

COTHAM SCHOOL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body

Thursday 10 July 2025, 5pm, Room: K102

Governors Present: Jo Butler (Headteacher), Accounting Officer Sandra Fryer (Chair of Governors), CG Dora Alderson (DA), MG Graham Nutbrown (GN), CG Isabel Tobias (IT), MG Henna Nathwani (HN), CG			Jack Barber (JB), CG Jared Rufus (JR), CG Paula Bradshaw (PB), MG Tom Corrigan (TC), CG Rachel Jewell (RJ), CG Sophie Hamilton (SH), PG Lucy Hunt (LH), MG
In Attendance (non-voting) Chris Reed (CR), Senior Deputy Headteacher Allison Crossland, Director of Finance&Resources (DoFR) Owen Morgan (OM), Deputy Headteacher Aimi Potter (AP), Director of Post 16 Domini Leong (DL), Deputy Headteacher Gosia Dreissig, Compliance, Information & Governance Officer (CIGO)	Apologies: Ian Spencer (IS), CG Richard Puttick (RP), PG Rebecca Reid (RR), PG Susanne Lettau (SL), PG Ruth Thomas (RT), PG Absent: Jakub Wilczewski (JW), CG	Quorum required: 4 Governors present: 13 Key: MG = Member Appointed Governor CG = Co-opted Governor PG = Parent Governor Q: Governor support, questions, and challenge A: Responses	

No.	Subject	Who	By when
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies. Items for AOB, Declarations of interest The chair welcomed everyone and introduced a new governor, Member Appointed - Paula Bradshaw. Apologies received from: RT, RR, RP, SL and IS. The chair noted AoB: Resignation notice from JB. No declarations of interest. The chair reminded everyone to check their Declarations of Interest on the school website and Governor Hub for accuracy. The meeting was quorate.		
2.	Minutes of Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2025 were confirmed as a true and accurate record and <u>approved</u> by the Board.		
3.	Matters Arising and Actions of Last Meeting (3 April 2025) The Summary of Actions was reviewed - please see the Summary of Action on page 7.		

4.	Headteacher's report The Headteacher provided a report on progress towards the KPIs set at the start of the year. The report highlighted mixed progress, with some areas meeting targets and others partially met. Areas of improvement included behaviour, teaching and learning, and curriculum implementation. Challenges in meeting KPIs were discussed, with a focus on ongoing projects and the need for continued focus on curriculum and assessment. DL discussed the challenges of setting meaningful and ambitious KPIs. The impact of external factors on KPIs, such as council support and off-site directions was highlighted. Discussion around the use of codified language in teaching and learning and its impact on curriculum assessment. The need for consistent implementation of teaching and learning strategies across the school was emphasised. Q: There are several references to Claire Price, School Improvement Partner. Please explain her role. A: Claire is working on a consultancy basis for the school to provide an external eye on what the school is doing. Claire has been a teacher at a number of schools and an HMI for Ofsted. Claire has been brought to provide a bit more challenge and to sharpen the school focus, and she did the school audit. The Chair thanked the Headteacher for the report, and the information shared in the Weekly Mailing, especially the recordings. <i>DFR joined the meeting at 17:21</i>		
5.	Approval of the Three Year Budget PB started with a huge thanks to DFR, DDFR the team for all their hard work during a particularly challenging year, which included key staff changes, a new finance system and the Stoke Lodge court case. PB pointed out that the final draft of the budget is based on the agreed revision of class groups, pupil numbers and staff headcount. It also includes the latest assumptions of income, costs and staff moves. The budget now balances over the three years and reports a surplus. The FP&GP committee approved the budget and are bringing it to FGB for final approval before submission to the DfE. DFR pointed out that the budget was balanced with a surplus of £273,000 for 2025-2026, £150,400 for 2026-2027, and a small deficit for 2027-2028. The budget includes assumptions on income, costs, and staff needs. The surplus is attributed to strategic planning and the impact of government funding.		

	PB thanked the finance, premises, CR and particularly DFR for all their outstanding work on this budget, in a very challenging landscape this year. <u>Governors approved the final draft of the Three Year Budget.</u>		
6.	Approval of the Management Accounts PB presented a summary of the Management Accounts for March, April and May as discussed and approved by FP&GP and Chair of Governors. DFR pointed out that the accounts show a surplus of £260,464 for the current year. Highlights include increased cover costs, recruitment of a new cover supervisor, and high energy costs. The budget for extension catering was discussed, with an emphasis on the increase in Free School Meals. <u>Governors approved the Management Accounts.</u>		
13.3.	Committee Chairs Updates and Minutes: Finance, Premises & General Purposes ● Spending approvals to note ○ Following the earlier asbestos report, FP&GP approved the appointment of a company to complete the recommended works at £34k. The works will take place over the summer break. ○ Approved funds to complete the installation of CCTV cameras on the main field. There are currently no cameras covering this area of the school, and it is considered a safeguarding risk. The original budget of £50k has been revised down to £39k and approved at committee. ● Other premises items to note ○ The school has been awarded Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) funding to repair the roof. This is great news and well done to DDFR and the team for securing this. Unfortunately due to delays by the DfE in processing the award, it is highly unlikely the work will begin as hoped during the summer, and maybe delayed for some time. There is a risk the school will have to requote for the works, which may result in increased costs.		
7.	Approval of the RISK Register DFR discussed the Risk Register, which includes top risks such as cyber attacks and national security. The Risk Register will be updated to focus on the most relevant risks for the school. All together there are 54 risks identified.		

	<u>Governors approved the Risk Register.</u>		
8.	Cotham Playing Fields, Stoke Lodge update • High Court Update • Getting back to using the playing fields • Funding • Communications The Chair provided an update on the playing fields at Stoke Lodge, including the recent court victory and ongoing negotiations with the City Council. A working group is proposed to support the school in mobilising the playing fields and addressing community concerns. DoFR confirmed the first meeting of this working party will take place next week on Thursday. The Chair has recommended concentrating on short-term actions in regards to mobilising the playing fields.		
9.	Trip approval: • Battlefields Trip: Thursday 18 June – Friday 19 June 2026 <u>Governors approved the trip in principle, pending an updated report being provided from the Trip Leader.</u>		
10.	Verifying your identity for Companies House - an update from Company Secretary DFR and CIGO provided an update on the requirements to verify identity for Companies House, including the process and timeline. Action: to complete the identity verification process for Companies House and send the code to CIGO.	Governors	by the first FGB in Sept 2025
BREAK 6:45 - 7:00			
11	Feedback from Governors' Conference - Strategic planning, key tasks ahead Governors discussed feedback from the Governors' conference, emphasising the need for strategic planning and budget setting. Governors appreciated the general trends discussed but noted a lack of specific guidance. Governors's feedback included: • The usefulness of understanding the broader city challenges and the support from local organisations		

	- Challenges in inviting external speakers and the importance of the bigger picture - Conference was informative, but depressing due to the large issues facing the community - Understanding the impact of broader issues on the students and the strategic role of governors - Including anonymised case studies to provide a real sense of students' daily challenges. - Timings of strategic discussions and the needs for a signed-off strategic document. Suggestions that the timings of the meeting should inform policy decisions - The need for governors to understand the bigger picture and their role in providing input into the school strategy. The Governors' Conference was tentatively scheduled for the week commencing 24 November 2025. DL invited governors to join the region's first Racial Equity Network Dinner hosted by the school on 22 November - details to follow. Action: To revisit the timings for the strategic discussion and invite the School Improvement Partner to contribute. Action: To arrange an initial discussion about strategic priorities, specifically around partnerships and corporate engagement, in preparation for the upcoming Governors' Conference.	Chair Chair/IT/RJ	At the First FGB in Sep 25 Over the summer break
12	Governance The Chair discussed the need to recruit new governors and the possibility of advertising on the City Council Governor's list. The Chair highlighted the fact of having a strong and highly skilled governing body at the moment. The Chair proposed a change to the current Full Governing Board (FGB) meeting schedule, moving meetings to either Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday, in order to better accommodate governors' availability and enhance attendance. Action: To send out a poll to governors to gauge preferences on the FGB meetings days - Monday, Tuesday or Thursday. <u>The Governors Meeting Planner was agreed in principle, pending the poll results to accommodate the updated FGB meetings day.</u> Action: To set up the Remuneration Committee at the next FGB in September 25.	CIGO Chair/ Governors	By 14 Jul 2025 At the next FGB
13	Committee Chairs Updates and Minutes <i>AP arrived at 18:50</i>		

	<u>13.1 Learning & Wellbeing</u> - reported back to governors by GN. Learning focused meeting on 29 April: • Acknowledgment of Peter Huckle's work as the committee chair for a couple of years • Update on Year 11 mock exams • Update on Year 13 mock results • Acknowledgment of an additional hard work teachers do after mock exams • KS3 progress • The presentation of data to governors was absolutely exemplary • Update on reading, oracy and EAL provision and practices • The Governors' visit report on the STRIDE event. Wellbeing focused meeting on 10 June: • GN was elected a chair • Review and approval of the Online Safety Policy • Introduction of an Online Safety Newsletter for parents and careers • Report on attendance and punctuality, including the impact of students traveling long distances to school • Updates on the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), safeguarding and behaviour • Promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development • Update on home learning. <u>13.2 Personnel & Training</u> - reported back to governors by IT Main points included: • Highlighting the busy HR function and the importance of the staff leaving survey • Approval of the new format for the staffing report and the need for the governors recruitment process to meet the safer recruitment policy • Wellbeing policy review report • Importance of staff CPD, including a session on dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace • Update on the new governors induction project • Approval of the new format for link governor's report. <u>13.3 Finance, Premises & General Purposes</u> <i>Discussed earlier after item 6.</i>		
14	Letter to Accounting Officer in academy trusts: 25 June 2025 The link to the letter was shared with the governor prior to the meeting.		

	The letter reminds governors about the new Academy Trust Handbook changes that will come into effect from 1 September 2025. Discussion around the new Academy Trust Handbook and its implications for governors' recruitment, especially clarification around whether employees can be trustees. Action: Review the new Academy Trust Handbook and implications for governors' recruitment.	All	By the next FGB in Sep
15	AoB - Resignation notice from JB was noted. The Chair thanked JB for his contributions. - The Chair acknowledged the hard work of the SLT and governors. - The Chair expressed gratitude to the Headteacher and DoFR for their efforts in managing the High Court case. - Chair thanked DL for her nine years of service and contribution to the school.		

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 19:51.

Summary of Actions

No	Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline
10	To complete the identity verification process for Companies House and send the code to CIGO.	10 July 2025	Governors	24 Oct 2025
11	11.1 To revisit the timings for the strategic discussion and invite the School Improvement Partner to contribute. 11.2 To arrange an initial discussion about strategic priorities, specifically around partnerships and corporate engagement, in preparation for the upcoming Governors' Conference.	10 July 2025	Chair Chair/IT/RJ	13 Oct 2025 Ongoing
12	12.1 To send out a poll to governors to gauge preferences on the FGB meetings days - Monday, Tuesday or Thursday. 12.2 To set up the Remuneration Committee	10 July 2025	CIGO Chair	Completed 13 Oct 2025
14	Review the new Academy Trust Handbook and implications for governors' recruitment.	10 July 2025	All	Completed

No	Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline
3	3.4 To set up a remuneration Committee with membership determined at the Annual General Meeting.	3 April 2025	Chair	13 Oct 2025
6	6.3 To redesign the staff survey questions to avoid portmanteau questions.	3 April 2025	DA&RT	By the Term 2 of 2025/26
7	7.2 To prepare Report and Action Log for Permanent Exclusions.	3 April 2025	CIGO	Completed
	7.4 To set up a standing committee to handle complaints, disciplinaries, and exclusions.		Chair	24 Oct 2025

Approved as correct by the Board on 22 September 2025.