



Ripon Grammar School Governors

Full Governing Board

MS Teams

12 May 2026, 18.00h

MINUTES

1. Introductory Business

Attendance

Present: Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ) – Chair, Robert O'Hare (ROH), Eric Medway (EM), Tom Cavell-Taylor (TCT), Jonathan Webb (JMW), Adele Laurie-Wilson (ALW), Peter Von Hoven (PVH), Vikki Barton-Brown (VBB), Dave Winspear (DW), Jayne Dale (JD), Jonathan Brantoin (JB), Ian Charlton (IC), Victoria Pang (VP), Amy Tweddle-Bray (ATB), Graham Livesey (GL) – Director of Strategic Operations / Clerk.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Start Budget 2026/2027

GL presented the Start Budget, supported by the March Budget Monitoring Report (BMR), the Financial Risk Register, and accompanying notes on both. Key points of information:

- The March BMR showed a £12k surplus carried forward into 2026/27, but an overall deficit of £23k for 2025/26 as a whole — a significant improvement on the much larger deficit forecast in November 2025, reflecting tightening controls and early FRP impact.
- The Start Budget incorporates the Financial Recovery Plan (FRP) approved at the last FGB: a reduction in teaching periods (1631 to 1586, ~1.25 FTE, £91k annual saving from September 2026); a £9k reduction to departmental budgets, falling mainly on DT and PE; a 0.2 FTE reduction in library staffing; a £15k Development Fund donation; an assumption of 85 boarders from September 2026; and reduced pension costs (one teacher leaving the TPS, and LGPS employer contributions falling from 18.1% to 15.1%).
- Possible further reductions in teaching periods have not yet been triggered and are not reflected in the Start Budget.
- GL praised budget holders generally for responsible management within tight constraints, singling out Mr Walker for reducing the Careers budget by absorbing contracted work himself.

ASSURANCE: GL confirmed that budget management is robust at multiple levels — the F&P Committee, SLT, Finance Office and budget holders — and that progress against the FRP will continue to be monitored monthly through F&P.

F&P Committee Report and Recommendation (ROH)

ROH reported that F&P had tested and stress-tested the assumptions behind the Start Budget the previous week, questioning GL, the Headmaster and the Bursar directly, and confirmed the Committee was satisfied the forecast is realistic and achievable for the current and following year (the third year of the three-year forecast being less reliable, as in previous years).

Four key risk areas were highlighted:

- Boarder numbers — each boarder worth ~£12k; break-even around 87 boarders.
- Pay awards — the Start Budget assumption is slightly above current NYC guidance, providing some headroom.
- Government funding methodology — the current basis disadvantages the school, with a risk it could worsen.
- Energy costs — heightened by events in the Middle East, though the school has taken steps over several years to manage this exposure.

ASSURANCE: F&P confirmed it is satisfied with the assurances received on quality and impact, and will track delivery of the FRP through monthly financial monitoring and, on the curriculum side, through EM's committee working with GL. On behalf of F&P, ROH formally recommended adoption of the Start Budget by the FGB.

Discussion — Points of Information

- JMW: the local authority has purchased 100% of its gas and 75% of its electricity ahead of the recent Middle East conflict, and boiler upgrades are complete — supporting the accuracy of the energy assumptions, with further information awaited on gas supply.
- Jayne Dale offered to share an Arcadis report on the inflationary impact of the Middle East conflict, to help inform future risk assessment. EJ accepted the offer.
- TCT queried whether the five-yearly electrical inspection budget line covers remedial works as well as the inspection itself, and asked that future parent communications on fundraising explain the reductions being made (e.g. to PE) sensitively but transparently, to encourage giving.
- JMW and TCT discussed the right tone for this communication — balancing transparency with the risk of an unduly negative message. EJ agreed to take this forward with JMW as part of end-of-term parent communications.
- GL confirmed the electrical inspection budget assumes a full inspection cost; the local authority funds remedial works above £5k, with the school funding smaller works. Most distribution boards have now been replaced under a rolling programme, and the school is pressing the local authority for a more flexible, proportionate inspection approach rather than a single full-site inspection date. EJ supported GL in continuing to challenge this as wasteful in the current financial climate.

Approval

The Start Budget 2026/27 was approved for submission, on the recommendation of the F&P Committee, with no objections raised.

EJ recorded thanks to GL, the Bursar, ROH and F&P, JMW, and the wider SLT and staff team for their work on the budget, noting this remains a starting position that will continue to be monitored through the year.

3. Any Other Business

EM raised the Chair's succession for the board's consideration: EJ's two-year term ends in August 2026, and she had previously indicated (December 2025) an intention to stand down at that point. Given the school is likely to face an Ofsted inspection around February, and the significant demands this places on the Chair specifically, EM asked EJ to consider remaining in post for continuity through the inspection.

ASSURANCE: EJ confirmed she would be willing to serve a further term if the board wished, on the basis that: this would need to be a final further term with no option to extend beyond it; robust succession planning is put in place during that time, including review of committee structures; and she has the active support of the wider board, including at recruitment interviews and other commitments beyond scheduled meetings. She confirmed no decision was being made at this meeting — any formal proposal would come to a future meeting — and that she would not stand in the way of anyone wishing to put themselves forward as Chair.

No further items of urgent other business were raised.

4. Date of Next Meeting

Full Governing Board: Wednesday 15th July 2026, 1800hrs, in school.

The meeting closed at approximately 1825hrs.