

Message from Chair of Governors

The Governors have spent much of the past year working alongside the school as a critical friend, a support and having oversight of the finances. We do this through 3 committees, Education, Personnel and Finance, and then various individual visits and meetings with staff and students. I also hope you have valued the newsletter we send out three times a year to update you upon aspects of governance. We welcomed several new governors this year and look forward to all of them really embedding in the school next year.

To all our fellow governors, who are volunteers, and many still working full time, who give of their time so very generously, we thank them for all the work this year.

Norton Knatchbull has not stood still. For example, the Glass House and Cricket Pavilion upgraded and paid for by the Geoff Petts legacy. Those of you that attended the cricket on Saturday 1st July will know that Prof. Geoffrey Petts attended Ashford Grammar School from 1964-1971. Geoff studied Physical Geography and Geology at Liverpool University, before gaining his PhD at Exeter University. Geoff went on to have an outstanding career as a Physical Geographer in various universities. Geoff was also a life-long sportsman and was an avid cricket and hockey player at school, university and after. He was President of Tenterden Cricket Club from 2012 until his death in 2018, where he hosted several Old Ashfordians at President's Day in Cricket Week.

In October we had a two-day Ofsted visit which resulted in the school remaining GOOD with many very good statements about the school, but it did lead to the work of reviewing the school curriculum, the outcome of which will be evident soon. The Governors would like to thank all the Leadership team and the staff for the time spent on this process.

We have started a programme of upgrading science rooms and are currently planning to revamp the school loos during the summer. In fact, the summer holidays will be a busy time for the site staff, as well as the upgrade to facilities we will also be installing an array of solar panels and air source heat pumps, as we move the school towards a greener future.

Much of the school will also be fitted with new fire doors, and the Music Room will be updated with new floors, ceilings and windows making it as good as new. We know that Ofsted will be returning in 2024 and we will be ready for them!

Finally following a year of Co-Chairing, Andrew Judd has decided, due to increased work commitments, to stand down as co-Chair. Andrew will continue to work with me as Vice Chair so that we have some continuity of governance when the Ofsted inspectors return. The board thank him for his superb commitment to the school this year.

Jane Burnett
Chair of Governors

Governor Updates

Carol Parsons

At the last meeting of the year we welcomed Carol Parsons to the board.

Carol was a teacher, advisor and headteacher for twelve years in London before moving to West Sussex providing advice and support to headteachers and governing bodies. After which she moved to Kent where she held several senior posts, the last as Director, Standards & Achievement. She shared responsibility for the strategic development of services for children and young people across the county and also had direct responsibility for securing successful outcomes in relation to the national standards agenda, through the leadership of advisory services to approximately 700 early-years settings and over 500 primary and secondary schools.

Carol has undertaken wide-ranging professional development in Europe and the United States, studying education systems, schools of the future and school design; vocational education and the leadership of schools.

On her retirement Carol was appointed as a Schools Adjudicator working with eight colleagues, in maintained schools across England. Where agreement could not be reached or where formal objections had been made it was their role to mediate between parents, local authorities, academy chains, diocesan authorities, and governing bodies in relation to admissions or school organisation.

Carol will join us in the first instance on the Education Committee and the Full Governing Body.

James Dearden

James joined us in March 2023 and is an active member of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

James has also taken on the role of Link Governor for Student Voice and recently completed a visit with Richard Hoyte to see how the school approaches Diversity and Inclusion.

James will be taking up the post of Vice Chair on the Finance Committee and the Link Governor role for Health & Safety from September.

Natalie Pearce

Sadly Natalie will be leaving us due to increased work commitments. Natalie worked with Richard Scarr on the Bronze and Silver awards and is a champion for staff wellbeing.

Natalie also made an impact as Health & Safety Link governor, where she worked closely with Pat Aird in setting up the Health & Safety Committee.

We wish Natalie the very best and thank her for all her work with the Board and the School.