



**THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS
AND ITS COMMITTEES
2025 - 2026**

THE COUNCIL

Richard White - Chair

David Fawcus - Vice Chair

Robin Badham-Thornhill

Julian Birch

Sarah Davies

Guy Foster

Nicky Huggett

Charlotte Mintern

Beth Robertson

Lucy Robins

Susan Ross

Chris Stevens

Edward Taylor

Katie Tilney

Alisdair Wade

INTRODUCTION

Pinewood is a Charitable Trust, which means that Governors, as trustees, do not benefit financially from their role in the School. If they wish, they can claim expenses but they give their time freely, voluntarily and willingly to the School. Charitable status also means that the School does not make a 'profit'. While it is prudent for the Council to budget for a surplus of income over expenditure, all surpluses are immediately invested into improvement of the School's facilities. In past times Governors were often remote figures who were chosen mainly for their ability to dignify the School prospectus. They were not much seen in the School. Today's Governors play a different role. They are appointed because they have a particular expertise that they are willing to put at the disposal of the School simply because they have a wholehearted empathy with, and commitment to, the School. As with the maintained sector, independent School Governors are today closely involved in many aspects of school governance.

This leaflet will illustrate these themes. The short biographical sketch of each governor will indicate the kind of gifts he or she brings to the School, while the list of committees and other activities will demonstrate the nature of their involvement.

School staff are involved with most of the committees. This enables Governors and staff to work closely together towards a common end.

Communication with the School is normally through the Form Tutor, the Head of Pre-Prep, Heads of Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools or the Headmaster, but if any parent has cause to get in touch directly with the Governors, he or she should write to the Chair of the Governors at Pinewood School, Bourton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 8HZ.

THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS AND ITS COMMITTEES

Council

Meetings of the Council take place at least once each term. The key areas of focus of the Governors include:

- Medium and long term strategy.
- Key investment decisions.
- Major financial decisions (for example agreement of budget, salary and fee increases).
- Human resource decisions.
- Overall academic performances.
- The ethos of the School.
- Extra-curricular concerns.
- Appointment of the Headmaster, Bursar and Governors.

Each meeting receives reports and appropriate recommendations from:

- The Headmaster.
- The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- The Chair of the Buildings and Estates Committee.

- The Chair of the Education Committee.
- The Chair of the Governance Committee.
- The Chair of the Admissions, Marketing and Development Committee.
- The Safeguarding Governor.

Strategy

Strategy of the School is considered on 2 levels:

Medium – Long Term. This is where the School wants to be in 3 – 10 years in light of the macro environment of the world and how it seeks to position itself in the Independent School market. This includes consideration of ideal pupil numbers, structure and staffing levels and provision of facilities against a background of economic realities and parental demand for provision as well as the need to satisfy legislation and regulatory framework requirements. This process is the responsibility of Council and the School Executive, and is managed through the Strategy Steering Group. The group meets termly and comprises David Fawcus (Chair), Charlotte Mintern, Alisdair Wade, Richard White and the Executive.

Short – Medium Term. This considers the timeframe of 1 – 3 years and the School utilises its School Development Plan to achieve this. This document is reviewed internally by all departments from Classics to Catering, English to Estates and Boarding to the Bursary. The School Development Plan reviews the past year and gives details of departmental short, medium and long term plans. The Council reviews the finalised document and the summary provided by the Headmaster.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee

The membership of this Committee comprises Lucy Robins (Chair), David Fawcus, Guy Foster, Edward Taylor, Alisdair Wade and Richard White and meets once each term. The Headmaster, his Deputy, the Bursar and the School Accountant always attend this meeting, as does the Auditor at the end of each financial year.

This Committee meets each term and concerns itself with:

- Financial stewardship.
- Operational matters requiring Governors' input.
- Building matters (where there are financial implications).
- Salaries and fees.

The Buildings and Estates Committee

This committee meets twice each term and comprises Guy Foster (Chair) and Lucy Robins. The Headmaster, his Deputy, the Bursar and the Estates Manager also attend.

This Committee has responsibility for ensuring the School has the appropriate facilities it requires and in the condition necessary for its purpose, whilst complying with statutory regulations.

The Education Committee

This Committee meets each term and comprises Robin Badham-Thornhill (Chair), Julian Birch, Nicky Huggett, Chris Stevens and Alisdair Wade. The Headmaster, his Deputy and the Director of Studies also attend.

This Committee oversees educational policy with particular emphasis on academic standards, educational resources and academic policies. In order to ensure that there is a consistent approach from Nursery through to Year 8, the Committee hears presentations from all academic departments including the Pre-Prep.

The Governance Committee

The Committee meets each term and comprises Beth Robertson (Chair), Sarah Davies, Charlotte Mintern, Susan Ross, Katie Tilney and Richard White. The Headmaster, his Deputy and the Bursar also attend.

This Committee focuses on the legal and legislative environment in which the School operates and provides support and guidance to the Governors and the senior management. It also has oversight of all the other Committees and specific responsibilities for Safeguarding.

The Admissions, Marketing and Development Committee

This Committee meets each term and comprises the Executive, with the Headmaster as Chair, and Edward Taylor. The Head of Pre-Prep, the Head of Admissions and the Head of Marketing also attend.

This Committee considers marketing strategies to deal with trends and take advantage of opportunities and reviews progress and effectiveness of key market initiatives and public relations. It also seeks to develop and maintain relationships with Old Pinewoodians.

The Bursary Committee

The Committee meets annually in the spring to review all new bursary applications for entry into the School in the September as well as carrying out an annual review of all extant bursaries. It also meets when required to consider Hardship Bursaries, should parents suffer any unforeseen financial hardship.

This Committee comprises Lucy Robins (Chair) and Susan Ross and is attended by the Headmaster and the Bursar.

Richard White BA (Hons) - Chair of Governors

Richard was educated at Downside and read Economics at Exeter University. Following a career in general management in land-based activities, he became Bursar in 2005 at Prince's Mead School, Winchester, a co-educational day school to 11+. He stepped down in 2023 and recently he held the role of Interim Bursar at Queens College, London and is currently an ISI inspector. Richard and his wife Jane have three grown up children who were educated at Twyford Prep, St Swithun's, Radley and Wellington College, and they live in Winchester. He enjoys cricket, sailing, tennis and bridge. He joined the Governing Body in September 2016 and was elected as Chair in November 2024.

Robin Badham-Thornhill BA (Hons), PGCE

Robin was educated at Cheltenham College and Exeter University. From there he taught at King's School, Bruton and Cheltenham College before taking over as the Headmaster of Lambrook Prep School. After nearly five years at Lambrook, he was appointed Headmaster of Summer Fields, Oxford from 1997. He retired at the end of August 2010. Then, he took up the position of Head of Development at Knightsbridge School, London until August 2020 and he was an ISI School Inspector. Currently, he works as an Educational Consultant. Robin joined the School Council in 2008 and was the Chair of the Governors from July 2016 to November 2024. His interests include cricket, golf, wine, walking, reading and a love of France. Robin is a member of the Education Committee and is also nominated as the Governor responsible for Boarding at Pinewood.

Julian Birch BEng (Hons)

Julian attended Sevenoaks School and went on to read mechanical engineering at Leeds. Since graduating in 1995 he has worked continuously in the Information Technology (IT) industry, specialising in the retail sector, working for and with a number of the UK's major retailers. He currently is owner and director of BM Jack Solutions. Julian is a past Pinewood parent, is married to Samantha who teaches at Pinewood, and they live in Bishopstone. Julian has specific IT responsibilities and hence is a member of the Education Committee and the School's IT Strategy Committee.

Sarah Davies BA (Hons), PGCE

Sarah Davies is currently Assistant Head (Safeguarding and EDI) at Bradfield College, having taken on this role in September 2021, following five years as Deputy Head Pastoral there. She leads on safeguarding, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that these areas are embedded within the school's ethos and policies. Sarah is the Designated Safeguarding Lead and chairs the West Berkshire Independent and Special Schools Safeguarding Engagement Group, alongside serving as an ISI Team Inspector since 2023. Prior to her current role, Sarah was Deputy Head at Notting Hill and Ealing High School (GDST) (2013–2016) following leadership roles at departmental and pastoral level in different school contexts. An English graduate from the University of Reading, Sarah is passionate about promoting equality, mental health awareness, and student safety more broadly. Outside of work, she is an unapologetic bookworm, film and live music enthusiast, and a (very vocal) Welsh rugby fan. Sarah also contributes to safeguarding as a school governor at a maintained secondary school. Sarah

joined the School Council in November 2024 and is a member of the Governance Committee. Sarah is also nominated as the Governor with specific responsibilities for Safeguarding at Pinewood.

David Fawcus ACA CloD – Vice Chair

Educated at St Edward's Oxford, after graduation from Reading University he qualified as a Chartered Accountant with a leading international firm. For many years he was the Corporate Finance partner in a Thames Valley practice. Since 2010 he has been running his own business providing corporate finance lead advisory and strategic planning services to a wide range of entrepreneurial businesses. He comes from a family with strong preparatory school connections and has a deep understanding of the independent school sector. David joined the School Council in 2004 and is Vice Chair. He contributes to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and in the development of the School's medium to long term strategic planning. His interests include cricket, equestrian sport and walking holidays.

Guy Foster

Educated at Stowe, Guy embarked on a career in property, training with and working for several well-known surveyors and estate agents in London, ending up as a regional director. Since 1997 he has run his own public limited company, which is based in Swindon and specialises in developing and investing in property in Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. He is also currently a trustee of a number of trusts, advising various large estates across the country on property matters. Guy is married to Nicola who works at Pinewood, and they live in Ashbury with their two daughters, both of whom are Old Pinewoodians. His interests include architecture and foreign languages. Guy joined the School Council in 2010 and chairs the Buildings and Estates Committee. He is nominated as the Governor responsible for staff welfare at Pinewood.

Nicola Huggett MA, PGCE

Nicola was educated at Marlborough College before reading Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford University. After a brief career in advertising with J Walter Thompson Ltd, she moved into teaching in 1994. From 1996 to 2007 she taught at Haileybury, where she was a housemistress and for the last two years Head of Boarding. In 2007 she was appointed as Deputy Headmistress of Downe House School until 2013 when she was appointed as Head to Blundell's and in September 2018 she took up her current appointment as Head of Cheltenham College. Nicola has a keen love of music and, in the sporting arena, she has competed in the London Marathon and played Club Hockey, was Captain of her College Boat Club and was President of the Oxford University Riding Club. As a talented horse rider she has competed in several international two star level 3-day events. Nicola is married and has four children. She joined the School Council in September 2018 and is a member of the Education Committee.

Charlotte Mintern MSc, Chartered MCIPD

Charlotte studied Economics at university and holds masters degrees in both Human Resource Management and People & Organisational Development. A chartered member of the CIPD, she has built her career in Human Resources, working in a range of organisations including Eli Lilly, BOC, and

the Ford Motor Company, prior to joining Associated British Foods (ABF) in 2006. For five years she held a range of HR and Development leadership roles in Twinings, before taking a Finance Talent Development role at the ABF Head Office partnering the Group CFO and his reports. In 2014 Charlotte was appointed HR Director for AB Vista, an international agricultural feed technology business with employees operating in over 20 countries. In 2019 she returned to the ABF Head Office as Group Head of Careers and Inclusion for ABF plc. She moved to Bourton in 2009 and remains local to the school, living in Bishopstone. Charlotte is married to Chris and they have one daughter at Pinewood. She joined the School Council in September 2022 and is a member of the Governance Committee.

Beth Robertson BA (Hons) GDL and LPC

Beth attended Sherborne Girls followed by Bristol University where she read Classical Studies. Moving to London after her graduation she spent the next 4 years working first for Taylor Woodrow Property Development in both London and Hong Kong, and then moved to a small brand development company. In 2001 Beth changed direction and entered the Law, completing a law conversion and legal practice course. She then spent 10 years as a solicitor at Mishcon de Reya in London, where she became a specialist in Family Law. In 2013 Beth joined Moss Fallon Solicitors as a Partner, an exclusively Family Law practice, where she divides her time between their offices in London and Wiltshire. Her practice is primarily concerned with divorce and the breakdown of relationships and the ancillary matters arising from that, predominantly the finances, matters concerning the children, and living arrangements. Beth had two children at Pinewood and joined the Governing Body in September 2019. She is Chair of the Governance Committee.

Lucy Robins BSc (Hons), MRICS

Lucy was educated at Bryanston before reading Land Management at Reading University. She qualified as a Chartered Surveyor with a leading international practice where she stayed for 8 years advising commercial and public sector clients on planning and development projects throughout the UK. Lucy then joined the Ministry of Defence and led a team disposing of redundant military sites in the southwest and London. She embarked on a second career as an independent school Bursar, first at Leweston School and from 2009 until 2020 at Sherborne School. With Covid thwarting Lucy and her husband's belated gap year, she was available to stand in as Interim Bursar at Pinewood from August 2021 until September 2022. Lucy is a keen supporter of the performing arts and an aspiring gardener. She is an advocate for mental health and is a trustee of Solent Mind, one of the largest local Minds affiliated to the national charity, Mind. Lucy joined the Governing Body in November 2022 and is a member of the Building and Estates Committees as well as Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Bursary Committee.

Susan Ross MBA C.A.T

Susan has worked for Cranfield University since 1999 and is currently Director of Admissions for Cranfield Defence and Security. She is also Head of the Cranfield Forensic Institute. Prior to joining Cranfield, she was Secretary to the Faculty of Law and Accountancy at the University of Dundee and Faculty Registrar at the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside. Before embarking on her career in Higher Education she spent a period of 12 years in the Housing Department of the new Town Development Corporation in Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland. Susan was part of the team which wound up

the New Town and disposed of all the assets before being made redundant as part of that process. Susan holds an MBA from the University of Dundee. She lives in Shrivenham with her husband Mike. Susan joined the School Council in June 2021 and is a member of the Governance Committee and Bursary Committee.

Chris Stevens MA, DPhil

A lifelong educator with experience in teaching, leading and governing schools across all age ranges, Chris completed a languages degree at Cambridge, before spending his early career teaching between prep schools and Oxford University, where he was researching for a doctorate in Italian. He has subsequently worked in leading boarding schools including Uppingham, where he was a housemaster, Marlborough, where he was Second Master, and Bradfield, where he was Headmaster for a decade. Currently working as Director of Education for a leading Indian schools' group in the Delhi region, Chris is returning to the UK to take up the role of Executive Head of the Clifton College Education Group in 2026. A keen runner and lover of the performing arts, Chris has three daughters, all of whom attended Pinewood.

Edward Taylor BEng (Hons)

Edward was educated at Eton College and read Mechanical Engineering at Birmingham University, graduating in 1991. After a post-graduate one-year course at Cambridge University studying Design, Manufacturing and Management, he worked in a series of Business, PR and Communications consultancies until 2005. He then moved to an in-house PR and Marketing role in a global financial services technology company. Over the last two decades he has had multiple roles in multinational technology businesses, with his remit covering all parts of Marketing and Strategy. He now works as Director of Strategic Development for the London-based media intelligence company, Roxhill Media. Edward is married to Lynn, who is a dentist, and they have seven children between them, all of whom have been Pinewood pupils. Edward is a very keen sportsman, particularly cricket and tennis.

Katie Tilney MBCHB, MRCGP, DRCOG, DFRH

Katie was educated at Downe House before going to Bristol University in 2000 to study Medicine. She finished her GP training in Bristol in 2010 and moved to Marlborough in 2013. She has worked at Ramsbury and Wanborough Surgery since then and became a partner in 2020. She is the safeguarding lead at the practice and her special interests include women's health and medical education. She is an educational supervisor for GP trainees and a GP tutor at Oxford University. She was also chair and tutor for the Swindon Education Trust organising educational courses for GPs in the Swindon and Wiltshire area. Katie lives with her husband and three boys in a boarding house at Marlborough College where her husband is a housemaster. Her boys are all at Pinewood. Katie joined the School Council in 2025 and sits on the Governance Committee.

Alisdair Wade BSc (Hons)

Ali is an Old Pinewoodian, leaving in 1989 to attend Marlborough College where he was Head Boy. He completed a BSc in Biological Sciences with his Honours in Zoology at Edinburgh University before starting at Cazenove & Co in London in a UK equity sales role. He moved to New York in 2002 before

transferring in 2006 to Merrill Lynch back in London to run their small institutions equity desk and then to Moscow in 2010 to head Merrill's Russian equity distribution team. In 2013 Ali returned to England and founded an investment company focussed on the education sector. He is now based in Wiltshire with two children at Pinewood. He runs the family farm alongside his education interests and has a passion for nature and the countryside as well as being a keen sportsman. Ali joined the School Council in 2022 and sits on the Education and the Finance and General Purposes Committees.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms will assist parents in understanding the vocabulary of independent schools:

BSA	Boarding Schools' Association
Bursary	Means-tested financial help with fees
CE	Common Entrance Examination
GSA	Girls' School Association
HMC	The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (Senior Independent Schools)
IAPS	The Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools
ISBA	The Independent Schools' Bursars Association
ISC	Independent Schools' Council
ISEB	Independent Schools' Examination Board
ISI	Independent Schools' Inspectorate



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