



Ripon Grammar School Governors

Full Governing Board meeting

Wednesday 10th July, 7:00 pm

MINUTES

In attendance

Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ), Eric Medway (EM), Helen Stiles (HS), Andrea Edmondson (AE), Matthew Bean (MB), Robert O'Hare (ROH), Tom Cavell-Taylor (TCT), Dave Winspear (DW), Adele Laurie Wilson (ALW), Ian Charlton (IC), Victoria Pang (VP), Sinay Jayan (SJ), Jonathan Webb (JMW), Graham Livesey (GL), Amy Tweddle-Bray (ATB), Vikki Barton Brown (VBB) Via MS Teams

1. **Welcome and apologies for non-attendance**

EJ welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from Josh Stott (illness) and Kiran Fernandes (other commitments)

2. **Declaration of interests**

There were no declarations of interest

3. **Chair's opening remarks**

EJ noted that this was the final meeting for AE and HS and thanked them for their invaluable contribution to the work of the board. Helen has supported the work of inclusion across the school and had an extremely positive influence on the team as well as the students. AE was thanked for her unflinching commitment to staff wellbeing in addition to her support in other areas. EJ thanked both for their personal support to her and for their positivity and enthusiasm. All endorsed this.

Thanks for were noted to KF who completes his term as parent governor and has served on both finance and boarding committees.

4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2024 and 17th June 2024.**

Both sets minutes were approved as correct records

18/3/1 – Proposed TCT, Seconded HS

17/6/24 – Proposed MB, Seconded DW.

5. **Matters arising and update on action points not covered by the agenda**

None

6. **Headmaster's report**

The head presented his report which had been uploaded to the papers in advance of the meeting (paper 06)

Discussions focussed on –

- a. School role- noting the positive number of applications for H9 and also Y12 – but the need to increase the number of students in catchment area of the school to take the entrance test – it was noted that the Head was planning to increase liaison with in catchment schools to promote this.
- b. Staffing – in response to previous requests the Head presented data on staff leaving the school since 2017 – and the reasons for this – retirement remains the strongest reasons with the remaining

reasons being to work overseas, for promotion or to relocate with family. Governors were assured that the numbers leaving for career changes or for parallel positions were very small and thanked the Head for this work and asked for the continuous process of both exit interviews but also stay interviews.

- c. Pastoral – antibullying projects have been completed and the Kirkland Rowell Survey is in progress – both will be reported to the pastoral committee. Governors were pleased to hear that the development of junior prefects, personal development awards as well as assemblies, parent information evenings and efforts to widen participation in lunch time activities were ensuring the pupil and parent voice were being heard and the pastoral focus was being maintained. Governors asked for data on outcomes and numbers relating to this.
- d. Despite the lack of capital funds Governors thanked the Head and DSO for their work in securing external funding to deliver improvements. The new staff room is on track for completion, with improvements to the school environment for students with physical disabilities, and extension to the pastoral centre and repair for the fume cupboards and the Astro pitch. Thanks were recorded to Cummins for their substantial award and to VBB for her work in supporting this.
- e. Strategic Development Plan
The Head shared an update on the SDP – noting progress in all areas.
- f. School Day Changes - Governors were pleased to hear that the change in the school day from September 2024 was being communicated to parents and stake holders. They asked for reporting on this at the next FGB and for the Head to consider how the benefits would be measured.
- g. Boarding Inspection – the head shared that the boarding inspection had been completed. The draft report had been released with the final report awaited. Governors asked for assurance regarding boarding safeguarding and the Head and EJ confirmed that no safeguarding concerns had been identified in the inspection, or areas of concern.

EJ thanked the Head for his work over the year, and asked him to extend these thanks, from the Board to the staff team.

7. **Financial Matters**

a. **Budget**

ROH presented a detailed update of the financial position – noting the concerns regarding the deficit budget and describing the continuous work to improve this. It was noted that a financial improvement plan was being developed, would be analysed by the F+P committee and presented to the next FGB for approval in September 2024. Again, the need to maximise income, ensure numbers on role are maximised as well as maintain the boarding position with regards to numbers was noted. The budget monitoring report was reviewed and variances relating to boarding numbers (adverse) and potential summer lettings (positive) were noted – governors asked the Head and DSO to review their risk appetite for the summer letting – noting the significant income opportunities and supported proposals to enable this with the use of site security, if needed.

It was noted that staffing costs remain high, and the Head was thanked for the work being done to assure vacancy process management, attendance support and cover management – with all identifying the careful need to ensure quality of provision of education whilst maintaining financial viability.

ROH, EJ and JMW will be meeting with Howard Emmett, and team to discuss the financial position and present the improvement plan – this will be reported back to the next meeting.

b. **Solar For Schools**

This proposal was discussed. It was noted that it had been scrutinised within the F+P committee, previous approval in principle had been given by the Board in April 2023. GL presented the overview again. The risks and benefits were noted. Governors noted that the delays in this process to date and reduced the financial opportunities to the school but recognised that in addition to securing fixed price

energy for a proportion of the school's annual energy. Two design options were discussed – (wee paper 07b) – option 1 was approved on the basis of

1. Reduced capital costs
2. Increased estimated annual savings
3. Flexibility to extend at a later date

Governors again noted the positive benefits of solar energy, and the need to respond to the student voice which has been clear regarding this important initiative.

8. **Safeguarding**

EJ updated the board on safeguarding – reminding governors of the statutory responsibility of the Board in this matter. Amendments have been made to KCSIE have been made and will be shared. In her visits to school EJ has gained assurance around process, reporting, site safety and a culture of safeguarding. She noted that the recent Ofsted Boarding Inspection had identified no safeguarding concerns for escalation. Confirmation around the single Central Record was provided.

9. **Governor elections and co-opted appointments**

a. **Co-options to the FGB**

TCT was re-coopted to the Board for a further term. He was thanked for his continuous leadership of pastoral matters.

b. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the FGB**

EM was nominated as VC of the FGB from period of 1 September 2024 by TCT and HS

EJ was nominated as Chair of the FGB from 1 September 2024 by ROH and MB

Both accepted the nomination and their appointments were approved.

10. **Governors' Committee meetings**

a. **Boarding Committee (08/05/2024)**

MB provided a summary of the recent boarding meeting – discussing the process of the boarding inspection, noting that in the absence of a formal report and outcome, no concerns had been raised. Thanks were noted to the boarding team for this work. The meeting had spent time reviewing the issue of withdrawal of boarding applications after being offered places and the committee had asked the AHB to consider how the school could enhance communication with parents and minimise this. The committee had received assurance from the discussions with the AHB in the meeting that safeguarding processes were in place as well as a correct process around medication administration.

b. **Finance & Personnel Committee (13/05/2024, 08/07/2024)**

ROH noted the capital plans. Supported by external funding and reminded governors of the work being done to ensure financial processes and assurances were robust. Governors recorded their thanks to ROH and the finance team for their tenacity and attention to detail in this difficult period.

c. **Curriculum Committee (03/06/2024)**

EM had provided summary notes of the meeting in June – noting the approval of the home working policy, replacing the homework policy for implementation in September 2024. The plan for roll out of digital access in school was reviewed, and governors had received positive assurance around the assessment of the quality of T+L by the Assistant Head, with monitoring and reporting as well as feedback being well embedded. Governors had noted that registration with lessons is much improved, but there are still a small number of teachings not consistently doing this, and the Head has been asked to take firm action on this safeguarding issue.

d. **Estates Development Committee (05/06/2024)**

DW outlined the progress made in the meeting regarding the review of the Estates Strategy and outlined the processes in place to prioritise and allocate work but also the resourcefulness and capabilities of the premises team who have been able to enable so much of the improvements. Thanks were recorded on behalf of the Board to all those involved. Discussions on sustainability but also the risks associated with the maintenance work backlog were noted and Governors asked that these risks were raised to NYCC as a priority.

e. **Pastoral Committee (12/06/2024)**

TCT described the work of the committee and the positive assurances from the HOY7, the student councillor and the pastoral team in embedding pastoral care and processes in school. Adam Milner had been to the meeting and discussed how the non-GCSE PE curriculum is delivered as well as co-curricular PE. Governors had sought and received assurance on the inclusion processes, accessibility and support to enable wider participation in this area.

f. **The Admissions Committee (17/06/2024)**

The meeting had focussed on the review of the school roll and reviewed the reasons behind students leaving. Assurance was gained regarding support for students leaving for SEMH reasons. The committee had noted concerns re the reduction in Y7 boarders. Time was spent discussing the appropriateness of the Y7 entrance test. The Head presented a paper suggesting some evidence that the current test and coaching favoured male candidates – bias against PP and FSM and a low update of the test in catchment. The Head was asked to investigate further in preparation for possible change for the test in September 2025.

g. **Health and Safety Matters**

None

11. **Governors with specific areas of responsibility**

a. **Child Protection & Safeguarding Governor**

There were no issues to be raised over and above item 8

b. **Inclusion Governor**

HS reported on her work with the team and was thanked by the Board for her support and the progress she had enabled during her tenure, there were no concerns raised. HS confirmed that the GCSE and A level exams had been uncomplicated in terms of access arrangements.

c. **CEIAG Governors**

TCT endorsed the work being delivered by the careers team, described the success of careers evenings and the work being done to support those students in Y11 and Y13 in making next step decisions.

d. **Staff Welfare Governor**

AE described her assurance around the embedding of staff welfare procedures into the daily management of the school She noted the work being done by the SLT to support staff not working due to sickness and the processes around this. AE was thanked by the Board for the work she has done here.

12. **Health and Safety**

DW confirmed his regular visits into school and described the enquires he has made with the team which have provided him with assurance that a culture of H+S is now embedded within school and is being regarded as the responsibility of all. DW noted the process of incidents and investigation were robust and is satisfied that standards are being met.

13. **Policies for approval by the Full Governing Board**
The updated Concerns and Complaints document, responding to recommendation made by DfE, were presented and unanimously approved.
14. **Off-site visits and activities**
Paper 14 provided a list of the school visits and activities through the year. Governors noted the breadth and number and recorded their thanks to the staff for enabling this.
No approvals were required.
15. **Calendar, Self-review and Skills Audit**
The calendar was shared, noting the dates for Whole School Prize Giving and Speech Day.
It was noted that governor meetings are now all moving to Wednesdays and will take place at the earlier time at 1730 hours (except for Boarding) to reduce the length of the school day for members of the staff team. MS teams will remain an option for Governors given the likely impact on those travelling to school from places of work.
EM reminded governors of the requirements to complete the self-review and skills audit which was to be shared.
16. **Any other business**
The Chair reiterated her thanks to the Head, the SLT and the staff team for their tremendous efforts through the year, and thanked governor colleagues for their hard work and unending support – wishing all a happy summer break.
17. **Next Meeting – Wednesday 23rd October 2024 – 1730 hours**
18. The meeting closed at 2105 hours.