



Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting – Part A
Held on 1st October & 22nd October 2025 at 5.30pm
At The John Fisher School

		1.10.25	22.10.25
Mr A Theobald (AT)	Foundation Governor - Chair	Present	Present
Ms G Grabowski (GG)	Foundation Governor – Vice Chair	Present	Present
Mr D Fox (DF)	Chair	Present	Present
Mr P Hall (PH)	Foundation Governor	Present	Present
Mr N McEvilly (NM)	Staff Governor	Absent	Present
Dr A McGowan (AM)	Foundation Governor	Present	Present
Father F Murphy (FFM)	Foundation Governor	Present	Present
Dr T Newman Sanders (TNS)	Foundation Governor	Absent	Absent
Mr A Tierney (ATi)	Foundation Governor	Present	Absent
Mrs J Cole (JC)	Foundation Governor	Present	Present
Mrs N Walsh (NW)	Parent Governor	Present	Present
Ms S Nasser (SN)	Parent Governor	Absent	Absent
Mr T Richmond (TR)	LA Governor	Present	Absent
Mr R Teague (RT)	Co-opted Governor	Present	Present
	Headteacher and Ex-Officio		

Attendees (non-voting) Mr P Bennett (PB) – Deputy Headteacher
Mrs S Lovelock (SL) – Deputy Headteacher
Mr Duncan Ponikwer (DP) – John Fisher Old Boys’ Association (Item 3)
Mr Brendan Hessian (BH) – John Fisher Old Boys’ Association (Item 3)
Mrs J Beeson (JB) - CEP Governance Clerk

	Minutes 1.10.25	
	Welcome and Opening The Chair welcomed the two members of the John Fisher Old Boys’ Association to the meeting. It was agreed that due to the Catholic Schools Inspection to take place on Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd, that this meeting would deal with items 1, 2, 3 and 10. The rest of the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday 22nd October to allow RT and PB to prepare for the inspection. RT opened the meeting with a prayer.	
1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received on 1.10.25 from TNS, SN, NM which were accepted. Apologies were received on 22.10.25 from TR, SN,TNS, ATi which were accepted The meetings were confirmed to be quorate. There were no declarations of interest raised in respect of any agenda item.	
2.	Election of Chair and Vice Chair The clerk advised that AT and GG had indicated their willingness to re-stand as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively, she had received no other nominations by email. There were no other nominations at	



	the meeting. ATi seconded the nomination of AT and GG who were elected unanimously.	
3.	Presentation by Alumni regarding investment in the school <i>(The draft discussion paper 'Proposed Raison d'Etre of the Current Association and its Future Planning' from the John Fisher Old Boys Association – JFOBA - had been distributed previously by email).</i> Duncan Ponikwer (DP) and Brendan Hessian (BH) gave a brief outline of their links with the school. DP as a former pupil, governor, member and trustee of JFOBA and BH as a former pupil, current parent and board member of JFOBA. DP gave a presentation (including a PowerPoint presentation which will be distributed afterwards to governors) of JFOBA outlining what their relationship with the school continues to be and which they hope to expand with greater links within the structure of the organisation, with the purpose 'to be a thriving, lifelong community of Alumni that empowers current students, supports school development, and celebrates the enduring legacy of the John Fisher School through mentorship, fundraising, and community engagement'. He said they were passionate about the school and the ongoing relationship of the John Fisher family, seeing themselves as one of the three pillars supporting the school. This remained an important ethos to encourage and support Catholic children continuing to come to the school. He examined the question of 'Why now?' including the discussion currently underway to rename JFOBA to be more inclusive and attract younger former pupils when they leave at 16 and 18 to see this as relevant to them. He gave details of their great sporting and pavilion facilities at Warlingham and Old Coulsdon and the plans to appoint a paid official to manage these. They will launch a membership drive using a social media campaign to increase their numbers for a greater legacy with the former pupils as an opportunity to stay connected and part of the community and John Fisher family. They plan to create a digital common room as a database where everyone will have access to what projects are being considered, events, the career opportunities, mentoring, professional development. To establish a 'Fisher for Life' identity which continues beyond the years as a pupil. JFOBA offer the school a partner in success. What next? DP asked for the school to consider providing dedicated points of contact to coordinate and liaise between the school and JFOBA to establish a shared road map with specific goals. There will be short term wins and a unified events calendar. They hope to be a voice at the table representing the JFOBA on the board of governors, to give transparency. The Chair thanked them for presenting to the governors and said he would circulate the slides. A governor asked if parents and governors would also be able to use the facilities? Another governor asked if other old boys would be able to tap into the wider JF family? She asked whether in addition to the sports options, there was also the wish to support the inclusive elements of arts and music? DP agreed that the plan was still in draft form and very aspirational with the aim to talk about the arts too. A governor asked what was the membership cost?	



DP said for the boys at the point of leaving school or university the plan was for it to be free, but they did have to cover the costs e.g. of the paid administrator, so probably it would be around £20 per annum.

A governor asked if JFOBA will consider capital works to the school itself being considered by governors in terms of supporting a feasibility study to take to the diocese. This would be helpful as they would be spending a lot of money.

DP referenced a former pupil who might be able to consider looking at creating a feasibility study, as JFOBA's aim was to use their resources to support rather than just paying for projects.

A governor said there appeared to be several Old Boys' groups and whether this will now combine them all?

DP confirmed it was just one entity with the various sporting clubs run through the JFOBA. It has a committee of 12 members.

A governor asked how many members there currently were?

DP said it was c1000.

The staff governor asked if there might be careers options available through the Association for the current boys and if there might be former pupils to come into school to speak to the boys about different careers.

DP referred back to the career guidance and mentoring in the pack.

A governor asked if there might be the option for mentoring support at a younger level in the school and how did JFOBA plan to reach these boys?

DP said the social media campaign was designed to engage with men who have left the school, but it's also through word-of-mouth that people tended to contact them. They hope the portal will have opportunities and be a central hub. Their next steps are to appoint someone to coordinate everything.

The Chair thanked them both. *(DP & BH left the meeting at 6.20pm)*

The Chair asked RT whether he wanted to add anything?

RT commented that in general the school is keen to collaborate with JFOBA, it is an untapped resource and they need to work out the details.

The Chair asked RT if he wanted to update the governors with anything relating to the Catholic Schools Inspection?

RT clarified that there was a schedule in place for the next 2 days. He gave details of who the inspectors were.



	The Chair explained to the governors that he and GG will meet with the lead inspector, as will FFM on Friday. There will be a feedback session for them on Friday afternoon and the results are given straightaway followed by the report in due course. (RT left the meeting at 6.30pm)	
10.	Safeguarding YE carried out a safeguarding CPD session for governors.	
	The meeting adjourned to be concluded on Wednesday 22nd October 2025	
	Minutes 22.10.25	
	The meeting opened with a prayer.	
4.	Governing Board Business	
4.1	Staff and parent governor elections – there were none outstanding.	
4.2	DBS up to date – RT confirmed this was the case.	
4.3	Governance information on the website – AT confirmed he had checked this himself and it was all current and correct.	
4.4	Governors' compliance documentation (Code of Conduct, pecuniary interests, contact information) – The Chair reminded governors there were still outstanding documentation and asked them to act on this promptly – ACTION.	1.
4.5	Terms of office – The Chair advised that during this academic year cycle there were 3 Foundation governors' terms of office due for renewal – himself, ATi and NM. A governor asked whether Mary Ryan's position would be refilled? The Chair advised this would be via the diocese as MR had been a Foundation governor.	
4.6	Link governor roles/responsibilities – The Chair had emailed a proposed outline of a simplification of the previous system to make the roles more generic and inclusive. The details were:- • Catholicity, Equality & Diversity – DF & FFM • Academic standards/teaching and learning Pastoral (Including oversight of exclusions) - AT, GG, SN, AMc, TNS • SEND and Inclusion – TR • Safeguarding and attendance – JC • Premises, Health and Safety – NM & ATi. • CPD and Careers – NW A governor commented that it would also make sense to have deputies for each of the single roles as part of succession planning. She also felt that inclusion ought to be a separate role. The Chair asked governors to look at the Ofsted framework for the requirements under each of these headings and indicate their agreement with the role allocated or volunteer for additional/ alternative roles and to be deputies. He asked them to read the email sent and respond to him in the next few days and he will then recirculate the list – ACTIONS.	2A 2B



4.7	Membership of committees and Chairs of committees – AT asked the governors if any wished to change the committee(s) they had been on in 24/25? None of the governors expressed a wish to change. He asked if the governors were happy with the Chairs of each committee? All of the governors confirmed they were happy with the existing committees' Chairs. AT confirmed this would be:- • Teaching, Learning and Standards – GG with SN as deputy. • Resources – NM and ATi as joint Chairs. • Admissions – SN. Mary Ryan had been joint Chair with SN, so asked for any of the governors to volunteer for this role as it made sense for a Catholic to be joint Chair on this committee – ACTION. A governor asked if RE should be split out or would sit within Catholic Life? The Chair asked everyone to think about the categorisations and email him their comments (Action 2A).	3.
4.8	Chair's action – 2 days after the meeting on 1.10.25, there had been problems with the bank over signatories for the new and old SLT members being added/removed. The bank had required specific wording to confirm this was a resolution of the governing body. He asked the governors to approve the letter sent to bank relating to the changes. DECISION – The governors approved the Chair's action with regard to the bank signatories.	
5	Minutes of the meeting of 9th July 2025 The Chair said he was taking the minutes as read, there were no further questions or comments. DECISION: Governors agreed that the Part A and B minutes of the meeting held on 9.7.25 were a true and accurate record of the meeting. <u>Update on Actions:-</u> 5.1 24/25 – 1: carried forward as both TNS and SN were not present at the meeting. 5.2 2 – carried forward. 5.3 3 – carried forward – Part B minutes Other outstanding actions – completed.	
6.	Results 6.1 RT distributed a report – already presented to the recent TL&S committee – which gave an overview of GCSE attainment and progress. He summarised that they were very pleased with these results. The Progress 8 (P8) score was calculated from CATs rather than KS2 data due to this cohort being in Y6 in 2020 when SATs were cancelled due to Covid. This has a different methodology but remains significant in that the pool of schools are similar because they are taken from the FFT. In percentiles, the school's overall P8 was in the 53rd percentile in 2023 and has since moved to the 28th and now the 19th. A governor asked what the 'EM' column represented?	



	RT confirmed this was the variance of the percentage of students at grade 4 or above in English and Maths from what is expected. The summary of subjects again shows the variance in the last column of the chart. The details around the Food Tech and RE results were discussed in full at the recent TL&S committee. In the subject comparison, on average students are achieving half a grade higher. There were very strong results in Chemistry as across all the sciences, together with Spanish and French.	
6.2	A governor asked if they had got to the bottom of the issue surrounding the History exam discussed at TL&S? PB advised that they had researched this and identified that it was notified to the exam board at the time relating to one of the papers, allowance was made for those students. He added that the exam officers had now put in place a watertight process for colour copying the papers.	
6.3	KS5/A level overview of the results and progress comparisons from 2023 to 2025. RT highlighted that the 24 and 25 results were almost identical despite the boys being very different if looking at them through their comparative GCSE results which for the 2024 boys were about 1 grade higher. The school had been expecting a dip but this had only happened in the A/A* grades. In grades B and above the 2025 cohort did better. This reflects the work done by Danny Jackson (Head of 6th Form) and the teachers. The increase in value added score over 2 years was nearly 1.4 grades per A level. A governor commented that whilst this was positive, it was possibly worrying that they had not known this would be the outcome. RT said it was due to being cautious around predictions. The projections became more positive as time went on across the year and DJ was getting more optimistic, but this was always being tempered by caution. The results nonetheless exceeded their expectations. A governor reminded other governors that last year the governing body had asked the school to focus on more accurate predictions, which they had done.	
6.4	RT also reminded governors that the school is competing with other schools which are taking in cohorts with higher prior attainment. The current Y13 are likely to do a lot better in raw results and this is the factor which tends to market the 6th form as that is what parents and students focus on. A governor asked how the school communicates this outside of JF? She commented that other schools appear to celebrate e.g. banners outside with the headlines of success. She felt that JF should look to do this more. RT said it was easier to communicate this sort of information on occasions such as open day when it can be framed in terms of improvement. They need the results regardless of value added. SL suggested that they plan to use social media more both for staff and students. RT said that Kirsty Butterworth is working on this with the X and Instagram accounts. A governor suggested on results day, a lot of schools do massive social media work. RT commented they were the best improved in Southwark diocese, but agreed they know they need to do more marketing. A governor who works in higher education said they are using Google Reviews as they have found this is where prospective students are looking rather than on the individual websites. She said they were also promoting staff performance to add to the bigger picture.	



6.5	A governor asked if the results data had thrown up any surprises for them? RT said he had been pleasantly surprised by the headlines, but the subject data held no huge shocks, but there was some very strong value added.	
6.6	A governor asked if there would be any changes to the subjects offered? RT said this was not yet finally decided but the plan is to stick with the same ones currently offered at both KS4 and 5. They had kept the strong BTEC pathway and anticipate the changes made in Y10 and Y12 this year will translate through. There are no plans to reduce further. A governor asked if French would be added back in? RT said they would love to and also music, but the numbers had to be there. They had introduced Law with the aim of retaining 6th formers and this seems to have had that effect as it is the third most popular subject. They have kept many 6th formers who would otherwise likely have gone elsewhere.	
6.7	A governor asked where they were with regard to phasing out BTEC and EBacc? RT said they will not be able to say until they have heard the final government view, also regarding the proposed V Levels, so they are waiting on the guidance being published.	
6.8	A governor asked about the results in GCSE computing, and whether the school was surprised they have gone down both at GCSE and A level? RT clarified that Computing GCSE had seen a dip in students at grade 4 but increase at grade 7. This is a tough GCSE where the range of skills required is wide and, whilst adept in certain aspects, students do not always have the full range. It often attracts students who misunderstand what is involved which is why the school's greater focus on guidance and advice for choosing the right courses will help.	
7.	CSED The Chair advised that the inspection had taken place this month but the report has not yet been published. They will update the board at the next meeting - ACTION.	4.
8.	Admissions 8.1 The Chair advised that at the recent Admissions Committee they had reviewed the Admissions Policy 2027 regarding the clause regarding siblings in category B (non Catholics). He explained that as part of an appeal this year where this had been the relevant factor, it was felt there was a contradiction in that for Catholic pupils any sibling applicant would be weighted ahead of an applicant with no sibling in the event of oversubscription. Therefore it had been agreed that this category would also place a sibling as a higher weighted criterion. 8.2 A governor commented that as a result of his work with another school, the diocese had advised that if the percentage of Catholics is below 70% they can remove the 'practising' criterion. It had indicated that in the schools where this was implemented that the number of Catholics had risen. RT said that at JF they have retained the Certificate of Catholic practice requirement. The Chair advised that this was because it gives a better idea of how many are actually practising Catholics.	



8.3	A governor said it was the Bishop's wish in the Arundel and Brighton diocese to drop 'practising' and that they had found it increased the number of Catholics. She asked what was the current percentage at JF? RT said he did not have those exact numbers, however the pattern in the school was high in Y10 and above, Y9 is the lowest, Y8 is higher and Y7 higher again. A governor asked how the Y7 numbers for 2026 are looking? RT said it was as yet too early to say because they were unsure of first choices. The Chair advised that they had set Saturday 22nd November as categorisation day and asked governors for their availability. He said Kirsty had sent out an email to assess how many could come.	
9.	Policies for ratification	
9.1	Governors' Visits Policy – The Chair said he was indebted to GG for her work preparing this taking the model policy from The Key. The draft had only been sent late yesterday, so asked governors to look at it to be brought to the FGB in December – ACTION.	5.
9.2	A governor advised that another school where he is a governor, they had been advised to implement a Menopause Policy as a legal requirement. The Chair asked RT to add this to the list of those to be prepared – ACTION.	6.
10.	Safeguarding	
	DM had been unable to attend the meeting to present his report, therefore the Chair asked RT to request DM to email it to governors in due course this week – ACTION.	7.
11.	AOB	
11.1	A governor asked RT about the matter which had been previously discussed regarding a 2 week half term in October as a lot of Sutton schools are doing. RT advised that St Philomena's and JF are the only senior schools not doing so. However the others are all academies. SL added that this is also a childcare issue for staff and present logistical issues when the primary schools are also doing it. She said it was also a factor for parents considering the school if it was out of synch with their other children. The Chair proposed this was a specific agenda item and asked RT to do a paper to go to the next TL&S committee and to FGB in December if approved by that committee – ACTION.	8.
11.2	A governor asked about the other holiday days for 26-27 to be approved?	
11.3	RT said he would send out the holiday days for next year – ACTION. RT advised governors regarding the health of a particular student.	9.
11.4	The Chair pointed out to governors a letter which he had distributed previously by email to them from the LA sending congratulations on the exam results. He said he felt this was indicative of the positive relationship with the LA and that they recognised the progress being made in the school.	



	FGB Meeting dates in the 2025/26 academic year - Wednesday 3rd December 2025 @ 5.30pm - Tuesday 24th March 2026 @ 5.30pm - Wednesday 8th July 2026 @ 5.30pm	
	Closure of Meeting The Chair thanked governors for their attendance. FFM closed the meeting with a prayer. The meeting was closed at 7pm by the Chair.	

Actions 2025 - 2026

No.	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of 1st and 22nd October 2025					
1.	Governors reminded to send in their outstanding compliance documentation.	All	a.s.a.p.		Open
2A.	Governors to email AT with their thoughts on link governor role allocations and deputies.	All	a.s.a.p.		Open
2B.	AT to resend the final list of link governor/deputy allocations.	AT	After 2A		Open
3.	Governor to volunteer for joint Chair of the Admissions committee.	All	a.s.a.p.		Open
4.	CSI report feedback.	Chair/RT	3.12.25		Open
5.	Governors' Visits Policy – governors to read over draft sent by email 21.10.25	All	3.12.25		Open
6.	Menopause Policy to be drafted.	RT	3.12.25		Open
7.	RT to request DM emails his Safeguarding report to all governors in due course this week.	RT / DM	a.s.a.p.		Open
8.	RT to present paper to TL&S as an agenda item in November about a 2 week half term in October.	RT / GG	26.11.25		Open
9.	RT to send out the holiday dates for 26/27.	RT	a.s.a.p.		Open

Outstanding Actions 2024 - 2025

No.	Action	For	Date	Comments	Status
Meeting of 18th September 2024					
1.	TNS to review the EDI Policy in liaison with SN	TNS / SN	Nov mtg	c/f 28.11.24 / 9.7.25 / 22.10.25	Open
2.	MAT presentations for mid 2025	AT / RT	2025/tbc	Autumn term 25	Open
Meeting of 9th July 2025					
3.	Parent and staff consultation regarding change to the 6 th form uniform to be held.	RT / DJ	Prior 3.12.25 to	c/f 22.10.25	Open

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Date: _____