



Ripon Grammar School Governors

Full Governing Board Meeting

Wednesday 15th October, 1800hrs Bishopton House

MINUTES

- 1. In attendance-** Eric Medway (EM), Robert O'Hare (ROH), Matthew Bean (MB), Dave Winspear (DW), Tom Cavell-Taylor (TCT), Amy Tweddle – Bray (ATB), Adele Laurie Wilson (ALW), Ian Charlton (IC), Victoria Pang (VP), Vikki Barton Brown (VBB), Jayne Dale (JD), Cpt Peter von Hoven (PVH), Siny Jayan (SJ), Jonathan Webb (JMW), Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ) – chair
Graham Livesey (GW) – Clerk to the Governors
- 2. Apologies** – none
- 3. Declarations of Interest** - None declared.
- 4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (16 July 2025)** - Approved as a correct record – proposed by Ian Charlton, Seconded by Dave Winspear
- 5. Matters Arising** - Governor Strategy Evening confirmed for 5th November; this will follow and afternoon of governor engagement in school activities – more details will be shared .
- 6. Headmaster's Report**

JMW shared his report which had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting (paper 06)

Particular attention was paid to

- a School Roll: Current roll 958; Year 7–9 over PAN; Year 12 slightly below target – governors were keen to understand why this was. JMW explained that whilst both internal and external applicants were very high – some external applicants had clearly held more than one offer and chosen to do elsewhere. Retention of internal applicants was strong, and governors were reassured by the improvement in this compared to last year.
- b Admissions: Governors heard how several applicants had failed to meet the current admissions criteria – securing high grades in several subjects but then lower grades overall. This has influenced discussion around the admissions policy – with a proposal of a change to a point-based system sixth form admissions policy: Proposed change to entry criteria (48 points from best 8 GCSEs OR 6 grade 6s; plus grade 4 in English & Maths).

Governors asked if this would have altered admissions for this year. The Head described how he had worked through all applications where grades had fallen short of expected and even with the new points system (because of the discretion shown to date – the students starting in September 2025 would not have differed. However, the new process would have automatically enabled entry – rather than for some, their admission being a consequence of a judgement call by the SLT.

A plan to award organ and scholarships is currently in draft and being agreed with the cathedral. This is being reviewed by the admissions committee, and once a final proposal has been agreed, this will be brought to the FGB for approval, with a plan for this to be launched for September 2026.

- c Year 7 entry testing had gone without challenge. Despite 494 registered for testing, 393 were tested. There was significant interest in boarding, and this is being followed up by the boarding team as well as the school admissions officer. Considering the reduced number of boarders this year, governors asked the Head to prioritize this with the team.
- d Staffing: there has been a successful appointment to the post of Assistant IT Manager. Governors noted that the Inclusion Manager will now be a member of SLT.

- e Exam Results: Public examination results from Summer 2025 were a cause for celebration, with strong A-level and GCSE performances – progress scores are provisionally very strong. There are areas where attainment fell slightly below where expected, this included the EPQ and some areas within humanities. The Curriculum Committee will review subject-level data in December and report back to the Board in December.
- f Pastoral: Governors were pleased to hear of the success of the Saxon Award which was launched in September. This award, accessible to all year 7 students’ rewards students for participation. Engagement has been overwhelmingly positive. Governors were mindful of the work associated with this for the staff team and asked the Head to alert the Board if there were concerns regarding capacity for this. The smart phone ban for year 7 has been well received, in general. Occasional comments from parents have been offset by very positive feedback. This will be reviewed within the pastoral committee.
- g Safeguarding: Behaviour so far has been positive, with no exclusions to date this term. Reports of significant behaviour issues have been reduced, suggesting that the positive behaviour policy and associated culture is well embedded – again this will be reviewed at the pastoral meeting. Governors noted that attendance continues to be above the national average.
- h Boarding: There has been a very positive start to the year under the leadership of the new Assistant Head of Boarding. A strategic plan update is in progress, which will report to the Board. In addition, a deep dive into boarding is planned for November 2025. Governors will be involved within this – formal details are yet to be described, but the format will be aligned to a boarding Ofsted inspection.
- i Estates: Summer works were completed under the leadership of Mr. Hogg and team; with highly positive outcomes. Governors heard that in the week prior to the meeting, a fire risk assessment had been completed by NYC with 89 actions identified. It was agreed that DW in his capacity as H&S link governor would work alongside GL to ensure this was appropriately addressed and any ongoing risks reported back to the FGB, via the Estates Development Committee.
- j Ofsted Preparation: the SEF is currently being rewritten, in line with the new Ofsted framework. This, along with the proposed strategic development plan, will be shared with governors on 5 November before coming to the next FGB for approval.

7. Financial Matters

ROH and GL updated on the current financial position. The current budget position remains very challenging with a forecast deficit to the order of £96k. This has been negatively impacted by the lower number of boarding students compared to predicted. Governors noted the unpredictability of boarding numbers. However, given this is the sixth successive year where boarding numbers have fallen short of the figure agreed within the start budget, the Finance Committee will review this in detail for the next year. A deficit license will be required, and a meeting is planned between the School and NYC in November to discuss this further. Governors noted again the challenge faced by the school. There is a funding gap – our costs to run the school in its current form exceed the funding awarded to us by central government. We are increasingly reliant on additional ad hoc funding streams which are non-recurrent and not secured. This includes grants and the development fund. Governors asked the Head to contact parents regarding the development fund and to consider communication strategies to engage parents, offering support as needed. The financial recovery plan will be reviewed, discussed at the next F+P meeting, and reported back to the next FGB Meeting in December.

8. Safeguarding

DW updated the board on the safeguarding in school. He and the Chair have engaged with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Head and ongoing meetings are planned. Whilst we are assured that safeguarding processes in school are extremely secure, and the work of the DSL is exemplary, concern has been expressed regarding their workload. The headmaster was asked to review this and consider how he could address with the DSL and their team to ensure the role being undertaken is sustainable for all concerned; and that the safeguarding systems within school are reviewed to ensure resilience. A formal SCR check will be undertaken by DW in November.

Governor Plans for 2025-2026

9. Parent and Student Engagement Plans 2025-2026

Governors recalled that the parental engagement session last year was very badly attended. This year, we will use a more targeted approach, reverting to individual invitations to parents. JD fed back that she had received feedback from year 9 parents that their questions had been answered through school fora (including the GCSE options evening) and so she felt that the non-attendance was a result of 'no concerns'. All recognised that the purpose of the engagement was not just to hear concerns – so we will ensure this is clear in the communication that goes out to parents.

With regards to student engagement – this will be reviewed at the strategy evening. Governors noted that whilst we have very effective communication with student volunteers, an ability to hear from those less likely to be selected or volunteer should be considered. ☒

10. Full Governing Board Self Review – ERM was thanked for conducting the review. The results were reviewed, and comments have been noted and will be fed into the action plan for the next year.

11. Website Compliance Audit – PVH has kindly agreed to undertake this.

12. SCR check – this was undertaken by EJ on August and will be repeated prior to the next FGB by DW.

13. Governors Annual Report – this will be shared at the December meeting for review.

14. Committee Structure for 2025/2026 – this was reviewed – volunteers for committee activity were requested.

15. Governor Vacancies – it was noted that a successful parent governor election has been conducted, and two new governors will join the Board in December 2025 (Peter Johnston and Jonathan Branton). Governors were sorry that Cllr Brodigan had not been able to take up the role of co-opted governor of the FGB and recorded their thanks for her expression of interest. A vacancy remains for a co-opted member of the Board which will be considered at the next meeting.

16. Governors' Committee meetings

a. Admissions Committee – EM summarised the meeting – the notes of which were shared in paper 16a. The change to the sixth form admissions policy was rehearsed and approved by all members of the Board. The committee had spent time reviewing boarding recruitment and had asked the Head to work with the staff team to improve the assurance processes around this.

b. Boarding – the meeting, which had occurred in the week prior to the Board meeting, was summarised by MB. The committee had been pleased to meet the Assistant Head, Boarding, Mrs Davidson and had welcomed her appraisal of the boarding situation. A focus of the forthcoming term is to be on safeguarding, recording systems (ensuring use of single systems which ensure appropriate information sharing across the school). A deep dive into boarding is planned for November 2025 and governors have requested that they will be involved in this. The outcome of this will be reported back to the FGB in December.

c. Estates Development Committee – DW highlighted that a fire risk assessment had been completed. 13 of the 89 actions have been completed, and he will be working with the premises team in school to ensure outstanding risks are appropriately mitigated – with concerns being escalated to the FGB as a priority.

Governors shared frustration regarding the release of the identified Section 106 funding (£84k) which has been further delayed. The Head is in contact with NYC and waiting response regarding this.

- d. **Finance and Personnel** – ROH summarised the financial position as described in minute point 7. Fundraising options are under review. The catering contract renewal is currently in progress.
- e. **Staff Pay Committee** – the committee had met in September 2025. One UPS application was improved, along with the appointment of the inclusion manager to the SLT.
- f. There were no Health and Safety Issues for escalation to the meeting.

17. Governors with specific areas of responsibility

- a. **Inclusion Governor** – EM plans to meet with the head of inclusion this term
- b. **CEIAG Governors** – TCT remains engaged with the head of careers, noting that this term's activities largely relate to post 18 options and support for this. TCT will meet with the team this term.
- c. **Staff welfare governor** – EJ has met with several staff this term. There have been no formal concerns raised. Governors were reminded of opportunities for staff engagement. ☑ EJ

18. Health and Safety

No additional issues were reported

19. Complaints

There have been no new complaints requiring governor involvement. ☑

20. Policies for approval by the Full Governing Board

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy was approved – subject to ensuring alignment with the lettings policy.

Sixth Form Admissions Policy was approved. ☑

It was agreed that for policy approval

- a. Key governor owned policies must be approved by committee
- b. New policies or policies where there are significant changes must be approved by committee
- c. Policies where there are minor updates, and no significant changes can be approved by the chair – and the approval noted in the next committee meeting.

21. Off-site visits and activities: for information and approval where necessary - none

22. Governor Training

EM confirmed that all governors have completed the NGA safeguarding training.

Financial training has been arranged for the next meeting of the F+P committee

23. Calendar – dates for next year's meetings were agreed

24. Any other business

- a. Action Tracker – EJ shared a draft action tracker for use to ensure actions are completed. This was unanimously agreed – and will be used for the FGB in the first instance. It was noted that the maintenance of the action tracker will require the support of the Clerk – which we will discuss.
- b. EJ indicated that she will be stepping down from the role of Chair at the end of her term (September 2026).

25. Date of next meeting – 02 December 2025

The meeting closed at 2026 hours. ☑