

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 25 March 2025

Present:	Mr. K. Balfe	Mrs. N. Job (Chair)
	Mr. J. Crowther (Headteacher)	Mr. S. Lucas
	Mr. K. Down	Mr. S. Mills
	Mr. G. Edwards	Mrs S. Reeve
	Dr. S. Eisenhandler	Mrs. K. Rowe
	Mr. T. Fitzakerly	Mr. T. Scott
	Mr. C. Hall	Mrs. V. Targett
	Mr. K Jenkins	Mrs. A. Thornber
In attendance:	Mr. T. Hankin	Clerk
	Mrs. J. Shaw	Director of Finance & Resources
	Ms. B. Winter	Head Girl

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

Mrs. Job welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Reeve was introduced as the newly elected non-teaching staff Trustee. Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs. M. King, Mr. D. Roberts and Mr. A. Jones (Deputy Headteacher).

2. Notification of items to be raised under Any Other Business

Mr. Crowther – Admissions

3. Declarations of interest

Trustees were reminded of the need to declare any pecuniary or other interest in the items for discussion. There were none.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2024.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4.2 Matters arising.

None

5. Head Girl's report

Ms. Winter gave a report on school life this term. She reported that it has been extremely busy and highlighted just some of the events and activities that have taken place, including:

- Sporting successes at County and National level
- The forthcoming Science Fayre and Gym & Dance competition
- Year 13 mocks and preparation for A level examinations. Students are receiving university offers including four who have had an offer for Oxbridge
- National careers week events and interview skills workshops

- Holocaust Memorial Day events including a guest speaker
- Celebration of International Women's Day and World Book Day
- Charity events including the termly Food Drive
- Various trips such as the Year 12 Media trip, a ski trip and a Business Studies trip to New York
- Some students represented Hertfordshire schools at the Commonwealth Day service in London
- The Classics Play, written & directed by two Year 13 students
- The Addams Family school production
- HGS Dance Company who recently performed at the Royal Albert Hall

The Chair thanked Ms. Winter for her excellent report and said she was amazed at the range and variety of activities that have taken place.

6. Headteacher's report

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr. Crowther reiterated that it has been a very busy term with lots of opportunities for students. The whole school community was involved in The Addams Family production and he thanked all staff for their support with this. He highlighted a number of areas in his report:

- Staff recruitment for next year
- HfL has recently completed a review of the Sixth Form Consortium. Details will be shared with Trustees once the Heads of the three schools have had an opportunity to review and discuss the report
- Work on the School Improvement Plan for 2025/26 has begun. As part of this work, the review of progress on the 2024/25 Plan is also being updated. A big part of the next plan will be a move to a new Management Information system
- Progress on the Headteacher objectives for this year
- Plans for the SEND department going forward, linked to the rise in students with an EHCP
- Eco School status
- Attendance and behaviour data
- Staffing changes
- Complaints summary, all of which have been thoroughly investigated in accordance with the complaints procedure

Trustees asked about recruitment and how well this is going. Mr. Crowther advised that it is generally going very well with strong appointments made. One current vacancy is providing difficult to fill. He was also asked if all staff received an induction. He confirmed that they do, although those joining at the start of the year receive a more in-depth induction than others joining mid-year. Ways of providing the same level throughout the year are being considered.

A Trustee noted that the Year 12 Extended Project presentations had been very impressive and the variety of topics covered was amazing.

The Chair asked about progress on some of the current SIP actions.

- HGFSa – Mr. Hall advised that the constitution and structure is being established, ready for relaunch to parents
- Canopy status – Mrs. Shaw advised that quotes and options are being obtained
- Student Leadership Team - Mr. Crowther stated that this is not working as envisaged and is being reviewed as part of the SIP for next year

- Pastoral Support google form – this is in place to allow students to request support

The Chair thanked Mr. Crowther for his report and expressed thanks on behalf of the Trustees to all staff for their hard work and support for students.

7. Committee reports

7.1 Admissions committee

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 25 February. Student numbers and in-year movement were discussed.

7.2 Curriculum & Performance committee

Mr. Scott reported on the meeting held on 25 February which had reviewed student progress data, school effectiveness reports and attendance. The Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance policy and the Supporting students with medical needs policy were reviewed and are recommended to the Trustees for approval. The policies were **APPROVED**.

The committee also approved the updated Low level concerns policy and the Equality Information and Objectives policy. This was **NOTED**.

7.3 Finance & Resources committee

Mr. Hall reported on the meeting held on 4 March. The main discussion related to the budget for next year and the grant funding that is expected. Initial budget projections show a large deficit for the year. The committee also discussed the Condition Improvement Fund bids and agreed the contractor for each project if the bid is successful. The Health & Safety report was reviewed and discussed along with the outcome of an IT audit.

The committee reviewed and approved the updated Records Management and Retention policy, Charges, Remissions and Refund policy, Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption policy, and Accessibility Plan. A new Accident and investigation policy was also approved. This was **NOTED**.

7.4 Audit & Risk committee

Mr. Down reported on the meeting held on 4 March. The reports from the Responsible Officer and Internal Scrutineer were reviewed. There are no matters of concern. It is suggested that a skills audit is completed by new Trustees as part of their induction.

Two amendments to the Risk Register relating to a new bank account debit card and the IT audit were suggested.

7.5 Personnel committee

Mr. Lucas reported on the meeting held on 4 March. Staffing changes were noted along with the introduction of an applicant tracking system to support recruitment. The trial by Hitchin Boys' school of a two week October half term was discussed.

The committee reviewed and approved the updated Grievance policy, Staff time off work policy and Online safety policy. This was **NOTED**.

8. Link departments

8.1 Department links

The Chair informed Trustees that Mrs. Franklin has resigned and there is a vacancy for a link Trustee for Pupil Premium.

8.2 Trustee visit reports

Dr. Eisenhandler informed Trustees that she has met with students in the Sixth Form Medrock group and spoke about interviews for medical school.

Mr. Down advised that he was recently involved in Sixth Form mock interview workshops. The students impressed him and were very well prepared.

Trustees were reminded that they should visit their link department at least once a year. They can contact the Heads PA with their availability.

Trustees were encouraged to attend the annual Art Show which takes place on 3 July between 5 & 7pm.

9. Any other Business

Admissions Mr. Crowther informed Trustees of some recent guidance received from solicitors regarding the Published Admission Number (PAN). This is only required for admissions into Year 7. For other year groups, Trustees can set an Operational Number which is usually the same as the PAN but can be adjusted for a particular year group to reflect any issues relating to that cohort of students. Trustees noted that any change may have an impact on pupil funding.

It was agreed that the Operational Number should be considered by the Admissions Committee. Mr. Crowther will contact the solicitors to request more guidance on the process to be followed.

Trust Board diversity A Trustee asked for an update on membership of the Trust Board. Mr. Lucas replied that he is in contact with two people who previously expressed an interest in a Parent trustee role about possibly joining the board.

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 3 June 2025