



# The Knights Templar School Board of Trustees



## Full Trustee Board 17 March 2026

### MINUTES

**Present:** Sue Welch (Chair), Pam Buckle, Ed Hutchings, Mark Lynam, Ruth Nudd, Obilor Nwamadi, David Summer, John Swift, Duncan Wardrop

**In attendance:** Elizabeth Battarbee (Clerk)

#### 1 Welcome and attendance

NOTED: apologies were received from Tanya Gribble and Ian Langley and were approved.

2 Declaration of any conflict of interest or confidentiality None declared.

3 Notification of urgent 'other business' items None requested.

#### 4 Minutes of Full Trustee Board held on 11 February 2026

AGREED: The minutes were approved and signed.

#### 5 Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda

**ACTION:** SWH to circulate Ofsted training documents (SWH, asap)

#### 6 Finance update

RECEIVED: a financial summary and management accounts (noting that it is now halfway through academic year) were circulated. These have also been reviewed by Finance and Strategy committee recently.

REPORTED: KTS had anticipated a break-even position at the end of 2025/26, but during the autumn term, the auditors advised that this was unlikely due to unforeseen costs in IT, and the likely year-end carry forward forecast has now been adjusted to £45K (a decrease from £160K)

REPORTED: the management accounts show the unforeseen costs of outsourcing some IT provision. There has also been some high costs in agency and supply teaching for long-term absences. One member of staff has now retired due to ill health.

*Question: were there additional pension costs with this retirement?*

No, this was all covered.

REPORTED: there were also unexpected costs due to a water leak. Increased water costs had been observed and a leak was located. Unfortunately repair required excavation and this was only possible in holiday time. This delay resulted in a total cost for the water loss of £12K. Whilst the repair was being completed, some asbestos was discovered so further costs were incurred in dealing with this safely. This £15K asbestos cost is subject to an insurance claim, which is complicated by the lack of evidence of physical damage. The leak was caused by lack of maintenance to the pipe, but the pipe was not visible other than through excavation.

*Question: does this leak have any connection with the damp in the same building?*

No that is definitely caused by roof leaks.

REPORTED: this issue demonstrates the challenges of the ageing infrastructure of the building. The water meter will continue to be monitored for further leaks.

REPORTED: the premises 'wish list' shows projects that need to be completed. These include new boilers for K block, new cold water supply (in overground pipes) to K block, new air con system in drama and emergency lighting (the latter was identified in a health and safety audit).

*Question: are there potential grants that can be accessed?*

KTS have already submitted applications to CIF (with regard to roof repair) but these other projects could be the basis of future applications.

REPORTED: the DfE have published School Estate Management Standards with an expectation that all schools need to complete a return in autumn 2026.

**ACTION:** for discussion at the next Finance and Strategy committee (SWH/JST, June 2026)

DISCUSSED: SLT are continually discussing curriculum and planning, including consideration of the recommendations in the School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) report. There was some useful feedback although many actions were already in place (e.g. reducing sixth form choices). Sixth form funding has not yet been published. It is anticipated that there will be 160 students in year 12 which is more than previous years and will be beneficial to funding.

REPORTED: another recommendation from SRMA was about the number of English and Maths groups in KS4. KTS has 7 forms of entry but runs 8 classes per year in most areas of the curriculum. In year 10 and 11, there are 9 groups for English and Maths. This could be reduced to 8. EHS has talked to local schools who have made similar adjustments. This would be one action that would reduce long term costs without cutting the curriculum offer.

REPORTED: the recent unexpected costs should not be repeated in future years. So it is anticipated that the financial situation should improve. If staff leave, they may not be replaced. The SLT is expensive due to its size, but members fill other roles such as Head of Department or working in the Reflection Room.

*Question: if we removed the unexpected costs (IT and water), what would be the revised forecast?*

It would be a good position, but in reality, each year seems to have exceptional costs.

*Question: What is actually in the bank?*

£500K. The lowest has been £400K. There are always committed funds that have to be maintained. Cashflow is not the issue.

*Question: how does GAG compare with last year?*

It is slightly reduced for each student because of the changes in Hertfordshire and the move to the national funding formula (Hertfordshire used to top up secondary school funding, but will no longer do this). There is an increase in SEND funding. KTS will have more students on EHCP and the SENCo has been successful at ensuring the best possible funding has been awarded for these students. SEND continues to expand and an Assistant SENCo would be a useful appointment.

REPORTED: the Academy Trusts self-assessment form has been completed. It will be submitted to the DfE. This is an annual statement, looking at financial management and governance, most of which was reported in the audit. An action plan is generated from the questions. The only area where KTS was not able to respond positively was about plans for the school estate and the ability to maintain buildings. Plans exist, but there are not enough funds to complete the work.

## **7 Admission numbers**

REPORTED: the numbers were discussed at Finance and Strategy committee recently. The local figures are available on the HCC website.

REPORTED: these show that KTS has a PAN of 210 and has received 210 allocations for September 2026 (209 of these were first choice KTS). There were 406 applications in total; a few years ago this was over 700. There are likely to be 10 EHCP. 52 of the allocated places come from outside the priority area (this is increasing because the places are not filled from within the priority area).

REPORTED: numbers across North Herts are reducing. It is a challenging situation and the LGC schools are not full.

REPORTED: the published statistics show which schools have a musical aptitude, or similar, admission criteria, and how many students were admitted in this way. Sometimes there are no students admitted under these rules, because the school is already full on the other criteria.

REPORTED: EHS has talked to local primary schools and will send them a letter about the musical aptitude admission criteria, for sharing amongst their school community. There are some local primary school headteacher changes. Many schools are not full with some reducing forms of entry. HCC is keen to set up the new SEND SRP in small schools but this does not seem a viable solution.

REPORTED: EHS has held discussions with the HCC admissions team. They talked about the potential local housing development and options for KTS. There is a school rebuilding programme to which KTS will submit an application. 250 schools nationally will receive direct capital investment for a partial or full rebuild. HCC have been asking schools if they wish to host a SEND SRP (The Priory School already has one). KTS does not see this as ideal as the students in the SRP (who have been selected by the LA) would have 70% of their lessons in the mainstream classroom, and 30% in the SRP. These students would bring additional challenges. However, nationally, it is a more cost effective way of resourcing SEND provision. The LA are trying to engage with schools to explore possibilities due to the lack of specialist schools.

## **8 Stakeholder surveys**

RECEIVED: responses summary from recent surveys. These were conducted as part of the Ofsted preparation.

REPORTED:

- the 220 parent responses were generally positive, and this response rate is good. The questions about SEND provision were good and much improved. There are still 8% of parents that say they would not recommend the school, but this is fewer than at the last Ofsted inspection. Parents were able to submit comments which will be reviewed by SWH and EHS.
- there is no benchmark data for students but KTS received many responses as it was set as a homework. The comments section was not available.

- There were 57 staff responses, and these were generally positive with sections showing obvious improvements. Benchmarks against other schools are not available. One challenging area is what to offer (what would be useful or expected) as professional development for non-teaching staff. Some teaching staff would be dismissive of professional development because of prior experience or knowledge

*Question: was it disappointing that only 1/3 staff responded?*

Staff were asked to complete the survey, but they weren't pushed to do so. The responses validate what the school is already doing.

*Question: were there any disappointments with survey response?*

No, responses were generally better than expected, particularly from parents.

DISCUSSED: nationally, morale amongst school employees has been low but KTS seems higher than average. Budget pressures do have an impact on staff. SEND provision at KTS received very positive feedback and is much improved; thanks were extended to Lucy Moore and her team. Trustees have also supported this development and were thanked.

## **9 Safeguarding review**

REPORTED: HFL have recently conducted a safeguarding review. This was very positive with no real concerns highlighted. It was a good validation of what already happens. HFL approved of the termly safeguarding committee, but wondered if another Trustee (other than Chair) should take on the role of regular meeting with KCS (to share workload). Another option would be for the conversation with KCS to take place before the regular group meeting.

REPORTED: HFL was pleased to see that there was PSHCE discussion across all year groups imparting valuable contextual safeguarding information.

## **10 Link Trustees**

REPORTED: there were no other reports or feedback.

## **11 Policies**

REPORTED: a number of policies (based on model policies) need to be reviewed on email.

**ACTION:** SWH will circulate (as appropriate).

## **12 Trustee training**

NOTED: the Trustee training on Understanding Assessment Data takes place online on Thursday 19 March. Documents and the meeting link have been circulated by HFL.

**ACTION:** The Key (accessed via GovernorHub) offer GDPR and Data Protection training for Trustees. This should take 30 mins to complete and would be useful for all Trustees (all, asap)

## **13 Correspondence**

NOTED: None.

## **14 School events dates**

NOTED: There is a school concert next week.

## **15 Any Other Business**

NOTED: None to discuss.

## **16 Date of next meeting**

NOTED: This will be on Thursday 21 May 2026 at 5pm.

## ACTION SUMMARY

| MINUTE | ACTION                                            | RESPONSIBILITY | DEADLINE       |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 5      | Circulate Ofsted training documents               | SWH            | asap           |
| 6      | Discuss School Estate Management Standards at F&S | SWH            | June 2026      |
| 11     | Circulate policies for review                     | SWH            | As appropriate |
| 12     | GDRR/DPA training on The Key                      | All            | asap           |