

Ripon Grammar School Governors

Full Governing Board Meeting

Tuesday 2nd December 2025, 1900hrs Bishopton House

MINUTES

1. In Attendance

Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ) – Chair, Eric Medway (EM), Robert O’Hare (ROH), Matthew Bean (MB – online), Tom Cavell-Taylor (TCT), Amy Tweddle-Bray (ATB), Adele Laurie-Wilson (ALW), Ian Charlton (IC), Victoria Pang (VP), Vikki Barton-Brown (VBB), Siny Jayan (SJ), Jonathan Webb (JMW),

Graham Livesey (GL) – Clerk.

Apologies: Jayne Dale, Davd Winspear, Captain Peter Von Hoven

Not attending: Richard Johnston, Jonathan Branton – newly appointed parent governors – outstanding onboarding requirements needed

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (15 October 2025)

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed.

Proposed: Ian Charlton. Seconded: Siny Jayan.

4. Matters arising (covered by action tracker)

EJ confirmed the Action Tracker had been updated. Several items were completed or ongoing.

Outstanding items include:

- Review of Estates Development Committee position – ongoing.
- Setting dates for parental engagement sessions – to be confirmed.
- School development plan – to be produced for final approval at next FGB

5. Committee Membership Update

EM presented updated committee membership (Paper 6).

- Two vacancies remain on the Estates Development Committee pending wider review of committee structure.
- Parent governor checks are still pending for RJ and JB.
- Small committees have been populated; flexibility will be retained to ensure appropriate expertise for specific matters.

6. Headmaster's Report (JMW)

JMW presented his report (slides shared in advance).

Areas of discussion included

a. School Roll & Admissions

- Current roll remains 958, with slight mid-term movement (Yr8 +1; Yr12 –1 due to health reasons).
- Year 7 projections: the school has discussed with NYC the potential to increase intake to 124 to support financial pressures. This may lead to form sizes of 30–31 in Years 7 and 8.
- Boarding recruitment for Year 7 is promising, with 14–15 pupils who have achieved the standard and expressed interest. Successful open morning held.
- Year 12 recruitment looks strong: 67 external applications at this stage (significantly above typical), with over 200 families attending open evening.
- Upcoming Year 12 taster events expected to support conversion.

b. Staffing

- Mental Health Lead post attracted no applicants; will be reconsidered.
- House tutor posts received three applicants: likely appointment for January.
- Library staffing to shift from 3 days to two 3-day librarians (5-day coverage).
- IT apprentice vacancy remains open.

- No significant teacher turnover expected.
- Tania Davidson's SLT role as Assistant Head Boarding is now permanent. JMW confirmed that appropriate HR processes had been followed.

c. Curriculum

- Key Stage 3 curriculum review delayed but progressing. Early signs show strong alignment between departmental planning and delivery.
- Significant focus on inclusion and expectations arising from Ofsted framework. Evidence tracking for SEND adaptations under development.
- Report writing model being finalised.

d. Pastoral

- Saxon Award continues successfully with very high Year 7 engagement. Recording participation remains an area for further development.
- Mobile phone policy remains effective with reduced usage and confiscations.
- Suspension rate extremely low (two suspensions involving the same student).
- Survey feedback from vulnerable students positive.

e. Attendance

- Whole-school attendance remains significantly above national averages, at approx. 96.5%, placing RGS in the top 2% nationally.
- Persistent absenteeism data to be reviewed by Pastoral Committee after questions raised about metrics.

f. Boarding

- Boarding Review moved to December; MB will be the governor representative assisting. Program includes surveys, checks of SCR, tutor conversations, house tours. JMW and MB were asked to gain assurance around processes for recording activities, and in particular processes around communication between day school and boarding and complaint management.
- Regular boarding leadership meetings proving effective with improving levels of engagement by all staff and consistent leadership within and between the boarding houses.

g. Enrichment

- Charity Week raised over £7,000 for Parkinson's UK.
- Carers' Respite Afternoon planned in collaboration with Parkinson's UK.
- House Drama successful; Grey House winners again.
- Significant work underway supporting Oxbridge interview preparation.

h. Estates

- Fire audit remains a major focus with several high-cost actions outstanding.
- Planning permission for School House approved; works to begin Feb 2026.
- Expected capital investment in boilers/hot water system.

i. Finance Overview (in brief)

- Current in-year deficit forecast c.£25k, improved from earlier projections.
- Broader financial picture remains extremely challenging (see Finance item below).

EJ thanked the Head for a highly comprehensive report.

7. Financial Matters

ROH & GL summarised the updated financial position.

Key Points included

- the In-year deficit forecast improved from –£96k to –£60k, with a best case outcome of end of year position of –£25k depending on year-end efficiencies.

a. Boarding income continues to underperform vs. budgeted assumptions. The Head was challenged to consider how we can more accurately reflect likely boarding numbers in start budget moving forwards given the consistent over estimation in previous years.

b. TES recruitment contract will not be renewed (cost saving). Governors asked about the impact of this and if there was a risk of a negative impact on recruitment. The Head assured that the online resources in place with social media profiles linking to vacancies, the impact is likely to be minimal – offset by a significant financial savings. Governors agreed to ensure this is reviewed annually.

c. Small additional income sources identified (interest, lunches) with a healthy lettings income.

d. Significant funding pressure continues relating to:

High proportion of staff at upper pay scale increases cost base.

RGS funding determined by minimum per-pupil level, significantly limiting gains from government uplifts meaning that income has not aligned with our cost growths

Projections from NYC indicate 0.3% annual funding increases vs 3% annual pay awards, creating a widening deficit.

b. Financial Recovery Plan and Deficit Licence

- RGS will likely need to apply for a Deficit Licence for 2026–27, requiring a three-year Financial Recovery Plan (FRP).

The draft financial recovery plan was shared at the meeting. Governors had not had site of this in advance. GL and JMW explained key aspects of the draft included

- £40–50k non-staff savings already identified.

- £80–100k teaching staff FTE reduction (approx. 1.2–1.5 FTE) required.

Options to enable this were described as:

- Combining PE groups (Years 7–8).

- Changing supervision arrangements for Sixth Form private study.

- Reducing internal cover costs

- Reducing GCSE options

Governors agreed the principles but requested more time before approving a formal FRP submission to NYC. Governors asked for a quality impact assessment relating to all items listed to enable clear discussions. IT was agreed that this would be discussed via the F+P committee with a recommendation to be made to governors.

ACTIONS:

- SLT to produce a skeleton FRP for governor review which will include clear quality impact assessments of all recommendations.

- **Additional meeting to be scheduled before end of term if required.**

8. Safeguarding

DW was not present – no report had been submitted

EJ shared the following information available because of her work with the DSL and SLT

- There is ongoing monitoring of DSL workload; noted to be high but well-managed. Governors asked about the resilience within the DSL team and for the headmaster to ensure shared levels of competence to enable assurance around this. Governors recognized the commitment and expertise of the DSL and asked the headmaster to support in line management and delegation of duties to allow the rest of the team to professionally develop, whilst also ensuring that the DSL is able to focus attention on leadership and oversight.

9. Single Central Record Check

- November SCR check completed (paper 10) with no concerns raised.

- Ongoing monitoring of DSL workload; noted to be high but well-managed. Governors asked about the resilience within the DSL team and for the headmaster to ensure shared levels of competence to enable assurance around this. Governors recognized the commitment and expertise of the DSL and asked the headmaster to support in line management and delegation of duties to allow the rest of the team to professionally develop, whilst also ensuring that the DSL is able to focus attention on leadership and oversight.

10. Website Compliance Audit

PVH is progressing with this and will share prior to next meeting

11. Governors' Annual Report

A draft produced by the Chair and shared.

Amendments agreed included:

- Financial context to be strengthened in opening section.

- Reflect reductions already made (PE periods, library staffing, careers staffing) to address the financial challenges

- Include reference to reserves falling significantly over recent years and concerns re sustainability of the situation.

ACTIONS - EJ to revise and circulate final version.

12. Committee Reports

a. Admissions Committee: No meeting since last FGB.

b. Boarding Committee – 7/10/25

MB summarised previous meeting (Minutes circulated). Focus included:

- Boarding review planning.
- Improvements to communication and recording systems.

c. Curriculum Committee – 4/11/25

EM summarized the important issues raised including

- Detailed review of Summer 2025 GCSE & A Level outcomes.
- New Literacy and Numeracy policies approved.
- Early draft of AI Policy reviewed.
- New Department Review model welcomed – this provides enhanced assurance around teaching and learning, including the student voice and enables assurance around action completion.

d. Estates Development Committee – no meeting

e. Finance & Personnel Committee – 18/11/2025

ROH summarized key points including

- Debt position stable; lettings income strong.
- Catering contract extended with £10k provider investment.
- TES contract cancelled this was referenced in agenda item 6
- Finance training has been delivered – which has been well received and ensures those involved in scrutinizing the finance and in budget analysis and management. Governors

agreed that it would be a useful training experience for those not on F+P and were encouraged to access this via the NGA website

f. Pastoral Committee 21/10/25

A summary of the pastoral committee minutes was presented by TCT

- The committee had met with the head girl – and reported a very positive meeting. The Head Boy was not able to make the meeting.

- The committee discussions had been underpinned by strong data assurances which are now consistently provided by The Deputy Head Pastoral.

g. Staff Pay Committee 18/11/25

- A brief meeting had been held to review on UPS application. EM described the robust process around this which enabled the committee to approve the application.

11. Governors with Specific Responsibilities

a. Inclusion: EM updated the committee - the SEND Lead is now part of SLT (supported by staff pay committee); Inclusion Plan progressing.

b. CEIAG: TCT updated on the role of the careers team and the work being done within school to support students. Financial constraints mean that the year 10 work experience week may become voluntary and require parental contributions. Historically this has been funded by school. Given the work experience offered in year 12, the year 10 activity has been an 'extra' which may need to be curtailed. Governors asked about the impact on students who may be choosing not to pursue A levels. TCT will be exploring this with the head of careers.

c. Staff Welfare: EJ updated on her meeting with the ECT lead along with conversations around HoY/HoD meetings provided positive assurance around staff wellbeing.

d. Health & Safety: There was no report. However, GL updated that since the last meeting there have been two incidents recorded as 'major' – and investigations are ongoing. The actions from the fire audit are significant.

ACTION – DW To update at the next meeting.

13. Complaints

There is one complaint which has progressed to a governor panel hearing – the hearing was postponed due to unavailability of the complainant and will be rescheduled.

14. Policies for Approval

Governor Allowances Policy was presented by the Clerk approved unanimously.

15. Off-Site Visits & Activities

GL presented the trips and activities for the years ahead in a paper circulated prior to the meeting.

- Paris MFL Trip (May 2027) noted.

- Bewerley Park (July 2027) noted.

- Sports Tour proposal (Oct 2027) discussed; governors asked if this would be limited to members of the sports teams. JMW confirmed that the trip would be targeted towards sports team members. Governors asked the SLT how they would respond to students who were team members who were not able to attend – especially due to financial constraints – and how this trip would align with the inclusion policy.

16. Governor Training

- Governor Strategy & Training Day held in November has received very positive feedback from all involved. IT was agreed this should be annualized – with dates and agenda for next year to be planned in good time.

- NGA e-learning is available to all governors and encouraged. Governors were asked to notify EM of training completed to enable updating of out training log (and evidence of skills competencies).

17. Calendar

- Christmas Concert – 9 Dec 2025

- Carol Service – 16 Dec 2025

18. Other Business

None.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 18th March 2026