

**Confirmed Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting on
Thursday 27th March 2025 at 5.00pm at Holyport College**

Governors		Initial
*denotes absence		
Tom Arbuthnott*	Educational Sponsor Link	TA
Mandy Bains		MBA
Walter Boyle	Founding Head Master	WBO
Sue Dudley	Vice Chair, Chair of Curriculum Committee, SEND, EDI, Pupil Premium and Careers Governor	SDU
Alastair Ingall	Headteacher	AIN
Mark Jones	Chair of Welfare Committee, Safeguarding Governor	CMJ
Gill Monk	Chair of Nominations and Successions Committee	GM
Adrian Percival		AP
Bruce Powell	Chair of Governors, Chair of Finance Committee, Chair of Strategy Committee	BP
Johnny Robertson	Chair of Foundation Committee, Chair of Bursaries	JRO
Sheridan Swallow	Chair of Audit and Risk Committee	SSW
Katharine Torrance		KTO
Lorraine Wales*	LAC and Wellbeing Governor	LW
Katharine Wootton		KWO
In attendance		
Adam Bicknell	Deputy Head - Academic	ABI
Liz Critchlow	Clerk to the Governors	LC
Andy Findlow	Director of Finance and Operations	AFI
Steve Gardner*	Deputy Head, Head of Boarding	SGA

Item No		Action Lead
1	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	Everyone was welcomed to the meeting, including three newcomers who introduced themselves: Katharine Wootton (Member Appointed Governor), Katharine Torrance (Parent Governor) and Andy Findlow (Director of Finance and Operations). Apologies were received and accepted from TA, LW and SGA.	
2	Any Other Business	
2.1	None.	
3	Declarations of Interest in the agenda	
3.1	AIN's declaration of interest in the boarding fees discount for members of staff was declared and minuted at the GFC.	
4	Approval of the minutes of meeting on 05.12.24, matters arising and update of action list	
4.1	Governors approved the minutes of the meeting on 5 th December as a true and accurate record.	
4.2	WBO joined the meeting at 5.20 pm. <u>Matters arising and update of action list</u> There were no matters arising and the rolling action list was updated.	
5	Head's Report	
5.1	<u>Ofsted Social Care Inspection Report</u>	

5.2	<p>Governors received the Ofsted Social Care Inspection report and congratulated the College team on the outstanding outcome. It was noted that staff are commended in the report many times and there are no advisories in the report. Governors are also commended in the report for visiting regularly and knowing the school well. BP, SDU and CMJ were thanked for meeting with the inspectors. The report recognises that all teams within the College work well individually and are also mutually supportive for the benefit of the students. It was agreed that BP would write a letter of thanks to all staff for their contributions towards this excellent outcome.</p>	BP
5.3	<p><u>Exam results 2024</u> For the first time in five years, L3VA has been published. The College's score is 0.17 or 0.21 depending on whether EPQ and Core maths are included. This is in the top quartile nationally but not the top 5%. Progress 8 for GCSE is 0.58. The Progress 8 score for GCSE will not be available for the next 2 years as there is no baseline data from KS2 for these year groups. Governors noted that the results were most pleasing and that students make excellent progress at the College.</p>	
5.4	<p><u>Staffing</u> Governors received an update on known leavers and maternity leave for next term. A Resident Boarding Assistant has been appointed for a one term fixed term contract until the end of the summer term and a teacher of Maths (and DT) has been appointed for September.</p>	
5.5	<p>There are plans to create a new position of Director of Communications. This role would incorporate communications, marketing and publicity. It was agreed that CMJ would send contact details to AIN of a colleague at Eton College who has experience in communications, marketing and admissions. It was noted high quality communication with parents is important. It was suggested that parent reps could be introduced for parent Whatsapp groups.</p>	CMJ
5.6	<p>The College has a lower number of students per staff than other nearby state boarding schools and it was noted that for financial reasons extreme care will need to be exercised with the staffing model going forward.</p>	
5.7	<p>Governors received information about predicted boarding numbers for 2025. There is a broadly positive picture for next year's admissions and 20 deposits have been received so far for Year 7. Predicted numbers of boarders in Year 8 and Year 13 are disappointing and it was noted that this is due to a lower intake (in 2024) in Year 7 and Year 12. There have also been some leavers this year from Year 8 boys' boarding and the behaviour of Year 8 boys has been a focus area this year. Next year's budget planning assumes c201 boarders and at GFC it was noted that the predicted range of boarders for September 2025 is between 201 and 206. Next year there will be an increased focus on marketing the boarding intake for Year 9.</p>	
5.8	<p>This academic year to date there has been one permanent exclusion (Year 8, intimidation and assault) and one permanent exclusion from boarding (Year 10, assault). There has been a significant decrease in fixed term suspensions compared with last year.</p>	
5.8	<p><u>Outlook for 2025 exams</u> There is an excellent set of results for this year's EPQs: A*: 32.8%, A*-A: 85.2%, A*-B: 98.4%, A*-C: 100%. Governors received predicted A level and GCSE data which was compared with actual results for the past 2 years. Higher attaining students are predicted to do slightly better than in previous years, but lower attaining</p>	

<p>5.9</p> <p>5.10</p> <p>5.11</p> <p>5.12</p> <p>5.13</p>	<p>students are predicted to do slightly less well than in previous years. Students of concern have been identified within departments and Heads of Departments are putting in place a range of intervention strategies. It was agreed that there would be a further discussion at GCC regarding the communication of potential grades to students.</p> <p><u>Curriculum Review</u> As part of the curriculum review, SLT and GCC have looked at whether the College should continue to prioritise the EBacc and as part of this consideration, whether it should be compulsory for all students to take a language to GCSE. They have also considered whether humanities (History or Geography) should continue to be compulsory for all GCSE students and it was decided not to make any changes in this area for the next academic year. Another area which has been discussed is the possibility of introducing additional courses, although are financial limitations on this option.</p> <p>There has also been a consideration of post-16 options in the context of provision in the local area. An analysis of courses available at other local schools and colleges shows that Holyport is the only institution to offer an A level only academic option at post-16 in the area and there is a high demand for this provision with 248 external applicants for day places in September 2025. It has been agreed that there is no desire to make any significant changes to the academic offer at Sixth Form. However, further consideration may be given to the entry threshold and to courses which might be more accessible for Sixth Form students at the lower end of the entry threshold. It was noted that the number of Year 11 Holyport students who achieved the entry criteria for the Sixth Form in 2024 was 57%.</p> <p><u>Attendance</u> Governors received Attendance and Absence data for the first half of the spring term 2025. It was noted that attendance at the College is good but there is still room for improvement. Overall attendance (Year 7 – 11) is 94.2% which is 2.3% above the national average. Persistent absence is 13.3% which is 8.7% less than the national average. It was noted that there was a downward trend in attendance weekly data for the first 6 weeks of this term, which dropped just below the national average in the last week before half term. Attendance in the last week of this term will be monitored.</p> <p><u>School Events</u> School events and Eton Societies have been well attended this term and the Good Schools Guide will be visiting next week.</p> <p>There was a discussion regarding how often student profile and safeguarding information is presented to the FGB. Safeguarding information is usually included as part of the GWC report. Format of Head's Reports to be further considered by AIN.</p>	<p>GCC</p> <p>AIN</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Nominations and Successions Committee</p>	
<p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p>	<p>Governors received the minutes of the NSC meeting on 24th March.</p> <p>Katharine Torrance was appointed as the new Parent Governor on 14th March 2025, having been elected by parents in the recent election.</p> <p>The process for appointing Katharine Wootton by Members has been completed and Katharine's term of office will commence today.</p> <p>BP has indicated that he intends to step down from his position as Chair at the end of the calendar year, which has been agreed by NSC. Nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair have been sought from the Governing Board and SDU has been nominated for the position of Chair by the NSC. No other nominations have been received. The committee wishes to nominate TA for the position of Vice Chair and TA has indicated that he</p>	

6.5	would be willing to serve as Vice Chair. Voting for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair will take place at the FGB meeting in the summer term. The committee will consider if any changes should be made to committee membership during the summer term and governors are invited to make any requests to join additional committees.	FGB NSC
6.6	Janet Walker has stepped down from her position as Member, effective from 24 th February 2025.	
6.7	It was noted that the process of governor self-assessment will be completed during the summer term, to be led by SDU.	SDU
7	DFO's Report	
7.1	<u>Management Accounts Period 5</u> The operating surplus is forecast to be £78k (0.9% of income) compared to the budget of £127k and actual of last year of £86k. This is an increase of £5k compared to Period 4. One of the potential risks which could impact this is the increase to National Insurance (£44k), which may not be covered in full by government funding. Reserves at the start of the year were £442k, and the carried forward reserve at the end of the year is projected to be £544k. There is an aim to build resilience this year and for closing reserves to be over £500k.	
7.2	<u>Capital Spend</u> Forecast capital expenditure remains at £115k. A rolling programme will be drawn up to replace and maintain assets as they age and wear out. Around a third of this year's capital has been spent to date, mostly on I.T. items. There is a programme to replace laptops, desktops and projectors, which will be rolled out over the next 9 months. There is £26k in the forecast for capital expenditure on mobile floodlighting for the astro turf. GM left the meeting at 6.30 pm.	
7.3	<u>Outlook 2024/25</u> There is £44k in the budget for lettings, around half of which is at risk, and next year is looking more positive with a couple of potential residential lettings in the pipeline. One of the key current risks is the sports hall floor. Damage has been caused by a water leak to the sports hall floor, and although some of the repair work is likely to be covered by insurance, there is some which is not. There is no significantly increased health and safety risk, and the hall continues to be used. AFI continues to liaise with RPA regarding the insurance claim. There is no allowance in the forecast for 2024/25 for any remedial work for this issue. It was agreed that CMJ would put AIN in touch with a colleague from Eton College regarding potential letting programmes.	CMJ
7.4	<u>Debtors</u> Term 1 debt (0.6%) is below that of last year (0.8%), and the term 2 position is also improved with 4.7% debt compared to 5.6% last year. The absolute debt level is higher than this time last year, but this is due to term 3 early payments received last year. A greater number of students have paid year to date fees than last year. Net debt is a similar position (3.6%) compared with last year (3.7%). The finance team continues to work hard to chase outstanding debt.	
7.5	<u>Boarding fees</u> A proposal was made at GFC to increase boarding fees for 2025/26 by 6.75%. The committee considered the following factors: a slight fall in boarding numbers; a slight rise in inflation to around 3.7%; the quality boarding offer (as validated by the recent Ofsted Social Care inspection); the	

7.6	<p>College’s current positioning against competitors; economic pressures on parents; economic risk inherent in the forecast for 2025/26; heightened fee differential with independent schools. Governors agreed that there were many factors which justify an increase of 6.75% to boarding fees and approved this increase for all year groups for 2025/26.</p> <p><u>Energy</u> The electricity contract ends on 31st March 2025 and the gas contract ends on 30th September 2025. Current markets are predicting a drop in prices in 2025, followed by a smaller but consistent decline in the following three years. Both fixed, variable and flexed contract options have been considered, including deals offered by brokers, however there is some concern as to whether the College would secure the best value for money with a broker. The recommended option for electricity is the DfE Energy for Schools pilot scheme, which aims to reduce the risk of schools’ exposure to market volatility and provide value for money energy for schools. The main feature of this scheme is that energy is purchased more in advance, which gives longer-term certainty and avoids short-term uncertainty in the market. AFI will investigate this scheme further and provide further information to GFC.</p> <p>ABI left the meeting at 6.45 pm.</p>	
7.7	<p><u>Scheme of Financial Delegation</u> See item 14.5.</p>	
7.8	<p><u>Boarding Fee Staff Discount</u> A proposal was made at GFC to introduce a discount of 50% to boarding fees for the children of members of College staff. There are no adverse tax implications for this proposal. The committee agreed that this discount seemed reasonable compared with benchmarking information. It was discussed whether a cap should be placed on the number of discounted places available for staff, but it was agreed that the discount would be an excellent incentive to help with recruitment and retention and no cap should be placed. The committee recommended to the FGB the introduction of this 50 % discount for boarding fees for members of staff, and governors approved the GFC’s recommendation.</p>	
8	Finance Committee	
8.1	Governors received the minutes of the GFC meeting on 13 th March.	
9	Audit and Risk Committee	
9.1	Governors received the minutes of the A & R committee meeting on 6 th February.	
9.2	An audit will take place on cyber security, which is listed on the risk register as a high-risk.	
9.3	AFI presented a very helpful account of his first impressions of the College to the committee.	
9.4	The internal audit will take place at the beginning of May. Areas to be scrutinised include authorisation levels, approval of journal vouchers and payroll.	
9.5	As the College is now over 10 years old, some fixtures and fittings are nearing the end of life and preventative maintenance is being planned for.	
9.6	A laptop was stolen from the premises. Security arrangements have since been tightened and further use of this laptop was blocked.	
10	Curriculum Committee	
10.1	Governors received the minutes of the GCC meeting on 10 th March.	
11	Welfare Committee	
11.1	Governors received the minutes of the GWC meeting on 6 th March.	

11.2	The committee wished to record their gratitude to the pastoral and boarding team for their excellent work which was recognised as being outstanding by the recent Social Care Inspection.	
11.3	CMJ has conducted a governor visit with WBO in which he looked at the Single Central Record and confirmed that this is in good order.	
11.4	The Ofsted social care inspection report notes that “The safeguarding team is an asset to the boarding provision. Team staff are extremely experienced in supporting vulnerable children and have a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience”.	
11.5	It was noted that overall attendance is good, and the College has the highest attendance in the local borough compared with other secondary schools. The small proportion of students who are persistently absent continue to receive support and attendance will continue to be monitored.	
12	Strategy Committee	
12.1	Governors received the minutes of the CSC meeting on 18 th March.	
12.2	AIN will take a draft of the Strategic Plan to the next meeting in May and this plan will then be brought to the FGB for approval in June.	AIN
12.3	It was suggested that ambitions for students could also be considered in terms of global opportunities as well as UK destinations.	
13	Foundation	
13.1	Governors received the minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting on 30 th January and the Foundation brochure.	
13.2	AIN and the executive team were thanked for all their work which has gone into producing such an excellent brochure. It was noted that the work of the Foundation will play an important role in the College’s future, particularly in the development of the co-curriculum. It was agreed that “state boarding free school” would be amended to “state boarding school” and “program” will be amended to “programme”. This brochure will be posted on the College website and circulated to the College community and the executive team will investigate the cost of printing. Governors approved the brochure.	AIN
14	Policies	
14.1	<u>Admissions Policy</u> The Admissions Policy has been redrafted and includes changes for the academic year 2026/27. Following consultation this policy has been agreed by GCC and determined by the FGB via email. Governors noted their approval of the amended policy.	
14.2	<u>ECT Policy</u> This policy has been reviewed by GCC and two amendments have been made. Governors approved the amended policy.	
14.3	<u>Exclusions Policy</u> AIN has made some minor amendments to update this policy. Governors approved this amended policy, subject to further minor amendments to change “Governors’ Discipline Committee” to “Governors’ Review Committee”.	AIN
14.4	<u>Complaints Policy</u> AIN has rewritten the Complaints Policy. It was agreed that this draft policy would be sent to GWC by email for review. Governors agreed to delegate the authority to approve this policy by email to GWC.	GWC
14.5	<u>Scheme of Financial Delegation</u> The following changes to allowances were agreed by GFC at the last meeting: AFI from £1k to £2k, CBR from £2k to £1.5k and SGA to £2k. Governors approved these changes.	

15	Terms of Reference	
15.1	<u>GWC</u> Some amendments have been made to the Terms of Reference for GWC. Governors approved these amended Terms of Reference.	
15.2	<u>CSC</u> The Terms of Reference for the Strategy Committee have been reviewed and, other than job titles, no changes are recommended. Governors approved these Terms of Reference.	
15.3	<u>GFC</u> BP and AFI will review the Terms of Reference for GFC and take these to the next GFC meeting.	BP/AFI
16	Chair's Action: to note any urgent action taken by the Chair since the last meeting	
16.1	None.	
17	Governance Update	
17.1	Governors received the amended meeting schedule for the summer term and the meeting schedule for 2025/26.	
17.2	The training schedule for Achieving for Children for the summer term was included in the meeting papers.	
18	AOB	
18.1	WBO will contact KTO and KWO to arrange safeguarding induction. The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.	WBO
19	Date of next meeting	
19.1	Thursday 26th June 2025 at 5.00 pm	

Signed:

Date:

Bruce Powell (Chair)