MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HEATHCOTE SECONDARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2025 6:30PM AT THE SCHOOL

Present:	Lauren Marchant, Chair Maria Slavovski	Co-opted Governors
	Sonia Close, HT	Headteacher
	Sharon Morgan	Local Authority Governor
	Leonie Alderman Claire Feiner	Parent Governors
	Andre Henry	Staff Governor

Clerk to the Governors: Angela Lenton

Summary of agreements and actions:

Minute reference	Formal agreements and/or actions identified	Named person(s) for action(s) identified	Completion date
4.1	**Agreed:** Three governor applications agreed unanimously for roles of Co-opted Governors	-	-
4.2	**Action:** Send potential candidate's information for consideration to meet and discuss a potential role as a Co-Opted Governor. **Action:** Send a letter to all parents inviting them to apply to become a parent governor **Action:** Review Maria's membership and potential move to Parent Governor	Helen Sonia All	Immediate Immediate 11/3/2026
5.2	**Action:** Governor Services to send a thank you letter to James for his hard work and support in the role of governor. **Action:** Complete Governors Induction Training **Action:** Governor Services to clarify if training regarding SIP and role of governors is available and if so, provide details	Governor Services Sharon Governor Services	Immediate 11/3/2026 Immediate

Chair's Initials:

9.1	**Agreed:(subject to new governor's approval):** Resources committee - Leonie, Sharon, Gavin and Amber Quality of Education – Andre, Helen and Lauren BAPD – Claire, Maria, Ernest **Agreed:** Maria safeguarding link **Action:** Single Central Record to be checked before the end of term	- - Sharon & Sonia	- - By end of Autumn Term
10.1	**Agreed**: Critical Incident Management Policy ratified.	-	-
	Date of next meeting: 11th March 2026, time 6.30pm, FGB held at the school	All /GS	Immediate
	Agenda item: Review Maria's membership and potential move to parent governor.		

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Laura Alexander.

1.2 None.

1.3 The meeting was quorate with seven members present.

2. NOTICE OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nothing to discuss.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Register of Business Interests – Governors have all confirmed their Pecuniary Interests on GovernorHub.

3.2 There were no declarations made pertaining to any of the agenda items for this meeting.

4. GOVERNING BODY

4.1 Discussion was held regarding three potential Co-opted governors to be considered for appointment. All three candidates have met with the chair of governors and headteacher, visited the school, had a tour, and the roles were discussed. The experience and skills of each potential governor were shared and discussion held regarding the support and oversight they could provide to the school as governors. Candidate 1 – Amber is a lawyer and would like to give back to the community by becoming a governor. Discussion was had regarding her application and the finance element; candidate has many transferrable skills which would be suitable for the role of governor.

Chair's Initials:

Decision: unanimously voted in as Co-opted governor.
Candidate 2 – Ernest, very strong, has been a member of school's forum, primary school governor, undertaken lots of mentoring and has a good understanding of disadvantaged children.
Decision: unanimously voted in as Co-opted governor.
Candidate 3 – Gavin, children used to attend the school and is keen to give something back to the school community. Experience with IT and runs his own software business. Good understanding of HR operations and teaching and learning.
Decision: unanimously voted in as Co-opted governor.
The new governors will bring a mix of demographic to the governing body.
Discussion was had regarding the process used to recruit new governors; bringing them into the school, providing a tour and meeting with them worked very well. Sonia shared that some parents were also interested but not all of them had retained this interest when the role and expectations of the role were explained; two parents wish to review this in 6 months.

4.2 A vacancy remains for 1 parent governor. Sonia thinks this can be filled, as two parents want to come back to be considered in 6 months.
Helen informed the meeting of another candidate who has come through ASTOS.
Discussion was had regarding potentially moving Maria back as a Parent governor and recruiting for another Co-opted governor – this will be revisited if the school are unable to recruit a parent governor.
Action:

- Helen to send potential candidate's information to Sonia for consideration to meet and discuss a potential role as a Co-Opted Governor.
- Sonia to send a letter to all parents inviting them to apply to become a parent governor
- Review Maria's membership and possibly move back to Parent Governor.

5. MINUTES

5.1 Governors received the minutes of the governing body meeting held on 24th September 2025 and agreed these to be an accurate record of the meeting. Query was made regarding the dates of some of the actions to be completed; this was due to the full governing body meeting being changed to 3rd December 2025

5.2 Matters arising

Minute reference	Formal agreements and/or actions identified	Named person(s) for action(s) identified	Completion date
5.	**Action:** Clerk to request clarity on whether a pay committee is needed with Donna at Governors' Services ***Response:*** *as the new Pay and Conditions set out in the Council's model policy, there is still the need for governors to consider threshold applications – so, those have to go somewhere, this 'could' be combined with Resources, so that one meeting per year is Resources* ***and Pay****.*	Clerk/ Governor Services	Completed

Chair's Initials:

6.3	**Action:** Lauren to contact James to seek clarity regarding his ongoing term of office	Lauren	Completed
9.	**Agreed:** to keep school Governing Board/Body Code of Conduct with actions below added. **Action:** add expectation that all FGB meetings are to be held face to face **Action:** Lauren to add FGB have to be attended in person, only under exceptional circumstances will the Chair consider and agree with individual's need to join meetings online (requests to be made 48 hours in advance). Cameras are to be turned on if joining online. **Action:** Lauren to add a sentence to the Induction Policy regarding the expected code of conduct with regards to Governor's communication through the systems used, including the agreed use of the WhatsApp Group.	Lauren	Completed
10.	**Action:** All governors need to complete the questionnaire on GovernorHub	All	Completed
11.	**Agreed:** The resources meeting agreed for 4th February 2026 will now be a FGB, held in the school at 6.30pm.	-	-
12.	**Action:** Sharon to complete Governors Induction Training	Sharon	Next FGB (due to date change) 11/3/2026
15.18/15.19	**Action:** SEND Policy 2025-26 to be ratified at the next meeting SEND Information Report 2025-26 to be ratified at the next meeting		Completed
	Date of next meeting: 4th February 2026, time 6.30pm, FGB held at the school	All /GS	Immediate
	Agenda item: SEND Policy and SEND Information Report 2025-26		Ratified at Resources meeting 19/11/25

Confirmation was provided regarding James' membership to the governing body; he has now left. All governors thanked James for his hard work.
Sharon informed the meeting she has not completed the governors' induction training due to the FGB meeting being brought. Discussion was had regarding the training available; it was queried whether training is still held regarding the use of School

Chair's Initials:

Improvement Plan, where governors would take this to the training to support the learning and development.

Action:

- Governor Services to send a thank you letter to James for his hard work and support in the role of governor.
- Governor Services to clarify if training is still available regarding the use of the SIP for governors

6. CHAIR'S ACTION

No decisions have been made outside of the last FGB.
Headteacher's Appraisal has been completed.
Pay decisions were discussed at the Resources Committee meeting on 19/11/2025.

7. SCHOOL BUDGET / HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

Sonia provided a summary of the budget; this was initially forecast (and ratified) to be a deficit of £371k for the year. For quarter two, this is now -£113k, with a forecast deficit budget of £125,770 for the end of the year, closing the gap by £200k. This will hopefully mean the school will not have to undertake the drastic restructure plan created as a part of the 5-year recovery plan, to reduce the forecast deficit, this will be reviewed in April 2026. Some of this has happened through natural change.
There is an implication for the budget going forward in the next financial year due to possible 6% cuts, which would equate to roughly £500k less funding for the school.
Helen asked.
Q. Are there any updates regarding the EHCP funding changes from Government?
A. The White Paper has been delayed until 2026, possibly in February. Potentially EHCPs will be removed for children not attending specialist provisions which would reduce funding.
The school plan to spend the capital income by investing in IT.
One of the 2 boilers in the humanities building has stopped working-the building is running off 1. This will cost £15k to repair.
Staffing information was shared (pg. Headteacher's report) – 3 applications have been received for the teacher of the deaf vacancy, 1 of these applicants is deaf – Sonia will be meeting with these applicants soon.
Attendance overview was provided (pg. 5 Headteacher's report). 1 child has recently been taken off roll after 2 years of non-attendance at the school.
Q – How many of the children with high non-attendance are LAC?
A – 3. Social Workers are involved; there's refusal to attend school. School has paid for tutors but couldn't get them in. 1 child will potentially be placed in a secure placement as absconding.
Q – Are eyes on them?
A – No, one goes missing overnight – hence the potential secure placement for their safety.
Information provided regarding other attendance issues regarding suspensions – serious incident with 4 boys using spice on school site, another child physically assaulted another male pupil – school has secured all these pupils' places in other schools so as not to permanently exclude them, as they're in Year 11. When pupils are sanctioned with suspension it affects attendance as it's an authorised absence.
Q – what is the impact of negotiating other schools take these pupils?
A – School has taken another school's pupil and vice versa – this means these pupils don't have a permanent exclusion on their record and there's successful transitions.
Q – The school reports there's an improvement in attendance, but the figures for 24/25 Year 7 cohort, who are now year 8, have declined with regard to attendance
A – The 24/25 figures are for the entire academic year, the 25/26 figures shown are Sept – Nov.

Chair's Initials:

Q – Could this be a trend to a dip in attendance?
A – Yes attendance dips throughout the year groups. It's what we typically see. Persistent absence is 4% lower
Q – Is attendance improving nationally?
A – Yes
SEND updates were shared and discussed (pg. 7 Headteacher's report). School continues with the MFL withdrawal groups for pupils to do phonics and early reading interventions, using primary specialists to fill gaps. Weakest readers have a reading age of 6,7,8 in Year 7 and using Toe By Toe programme to target these children. Introduced peer readers with 6th Formers to target the cohort. School is finding it hardest to target those readers with a reading age 2 years below chronological age – they're not maintaining reading at home, hence the drop from chronological age.
Q – Are these children coming from a specific primary school?
A – No, it's everywhere, yet these children have 'passed' SATs reading, but what we're seeing doesn't match this. Ofsted are focusing on SEND, PP so we need to be closing the phonics gap.
Q – MFL would not be appropriate for pupils struggling with phonics and reading?
A – The need to be able to read in English is more important. Ofsted were happy with the rationale for withdrawal from MFL for specific pupils.
Behaviour update was provided and discussed (pg. 8 Headteacher's report). Year 11 are impacting behaviour – lots of children with complex and undiagnosed needs – also the cohort started with 180, now 156 pupils. Some moving through FAP. They were Year 6 during Covid and have had 3 different heads of year, although strong heads of year, continuity is important.
Governors reported how helpful it was to see the number of pupils in the breakdown of suspensions.
18 suspensions for the term, if that's tripled it will be lower than 24/25. Real focus on behaviour and children receiving interventions – behaviour processes are having a positive impact. There's a clear vision; restorative conversations planned and a drive on praise to improve. Sonia reported AGE is doing a great job leading on behaviour.
Trips were shared and discussed; all trips abroad were filled in minutes. The school is reviewing the system used as first come first served wasn't ideal – the school plan for parents to submit a letter of interest, school will check eligibility and then they'll be a selection process. This will prevent children who have been told they can't attend trips for specific reasons, from securing places.
Q – Year 11 don't have any trips abroad?
A – No, lots of staff were put off by parent complaints previously. It's a careful staff selection process for trips and safeguarding is key.
Safeguarding updates were shared and discussed (separate report). Needs are high, 2 strategy meetings took place on 3/12/2025, one resulted in a child being taken into care. IT logs are being addressed, offensive 'talking' from 6th Formers, offensively engaging with one another. Addressed through education and 2nd conversation results in sanctions – school continue to monitor IT logs.
Everything is being saved on CPoms, behaviour logs have been taken off Arbor and put onto CPoms, this allows reports to be generated to support actions.
Q – Is there still a school counsellor on site?
A – Yes, 2, 1 works 3 days, another works 2 days, making 1 FTE.
Q – How many pupils have used this service?
A – 30 children accessing counselling who can't get into CAMHS. Also using Sparks4Life Mentor to work with most vulnerable, mainly boys. Counselling is generally 6 sessions.
Q – That doesn't seem long?
A – No, but after 6 weeks students would be triaged, there's a rotation system, after 6 weeks, another group can use the services.

Chair's Initials:

Q – Can we get a student counsellor?
A – Not really, school legally must provide supervision, which the school can't afford.
Q – How do we monitor outcomes with counselling?
A – It's difficult, counselling focus is CBT approach, supporting students to develop coping strategies.

8. YEAR 11 and 13 DATA

Krista (Deputy Head) presented data for Yr11 and Yr13 (separate report).
Detailed information; PP and SEND, will be shared with staff at the end of the term – headlines and focuses have been shared with staff.
School have advertised 5TLR opportunities for staff, including progress lead for PP and SEND in Year 11.

Year 13:

-KS5 currently average C, higher compared with same time last year. Grade progress is in line with national. Less pupils sitting 'at risk of U' than ever before. Still below average grade of B, focusing on moving B's to A's. Top end grades are falling behind expected – this will be a focus. BTEC prediction is more positive than current actuals but progress remaining low in some subjects. Group analysis shows girls are slightly underperforming on current grades but not predicted. Priority for HAPs (Higher attaining pupils) as making less progress. SEND / Disadvantaged performance relatively inline.
Current grades are based on challenge week performance, may include other factors, so a holistic predicted grade.
Q – Is the predicted grade higher than the actual?
A – Yes, the hope is all the planned work will impact over the coming months. Lots of work being undertaken with holistic testing. In Year 13 everyone sat at least 1, if not 2 exam papers.

Year 11:

School is on the trajectory of improvement, not far off from predicted grades.
Comparing current to last year, predictions are more in line with actuals. School is holding raising attainment meetings with subject leads to unpick. There are gaps between targets, this shows in English.
Q – Is this cohort higher ability compared to 24/25 Yr 11?
A – On paper more able, but no SATs to compare, there's a potential gap between target and actual.
53 pupils not on track to meet English 4+, 25 of these are PP. Science, Humanities and Language often track low at this stage but lots to do. Progress 8 is -0.35%, targets based on CATs. Have to get Attainment 8 up from 36.1, was 46.1 last year.
Focus on closing the gap for SEN K pupils in English. Pupils with EHCP are making strong progress, use of additional funding to support.
Whole school initiatives include positive culture, booster attendance meetings with parents, meeting pupils who didn't engage in challenge week, including reviewing seating, providing pencil cases etc.
Specialised pathway meetings where personalised messages are delivered, hard messages shared, alongside support. Reports for key pupils, truancy monitoring (pupils are truanting lessons they want to drop).
Boosters have been changed; now compulsory for Autumn 1 in English, Maths and Science – positive impact made. There's regularity with set days and peer pressure has worked as whole group go to maths etc. School focusing on building Middle Attainment Pupils to High Attainment.
Training planned for end of academic year on PP. SENCO analysing performance of SEN K. Classroom level interventions shared – what teachers do in the room is most important.
Krista was thanked for her hard work on data.

Chair's Initials:

Q – With minimum wage changing for 16-18s and changing climate, is there a feeling from pupils if they get A-Levels they still won't get jobs?
A – A large majority of cohort go to university or do apprenticeships. Andre shared he hasn't heard from pupils regarding worries with jobs – there's a been a big push from UCAS re predicted grades.
Q – Do the school provide work experience?
A – Yes, this cohort are interested in progressing in a trade. Pupils are concerned about the impact of AI and jobs.

9. GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEES

9.1. Discussion was had regarding governing body committees and who will be on each of the three committees now Co-opted governor vacancies have been filled.
Agreed (subject to new governor's approval):

- Resources committee - Leonie, Sharon, Gavin and Amber
- Quality of Education – Andre, Helen and Lauren
- BAPD – (Behaviour, Attendance, Pupil Development.) Claire, Maria, Ernest

Safeguarding link needs to be named ASAP, as Lauren can't be this.
Sonia suggested Maria, if confident to be the safeguarding link. Maria agreed and shared she is a current DSL.
Agreed: Maria safeguarding link
Action: Single Central Record to be checked before the end of term

10. POLICIES

Critical Incident Management Policy
Sonia gave caution with regard to the policy; plan has been created in the best case, impossible to cover/plan for everything as you just don't know. Difficulties are with the school having 3 buildings that can't 'talk' to one another – lockdown has to be triggered manually, fire alarm can't be used as a different sound is required, whistles and airhorns are the best alternative. During a previous semi-lock down, emails were sent to all staff, SLT were based on every floor, but this wouldn't be possible if an intruder was in the building. The policy isn't fool proof, not every eventuality can be planned for, staff need to think on their feet. The next school training will be a partial lockdown. Communication across the school is a challenge – SLT have radios, phones are on our laptops. School is in talks with 3CX to explore other options, especially due to Martin's Law coming into effect. A central radio system would be ideal, but this will be expensive.
Q – Does the LA have any responsibility?
A – As the school sits below 'stage 2' we don't need to have one.
Q – Is stage 2 based on capacity or population?
A – Capacity of buildings, once costs are received from 3CX we can review.
Changes made to the policy were highlighted. Concerns regarding pupils texting parents is an issue, they're understandably scared. School has to think about how and what is communicated from children to parents and how this is managed in a lockdown/partial lockdown situation.
The school has multi-entrances, which is an issue. Doors can't be locked – Kier have to physically lock and override the system. School is working with them to have an override button in reception. Governors were reminded the policy needs to be treated with caution and not fool proof. Training will be undertaken with staff and parents informed this will be taking place. Also using assemblies to drip feed.
Agreed: Policy ratified.

11. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS (PAY)

Andre and Sonia left the meeting.

Chair's Initials:

Headteacher's Pay Review

Confidential minutes were taken

12. DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING
Discussed before Sonia and Andre left the meeting
4th February – all committees to meet
25th February (TBC) SFVS
11th March – GB
13th May – all committees to meet
20th May – GB
15th July – GB
Agenda Items – review Maria's membership and if move to parent governor is required.

13. ANOTHER OTHER BUSINESS
Discussed before Sonia and Andre left the meeting
No

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Chair's Initials: