THE CRYPT SCHOOL
Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Monday, 9 February 2026, 4.20pm – 6.40pm, The Crypt School and online

MINUTES: Part 1

Present:	Lee Hill (Chair), Suzanne Aspden (online), Ruth Burchell (online), Sheila Bradburn, Ahmed Goga, Sonia Macleod, Dare Owatemi, Lynsey Pollard, Amit Ray, Nicholas Dyer (Headmaster); Gordon Taylor, (Associate Trustee)
Attendees:	Anthony Gilbert (Member), Phil Stanlake (Senior Deputy Head), Joanne Hitchings (Finance Director & Company Secretary), Nicola Donlon (Clerk); Tianna Klaric (Head Girl & Student Governor) & Liam Page (Head Boy & Student Governor): items 1-3.
Apologies:	Kate Williams (Associate Trustee)
Absent:	None

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	**Apologies** – as above, approved by the Board.	
2.	**Declarations of interest** – as per the register of interests.	
3.	**Student Governors' report** The Student Governors (TK and LP) presented their update on the Student Executive activities in school, including: - Appointment of new prefects - Work on inclusion, including planning for an inclusion assembly to raise awareness of the impact of comments and a whole school culture day (20 April) - Fundraising for the charity IT Schools Africa. They raised the following concerns: - An update on funding for the new girls' toilets - Closure of the girls' changing room - Apparent vaping in girls' toilets – could smoke detectors be installed? - Absence of locks on boys' toilets in Cooke Centre - Confusing signage for the school one-way system. The Senior Deputy Head (PS) said new signage had been ordered, although some of the old signage on stairs was difficult to remove. The additional girls' toilets would be built in the summer holidays. Smoke detectors would be considered, but there was concern that they simply pushed the problem elsewhere. Trustee asked if the boys' toilets were adequately clean. LP said they were satisfactory, for boys' toilets. The Headmaster (HM) said that many schools now	

	had open toilets; these would be expensive to install and there were also some privacy concerns. Trustee said they liked the Student Executive's ideas on inclusion and asked if they could evaluate the effectiveness of these actions. The Student Governors agreed that some student feedback would be helpful e.g. through Student Voice or a Google Form, and that the Executive would discuss this further. The HM suggested adding this to the student survey. As this was their last meeting, the Board thanked the Student Governors for their contribution and wished them well for their upcoming exams. TK and LP left the meeting. Trustees asked how previous Student Governors were getting on after leaving school and whether there was an alumni book or similar. The HM said that the School requested a contact email for departing Y13 students on results day and invite them to connect via LinkedIn.	
4.	**Agree minutes of meeting** Minutes of Board meeting (Part 1) 8 December 2025 were approved without amendment and signed by the Chair.	
5.	**Matters arising from previous minutes:** ● Action table (paper 1a) The Chair said he had drafted the letter to Sue Wales, but had not yet been sent. The HM said that the Ofsted report of the recent inspection of Sir Thomas Rich's school had been published. The inspection had been very thorough, with a much stronger focus than previously on the senior leadership team. The School was now preparing for a possible inspection in March 2027.	
7.	**Finance Director's report:** **a) Management Accounts to Dec 2025 (papers 3 and 4)** The Finance Director (JH) presented her report, which included a full re-forecast of staffing changes to reflect all approved changes made since the start of the year. Trustee asked about fundraising costs. JH said it was paying for itself at present, but a budget would be sought going forward. Trustee asked if there had been any feedback on the failed Condition Improvement Fund bid to use in future bidding. The HM said it had been a poorly constructed bid put together by an external consultant who would not be used again. This year's bid had also been stripped back to fire safety works to reduce the overall cost. Trustee noted that donations were down and suggested discussing this strand of income generation alongside the fundraising programme. Trustees commented on the number of requests for money received by parents, including for trips or charity donations, and suggested combining requests and focusing on a single charity for donations. The HM said that the number of charity donation requests had not increased, but the move to cashless payment may have affected parents' perception of this. The Chair said that, because of the regulations governing charging for trips, these would need to remain separate. It was AGREED that the donations programme should be discussed with the Development Manager at a future meeting (ACTION).	**Clerk, Trustees**

11.	**School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool: checklist for approval (paper 9)** JH presented the draft self-assessment for approval by the Board. She explained the "in part" responses: Q24: the school was working on an asset management plan for other equipment to be ready for later in 2026. Q25&25a: the school was working towards implementing the leadership and governance core digital and technology standard by August 2027. Q47: The accounting system reporting was not completed automated yet. Anthony Gilbert said that Rendcomb College in Cirencester was closing at the end of the school year and might have some useful assets for disposal; JH said she would notify the Operations Manager (ACTION). JH said she would amend the Member attendance at the AGM in the checklist. With that change, Trustees APPROVED the checklist for submission to the Department for Education. JH left the meeting.	**Lesley Smith**
6.	**Headmaster's report:** i) **Educational performance (paper 2a**) The HM said that the attainment data had been scrutinised in detail by the Pupil Education and Outcomes Committee the previous week, so the data were primarily for information. He said that confidence in the gut grades was quite high. Trustee asked if students knew their gut grades. The HM said that students knew their target and predicted grades; gut grades were not shared individually and were usually higher. A level students also saw their UCAS predicted grades; the school gave students the benefit of doubt in calculating these grades, whereas gut grades were more cautious. UCAS held a profile of each school's performance in predicting grades and adjusted accordingly. **ii) Other items (paper 2b)** The HM invited the Board's views on moving Religious Studies (RS) to a three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum in line with other subjects, with students being able to opt for a full RS GCSE in Year 10. Trustee said it was important to consider carefully how to present this change so that it did not undermine the School's commitment to supporting a broad-based curriculum. The HM said that students lower down the school enjoyed subjects such as RS and English, but saw them as less valuable for their future career. Trustee asked about plans for Modern Foreign Languages at A level. The HM said the strategy was to maintain options at GCSE and A level (and was staffed to do so). Students studying one language all the way through KS3 and KS4 had improved results, supported by new staff and an improved curriculum. Trustee asked through what channels the school could persuade students to choose particular subjects. The HM said that there was plenty of opportunity to promote subjects through information provided to students and parents in Y9; some teachers were also more proactive in promoting their subjects. Trustee suggested providing more information on the content of the GCSE curriculum. PS said this information was provided in the booklet supporting choices on the school website, but this could be looked at again.	

	The HM said that the school intended to add an additional A level Maths set next year to reduce the set size to 20/21 students; this would not increase the number of students that could be admitted to study Maths. Trustee asked what would happen if the subject were over-subscribed. The HM said that all internal students could be accommodated if they met the grade requirement; external students would be admitted based on their grade until the sets were full. Trustee asked if sets would remain mixed ability. The HM said that they would, this was strongly supported by the Head of Maths. Trustee said that, in their recent visit to the Maths Department, some higher performing students felt that they could be challenged more. The HM also invited the Board's views on increasing Sixth Form entry grades to a 6 for English and Maths and a 6 in English Language for entry to written/essay-based subjects e.g. history, which could be implemented to take effect for the current Year 10. He said the impact would be most significant in relation to English Language; the aim would be to raise the profile of English in the curriculum, to positively influence students' work ethic for their English studies and to support performance in essay-based subjects at A level. Trustee asked about the impact of students' attitudes to learning on the results achieved in English. The HM said there was anecdotal evidence from interviews with students that they tend to be focused on achieving good grades in their intended A level subjects and the minimum entry requirements. The changes would help to reinforce the importance of English but were not a panacea. His recommendation was to increase the English Language grade requirement for essay-based subjects for the current Year 10, and to consider increasing the Maths and English grade entry requirements for the current Year 9 once this summer's results were known. The HM would circulate data on the number of students that might be affected by these changes and the Clerk was asked to bring this item forward again for decision in May (ACTION). Ahmed Goga withdrew from the meeting. <u>Admissions test</u>: the HM reported that three tenders for providing the test had been submitted. Trustee asked if all schools in the Gloucestershire Grammar Schools G7 group would have an equal say in the decision. The HM said that all schools would have to approve the final decision. Anthony Gilbert said that Stroud High School had informed parents that it was considering an additional assessment for students talented in music and art. Lynsey Pollard withdrew from the meeting. Ahmed Goga rejoined the meeting. Trustee asked if the stronger emphasis on inclusion in the new Ofsted inspection framework would impact the decision on test provider. The HM said it would not specifically, although the G7 group would address inclusion and equality issues in making the decision and continue its other outreach work.	**NCD, Clerk**
8.	**Key Performance Indicators (paper 5)** Trustees noted the report.	

10.	**Policies for approval:** a) Careers Education and Guidance Policy (paper 7) - APPROVED b) First Aid Policy (paper 8) - APPROVED c) Policies reviewed and approved in Term 3 (paper 18): noted by the Board.	
12.	**Policy delegations (paper 10)** Trustees APPROVED the new delegations for approval of policies set out in paper 10. Lynsey Pollard rejoined the meeting.	
13.	**Report of Trustee review on SLT and governance values and culture and management response (paper 11)** Ahmed Goga (AG) presented his report. He said: • the young people he had met as part of the review were a testament to the School. • Co-education was now fully embedded and not even considered as an issue for discussion by students • Inclusion work reported by the Student Governors had also been raised by the students in this review. The School was in a healthy place, but should not be complacent • Sustaining excellence, and translating the aspirations of Governors and senior leaders into objectives for all staff, was a continuing challenge. Some staff were unaware that the Board had set an ambition for at least 50% of the school intake to be from the city of Gloucester. Trustee said that they were not aware of this aspiration. The HM said that the School wanted to be Gloucester's grammar school; the school had increased its overall intake over the last decade, but the percentage of the intake coming from Gloucester had declined. All the grammar schools were competing for a limited number of local children and there was no longer a realistic chance of getting back to 50%. Trustee asked how Crypt's intake compared to the other grammar schools. The HM said that Ribston had the highest intake from Gloucester; Crypt's intake from Gloucester had declined but was still one of the strongest. Pates had reached levels of some 65-70% of students coming from out of county. Trustee asked about the rationale for the 50% target. The HM said it was rooted in the original founders' goals and the School's history; it also supported the School's wish to contribute to the city and promote social mobility. It could also help to protect the School against future challenge as a grammar. The HM thanked Ahmed Goga for his report and said SLT was reviewing how to respond to each of the recommendations. AG said that Governors should also consider how visible their work was to staff, which was essential for the School to move forward as a community.	

14.	**Committee reports:** **a. Resources, Staff & Pay (paper 12)** **b. Pupil Education and Outcomes (met 4/2/26):** **c. Admissions (no meeting)**	

	d. Audit (paper 13). The Board noted the reports from committees.	
15.	**Risk Register (paper 14)** **The Board reviewed items on the risk register as follows:** 1.6 (ineffective Board structure and operation): committee structure had been recently changed and would be reviewed in October. No change, review in October. 5.3 (information security risk): no change, review again in October. 5.5 (major infrastructure failure) – no change. 5.6 (contractor failure) – no change.	
16.	**Safeguarding report (paper 15)** The Chair noted that the Pupil Education & Outcomes Committee had reviewed this report in detail at its meeting last week. Trustee asked about capacity constraints in the SEND team; the HM said that staff hours might need to be increased. Trustee asked if the School was satisfied that the incidents of food theft were not needs-driven; the HM said it was.	
17.	**Stakeholder surveys: update on planned surveys** The HM said the parental survey was currently out for response and that a pupil survey would take place in Term 4. SLT culture surveys were out for response by teaching and support staff.	
9.	**Artificial Intelligence (AI) (paper 6)** The Board noted the update on how AI was being used in school. The Chair invited Trustees to submit any points they wished to raise for consideration at a future meeting.	
19.	**Date of next meeting:** Full Board Meeting Monday 23rd March 2026, 4pm, The Crypt School	

Signed:

Date: