

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR OF GOVERNORS JANE BURNETT

Dear All,

As we reach the end of another busy term, I wanted to share an update on recent work by the Governing Board.

Much of January and February was taken up with organising the two-day process and interviewing for our new headteacher. Following a very in-depth selection procedure we are delighted that Jamie MacLean will be joining us in September. I would like to thank the many parents who took the time to respond to the survey about what we need in a new headteacher and to NKS colleagues for their engagement with the process. Your feedback is always valued and was helpful as part of the interview process

After a quarter of a century as a governor at NKS Michael-John Knatchbull retired this term. Michael-John has been a tireless advocate for the creative arts in school, and you will have seen him regularly at music and art events in particular. Michael-John has also been a key member of the finance committee working to ensure school funds are well spent on the students. We would like to extend our warmest thanks to him for his long-standing service.

Michael-John's niece Ella du Breuil has been appointed as the family representative, and we welcome her to the board where she will sit on the Education Committee and take on the role of Careers Link Governor. You can read her bio on the website and at the end of this newsletter.

This term we received resignations from Philip Sibbald and Alex Evans-Crane both leaving for personal reasons. Philip has been an advocate for the school for many years and remains with the Old Ashfordians' Association. We would like to thank them both for the work they have done with the governing body over their tenure.

Amidst these changes we have continued our regular committee and full board meetings, attending raising achievement meetings and supporting the school in maintaining high expectations and positive outcomes for students.

We would like to thank all those parents and carers who have completed the parent survey. We always welcome parent feedback and look forward to disseminating the results and sharing them with you next term.

Wishing you all a peaceful and relaxing Easter

With best wishes

Jane Burnett, Chair of Governors

NEW GOVERNORS NEEDED

Next term we will be saying goodbye to a number of long-standing governors. We will be looking for new governors and are particularly keen to recruit someone with strong finance, IT and/or legal expertise.

If you are a member of the parent community and are interested or know someone who might be, please reach out to Lseed@nks.kent.sch.uk who will set up an initial conversation with the Chair of Governors.

GOVERNOR PRESENTATIONS & STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

This term Governors welcomed a number of NKS colleagues to our meetings.

We were pleased to hear about the continued progress towards achieving the **Feminista Award**, from **Mrs Turner** recognising the school's commitment to promoting gender equality and ensuring all students feel empowered to challenge inequality.

Mrs Turner also shared the work of the **NKS Community Champions**, a group of students in the lower school. This term, Community Champions have contributed to behaviour improvement priorities, supported Respect Charter messaging, and helped shape resources linked to antiracism and antisogyny. Their involvement continues to strengthen student voice and provides a meaningful platform for pupils to lead on inclusion and values-based projects.

Governors received an update from **Mr Hoyte** on the whole school 'How-we-treat each other' survey, which achieved a strong response rate and showed clear improvement in key areas. This survey is now in its 4th year, and governors are really pleased to see the school's ongoing commitment in this area. The next steps included a targeted follow-up survey focused on girls, LGBTQ+ students and ethnic minority groups.

Mrs Vernon presented the careers path for our NKS student, including university outreach, employer engagement and work experience. She reported that links with Russell Group institutions continued to strengthen, supported by university visits, an annual careers fair and targeted guidance. Governors also heard that employer partnerships were expanding, particularly with local industries such as Construction, Manufacturing and Engineering. Mrs Vernon also confirmed that all Year 11 and Year 12 students received 1:1 careers' guidance, with tailored support in place for more vulnerable pupils.

Student Engagement

Meeting students remains one of the most rewarding parts of our work. Through the Governors' School Lunch Project, we have spoken with students from multiple year groups, gaining honest insight into lessons, behaviour, wellbeing and enrichment. Students continue to impress us with their thoughtfulness and clarity—one Year 8 pupil told us simply, *"We feel listened to."*

Governors were also delighted to be invited to attend School Council meetings. Students discussed canteen provision, the Respect Charter and enrichment ideas with maturity and purpose, offering practical and often solution focused suggestions.

This term, the School Council played an especially valuable role in the Headteacher recruitment process. Students refined their interview questions and approached the task with professionalism and confidence. Their contribution added genuine depth to the selection process, and governors were struck by the “real sense of responsibility” they brought to the activity.

Marianne Highwood, Chair of Governors Designate

NEW GOVERNOR

Welcome to Ella du Breuil, Foundation Governor

Ella has an eclectic portfolio career, ranging from Marine Biology, with a Master's in Applied Marine and Fisheries Ecology from the University of Aberdeen, to working as a senior boating officer for the British Antarctic Survey in South Georgia. She is now a paramedic, primarily working in the humanitarian sector.

Her current roles include: paramedic for the London Ambulance Service, training director and chief instructor for Atlantic Pacific (a maritime search and rescue charity) and faculty for World Extreme Medicine, teaching medical professionals in remote and resource-poor locations.

She continues to volunteer for the RNLI as a commander on the Thames; she is a trustee and medic for SARAID, an urban search and rescue charity that is a UN-recognised rescue team assisting in the aftermath of humanitarian disasters. In addition, she volunteers with the refugee situation in Greece and the central Mediterranean, acting as a boat driver and medic. In 2024, she went to Ukraine with the World Extreme Medicine Fund, supporting the government in Kherson, teaching civilians critical first aid.

Ella is a lifelong believer in the power of education. She has been an instructor in outdoor education since the age of 16 and believes that learning happens in every environment.

She lives in Kent with her wife.

Things done well make the best memories
SIR NORTON KNATCHBULL – 1637

If you'd like to know about the governing body you can find out more about us on the school website: [NKS Governance](#)

If you would like to contact the Governing Board or find out more about what we do, you are very welcome to do so via our Governance professional, Lena Seed lseed@nks.kent.sch.uk

Wishing you a Peaceful Easter break!