



# Ripon Grammar School Governors

## Full Governing Board Meeting

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023

### MINUTES

#### Governors present:

Matthew Bean (MB), Ian Charlton (IC), Andrea Edmondson (AE), Kiran Fernandes (KF), Adele Laurie-Wilson (ALW), Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ) [Chair] (SJ), Eric Medway (EM), Robert O'Hare (ROH), Victoria Pang (VP), Jonathan Webb (JMW), Dave Winspear (DW).

**In Attendance:** Graham Livesey (GL) DSO and Clerk to the Governing Board

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

The Chair welcomed all governors to the meeting. It was noted that since the last meeting she had met with JMW regularly - combination of face to face, virtual and telephone meetings, totalling 12 hours. 4 governors had attended tea with boarders prior to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Helen Stiles, Vikki Barton-Brown, Josh Stott (with consent)

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

None

#### 3. Minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 10th July 2023.

The minutes were approved – proposed by DW, seconded by TCT.

#### 4. Matters arising and update on action points not otherwise on the agenda

None

#### 5. Update on Governor Membership and Committees

The Chair updated the Board on the resignation of Alan Watson as LA Governor. She has notified the LA who currently have no suitable candidates.

There is a vacancy for a co-opted governor.

#### 6. Headmaster's Report

The Head was thanked for circulating his presentation, prepared in advance of the meeting, which was available within the meeting documents.

Specific discussion occurred around.

##### a. Students on role

Governors asked about the boarding numbers - these are at 94 compared to the predicted 97 .

Mainly due to those being offered places in the sixth form not meeting the required standard.

Y7 boarders are lower than expected - the school felt that the delayed response by NYCC in offering places to those on the waiting list had meant the school had lost out - JMW is pursuing this to ensure that school can manage this situation in the future.

##### b. Sixth Form Numbers

Governors noted the Y12 retention rate from our own Y11 students was 72% this year compared to the usual 20-85%.

Questions included:

1. What are students looking for that makes them go elsewhere?  
*Some are looking for another course - eg sociology  
 Others are looking for a change in culture and environment - the Head reported that there were more students in the group who had not enjoyed school and were looking for something different.*
2. What can we do to make things more attractive?  
*We do have to balance the numbers leaving with the higher than ever number of external entries. External applications are at an all-time high.*
3. Do we have data on why students chose not to stay in school?  
*This is being collated and will be reported to the admissions committee.*
4. Of the 16 students who did not apply to remain in school - how many would have been eligible to stay?  
*9 students did not get the grades - 7 did - and we are unsure why they chose not to stay.*
5. Why do we not offer IT as an A level?  
*We cannot afford to run the course and there has been no demand. Currently we are prioritising maintaining the courses we deliver well.*
6. Do we have data on those offered places who then did not come?  
*Very little - everyone is asked but most do not reply. Of the data we have there are no trends.*

**c. Eleven Plus Testing**

This year a record of 400 year 6 students were tested. Of the 53 eligible students in catchment who were given access to the FROG platform (learning resource) - only 15 accessed this. A discussion around how we ensure we enable as many students from in catchment as possible to take the exam occurred. This will be taken back to the Admissions Committee for further discussion.

**d. Public Examination Results**

The exam results are good. A\* to A at A level is down on previous years, but record grades overall were seen. GCSE results are also good - but did not meet the headline figures of the years before. Full review of this will occur at the curriculum committee meeting.

**7. Safeguarding**

A safeguarding meeting was held during the week prior to the meeting. The LA advisor attended and undertook a comprehensive review, analysing governor and leadership work, impact on students, site safety and policies and procedures. No lapses had been identified.

There were no safeguarding issues to bring to the attending of the Board. [\[OO\]](#)

**8. Finance**

ROH summarised the current position and paid tribute to the efforts of the Head, SLT and Finance Team. Variance from the state described at the last meeting has arisen because of a save on capital spend (reduces costs of projects - due to in house delivery), an increase in funding received by the school of the order of 15k, a reduction in energy costs but also a reduction in boarding numbers.

The F+P committee have reviewed the situation frequently, and the ongoing uncertainty around energy costs could have a significant impact on the financial position. A series of interventions have been made to enable savings - so further adversarial changes are likely to leave us in a difficult financial position.

GL presented the most recent energy data. Interventions by the premises teams to improve energy efficiency have yielded savings. There has been a reduction in gas and electricity usage, and thus a net saving from projected costs. However, the uncertainty round the unit price of gas charges in particular poses a significant risk to the school.

All present understood the gravity of the situation and supported the committee in their decision for ongoing enhanced oversight and monthly scrutiny of the financial position.

## 9. Strategic Matters

### a. Strategic Development Plan

The Headmaster summarised the SDP for 2022 to 2026 and the amendments (included in the slides 05) The strands remain the same.

- Quality of Education - with focus on SEND and embedding quality first teaching, developing, and delivering the ICT strategy, mapping the school day.
- Behaviour and Attitudes - Student Values, Form Tutoring, Bullying - grass roots project
- Leadership and Management - developing middle leaders, CPD programme, staff wellbeing and parental engagement and communication.
- Personal Development - c-curricular engagement, mental health schools award, student voice
- Sixth Form - developing programme to support competitive university entries, refinement of the EPQ programme, personal development programme and careers programme.
- Boarding - embedding tutoring programme, medication audit programme, weekend programme and the fabric upgrades to the Houses.
- Estates - classroom upgrades, IT suites, fitness suites and development of the staff room
- Community and Outreach - access at Y7, fundraising, future governance arrangements

All agreed the strands and priorities were appropriate - the Chair asked all committee chairs to refer to the SDP strands within their agendas to ensure support for delivery of these.

### b. Governor Action Plan

This was available as paper 8c. EJ summarised the plan - which aligns with the priorities of the SDP but describes how governors will support this through the work of the committees.

### c. SEF

This is being updated and will be presented at the next meeting.

### d. Capital Projects Update

It was agreed that the allocated funding, within the start budget, for the upgrade of the boarding facilities in School House would be committed. This work will be undertaken in Spring 2024.

It was agreed that the allocated funding within the start budget for the IT upgrade would be committed to enable delivery of stage 2 of this project. It was noted that Phase 1 had come in under budget due to the efforts of the premises team. The Board asked for their thanks to Andy Hogg and team to be recorded.

Funding secured from the Jepson Trust will be used to enable the essential cleaning of the AstroTurf Pitch.

Governors asked why NYCC could not be asked to support this work - *GL informed the Board that this is a cleaning exercise and so not covered NYCC.*

TCT raised the issue of pastoral space. This has been brought up by the pastoral team - with challenges of limited capacity within the Hub for segregation and privacy. Whilst this is not currently funded within the capital budget, external grants are being sought with this project as a priority. This will be picked up at the EDC.

## 10. Student and Parental Engagement

The described the need to re invigorate the engagement events. It was agreed that in the first instance all Y9 parents would be invited to attend a face-to-face meeting - date tbc. Governor volunteers are required for this. AE suggested that an alternative virtual meeting would be useful - to attract different parent group. This will be considered after the face-to-face event.

**ACTION - EJ to confirm date, invite parents and inform governors.**

## 11. FGB Self Review

The results of the review were available to governors (paper 11). ERM took governors through the report. There were no questions. Training needs described by governors in their responses were noted.

## 12. SCR Check Report

EJ confirmed that the check had been completed - the very few minor issues detected have now all been resolved.

## 13. Website Compliance

EJ confirmed that the audit had been completed - results are available to governors (paper 13) but there are no compliance issues.

## 14. FGB annual report

This will be prepared by EJ for the next meeting - followed by a request for contributions from committee chairs.

## 15. Membership of Governor Committees

The committee membership was circulated - governors were asked to inform the chair of any changes. IC agreed to join the Staff Dismissal Panel and the Pay Appeals Panel.

## 16. Governors' Committee Meetings

### i. Admissions Committee 27 September 2023

The full minutes are available (paper 16a) – ERM highlighted the discussions around the school role and the variance against the expectations – with an action taken from the Sixth Form team to provide and annual report to the committee on the students who chose not to move into Y12 and leave – which will include the data on reasons for leaving, destination, and final GCSE results.

One persistent theme is a low number of sixth form boy boarders – compared to high numbers of girls – this is a national and established trend.

Discussions around the Y7 selection tests – and the school was asked to action previously discussed ideas to try and increase the proportion of in catchment children taking the test.

The Head was asked to work with the team in school to enhance the number of Y9 and Y12 applicants for 2024 to ensure we are at capacity.

### ii. Finance and Personnel 9 October 2023

The minutes are available (paper 16b) but ROH had no further items to add.

### iii. Staff Pay Committee 18 August 2023

The minutes are available (paper 18c). ERM detailed the procedures for review of the pay progression applications – and the rigor applied. IT was noted that there had been significant discussion about the quality of the teacher appraisal process – and the assurance processes around this – which has been tasked to the assistant head (T&L).

### iv. Boarding Committee 11 October 2023

MB presented the minutes (paper 16d). The committee had been on a tour of School House and were impressed by the refurbishments that had taken place over the summer holiday. The AHB was asked to develop a process for recording reasons why students leave boarding. There was discussion around the carpark and the pending decisions regarding Ripon AFC – with assurances given of the work being done to protect the amenity to and ensure the safety of boarders.

**v. Pastoral, EDC, and Curriculum Committees**

No meetings.

**vi. Health and Safety**

There were no issues arising from any committee.

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

**i. Child Protection and Safeguarding**

EJ reported the recent safeguarding visit from the LA advisor – no issues of concern were identified. She confirmed the plans for regular meetings with the DSL and the DSL team.

**ii. CEIAG Governor**

TCT reported plans to meet with the careers team.

**iii. H&S Governor**

DW has met regularly with GL and the team and provided a comprehensive report to the FGB.

**iv. Inclusion**

HS has plans to meet with the SEND team. She has prepared the SEND report – which will be reviewed in detail at the Curriculum Committee.

**v. Staff Welfare**

AE reported her discussions with CD. The Wellbeing strategy has not been produced. AE is meeting regularly with staff.

**18. Complaints**

None

**19. Governor Training**

HKE will be circulating the up to date KCSIE document – with a follow up quiz to check knowledge.

PREVENT training needs to be completed by all governors – link to be sent out.

HKE has been asked to invite governors to safeguarding face to face training this year.

**ACTION – all governors to complete PREVENT and KCSIE training by 1 December 2023**

**20. Policies for Review**

The Child Protection Policy has been updated and was circulated to governors prior to the meeting. The changes were approved (Proposed by EM, Seconded TCT).

**21. Off site visits**

There are no visits for governor approval

**22. Calendar**

Governors noted the comprehensive list of events which included:

- House Drama 16 and 17 November
- Christmas Concert 12 December
- Carol Service 19 December

**23. AOB – none**

**Next meeting 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**The meeting closed at 2110 hours**