THE CRYPT SCHOOL
Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Wednesday, 1 July 2026, 4.00pm – 5.40pm
Held online

MINUTES: Part 1

Present:	Lee Hill (Chair), Ahmed Goga, Dare Owatemi, Sheila Bradburn, Suzanne Aspden (from item 8), Ruth Burchell (from item 5), Lynsey Pollard, Amit Ray, Nicholas Dyer (Headmaster); Kate Williams, Gordon Taylor (Associate Trustees)
Attendees:	Phil Stanlake (Senior Deputy Head), Joanne Hitchings (Finance Director & Company Secretary), Nicola Donlon (Clerk)
Apologies:	Sonia Macleod, Student Governors (on work experience)
Absent:	None

	Item	ACTION
1.	**Apologies:** as above, approved by the Board.	
2.	**Declarations of interest:** as per the register of interests.	
3.	**Agree minutes of meeting (18 May 2026) Pts 1 and 2:** approved without amendment.	
4.	**Matters arising from previous minutes:** **a) Action table (paper 1a):** The Headmaster (HM) reported that the updated plan was now live on the website. Data on math and English grade requirement impacts was circulated on 30 June. A specific parental concern regarding SEND provision that had been raised with Amit Ray would be reviewed by the HM and Chair with the aim of drawing the matter to a close.	HM, Chair
5.	**Headmaster's report:** **i) Educational performance (paper 2a)** **Year Group Updates:** The HM said that Year 10 was a high-attaining group; Year 12 was academically strong but results showed some underperformance and a "longer tail" of struggling students in some subjects, partly attributed to anxiety and lack of resilience; this would be a focus for the coming year. The Board discussed areas of weaker academic performance in the context of mock results and student feedback (papers 19a and b). The HM said that the next Y12 data point would be the November assessments and the Board would receive a report to review progress at that point. **ii) Other items (paper 2b)**	

	Admissions: Current Year 7 enrolment was at 159, though one was thought unlikely to attend. **Statutory Updates:** Trustees noted the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" summary and the brief on upcoming statutory changes for schools. Ruth Burchell joined the meeting. **Strategic Reviews:** The HM said future Trustee reviews will tilt toward strategic issues (e.g. inclusion) rather than departmental detail to align with the new Ofsted framework. Trustee asked for the Headmaster's reflections on other schools' experience of the new inspections regime. The HM said that, from next year, schools under inspection would be compared to similar schools rather than the national picture, so the Crypt might be compared to schools that achieved exceptional grades. Trustee suggested that sharing expertise at the national level might be an important factor in achieving exceptional grades. The HM said that the School was seeking to become a NACE ambassador school in 2027-28. Trustees discussed the proposal that the Board could adjust the relative weightings of different elements of the new admissions test in order potentially to shape the skills set of the resulting intake. The HM suggested that the Admissions Committee should look at this initially and the Chair asked all Trustees to reflect on this and come back with their views at a future discussion (ACTION).	Admissions Committee, Trustees
6.	**Key Performance Indicators (paper 3)** The Clerk highlighted the impact of study leave on overall attendance and said that figures excluding those students were presented in the notes to paper 3. Trustee asked about the rise in signed off absence. The Senior Deputy Head (PS) confirmed that this was related to one person.	
7.	**Finance Director's report: Management Accounts to May 26 (papers 4 and 5)** The Finance Director (JH) said that the year-end surplus would be absorbed by capital expenditure. The Resources, Staff & Pay Committee had approved further costs for the summer works so those would proceed, although some of the in-house work planned might not go ahead because of staff absence. She confirmed that the girls toilets and DART refurbishment would go ahead. Trustees noted the report.	
8.	**School Budget 2026/27 – 2028/29 (papers 6 and 7)** The Finance Director said a reduction in teachers' pensions contributions was likely to be netted off by clawing back some funding, so the figures in the Budget would need to be adjusted. Overall, the forecast position for Year 1 was a deficit of £120k, with deficits also forecast for Years 2 and 3. Trustees AGREED that the Budget should include mitigating actions for Years 2 and 3 to reduce the projected deficit, such cost-saving measures, staff reduction or increased pupil numbers. Suzanne Aspden joined the meeting. JH said that the final Budget would also need to reflect certain staffing arrangements and the confirmation of Education, Health and Care Plan requirements, which were both still being finalised. Trustees APPROVED the final Budget for 2026/27 – 2028/29, with amendments as needed to reflect the factors discussed.	JH

9.	**School Improvement Plan (SIP) (paper 8)** The Senior Deputy Head presented the draft SIP. He referred to the School's recent NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) re-accreditation, and welcomed that the report's recommendations had already been identified by the School as further improvements and reflected in the draft SIP. Trustee asked how teaching staff had been involved in the development of the SIP. PS said there had been a series of workshops at a twilight session; staff had selected which workshop to attend and had the opportunity to contribute. Trustee welcomed this additional engagement, which had been recommended in a previous Trustee review. The Chair took the opportunity to congratulate Phil Stanlake on the 35th anniversary of his working for the School. Trustees APPROVED the School Improvement Plan for 2026-27.	
10.	**Trustee/Governor visibility (papers 24 and 25)** The Chair highlighted the SIP leadership and governance improvement priority of increasing the visibility of governance in school, which would be achieved in part by strengthening the Trustee review programme to focus on strategic issues. He said that, from the next school year, he would be doing weekly school walks with the Headmaster. He would also like to set up some student panel meetings with Trustees and meetings of the whole Board with staff. The Clerk had recently asked Trustees to update their website profiles; the Chair suggested adding photos, if Trustees were happy to do so. It was also agreed to arrange a joint photo of the Board (ACTION). Trustee suggested strengthening the Board's connection with the Schools Parent-Teacher Association and the Chair offered to join a PTA meeting (ACTION).	Clerk Chair
11.	**Training: Trustees' Training Programme for 2026-27 (paper 9)** Trustees APPROVED the new training programme for 2026-27. It was agreed that Sheila Bradburn and Ruth Burchell would update their Prevent training to ensure that there were two trained Trustees (ACTION). Lynsey Pollard offered to undertake training and shadow Sheila Bradburn in safeguarding reviews to strengthen her role as Deputy Safeguarding Trustee (ACTION). The Clerk reminded the Board that a full range of training, including on compliance issues such as equality and diversity, was available online via NGA Learning Link.	SB, RB LP, Clerk
12.	**Trustees' Review Cycle for 2026-27 (paper 10a&b)** Trustees APPROVED the new internal guidance for Trustees on school visits and the Trustee review programme for next year. The Board appointed reviewers as follows: Staff Welfare and CPD: Sheila Bradburn and Suzanne Aspden SEND and inclusion: Amit Ray and Lynsey Pollard Post-16 education: Lee Hill and Ruth Burchell	
13.	**Policies for approval (papers 12-14)** Trustees APPROVED the Special Educational Needs Policy and Behaviour Policy and noted the policies reviewed and approved in Term 6. The Clerk said the Local Government Pension Scheme Policy was postponed to a future meeting.	
14.	**Risk Register paper 15)** Trustees reviewed the register as follows: 1.10 (fail to recruit pupil numbers): impact has increased to 4 because of deficit budget. Trustee asked about mitigation if Year 7 numbers don't meet the budgeted level, e.g. through late offers; JH said the school could not admit above the PAN of 155 for Year 7. Review in October 26 once numbers are confirmed.	

	2.1 (SLT lack skills/fail to perform): no change 2.2 (loss of key SLT personnel/failure to recruit): no change 3.2 (loss of key personnel/ failure to recruit other staff): no change, review again in October. 3.3 (staff wellbeing): turnover has been low and sickness absence has been lower, no change. 4.1 (inadequate financial controls, monitoring or reporting): no change. 4.3 (reserves): no change. 4.4 (failure to comply with HR/payroll/financial regulations): no change, remove reference to old payroll provider. 5.1 (failure to comply with H&S or environmental regulations): no change 5.7 (site security breach): no incidents and site security monitoring in place, reduce likelihood to 2, total risk score 6. Trustee asked if risk 5.4 (natural disaster) could be modified to include risks arising from the impact of climate change, in view of the recent school closure because of extreme heat, and whether the risk should therefore be increased. JH said the School would be producing a sustainability plan with the help of a Government-funded adviser and was looking at installing solar power generation, which could then power air-conditioning in the summer months. Trustees AGREED that this should be itemised as a separate risk covering weather extremes, with an action plan to be produced, with likelihood 3, impact 4 (ACTION).	Clerk JH, LS, Clerk
15.	**Trustee appointments:** Trustees AGREED to recommend to Members the re-appointment of Sheila Bradburn for a second term of four years (ACTION).	Clerk
16.	**Committee reports (papers 16-18)** The Board noted the Committee meeting reports.	
17.	**Stakeholder surveys: update (papers 19a and b)** Trustees noted the reports of surveys of Y11 and Y13. Trustee commented that there was not always a correlation between student experience of a subject and academic outcomes. Trustee welcomed that the surveys illustrated that students were engaged and thinking about what they wanted from their learning experience. Provision of girls toilets had again been raised by students; Trustees noted that the additional toilets would be completed over the summer holidays, but the next challenge would be improving the condition of the boys' toilets.	
18.	**Safeguarding report from Designated Safeguarding Lead (paper 20)** Trustees noted the report.	
19.	**Annual reports:** ● **Careers Report (paper 21)** ● **Data Protection and Freedom of Information Report (paper 22)** ● **Student Parliament actions (papers 23a&b)** Trustees noted the reports.	
20.	**Any other business** – none.	
21.	**Date of next meeting: Monday 12 October 2026, 3.30pm**, The Crypt School	

Signed:

Date: