

Report of the trustees

National Governance Association
(REGISTERED NUMBER: 03549029)

For the year ending 31 March 2026

Contents

Report of the trustees.....	1
Contents	2
Objectives and activities	2
Achievement and performance.....	4
Financial review.....	10
Future plans	11
Structure, governance and management.....	11
Reference and administrative details.....	14

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2026. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

Objectives and activities

The National Governance Association (NGA) aims to improve the educational standards and wellbeing of young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. NGA is the charitable membership association for governors, trustees and governance professionals in England's state schools and trusts.

NGA membership is open to:

- **Standalone governing boards** from single or federated schools (at standard and Gold rates).
- **Multi academy trusts** (MATs), where membership covers the trust board, their central executive teams, lead governance professionals, and local academy committees.
- **Organisations and groups** including local authorities, dioceses and other providers who support school and trust governance
- **Individual** governors, trustees, clerks/governance professionals.

We also offer a range of professional development services for governors, trustees, chairs of boards, governance professionals and executive leaders. Our e-learning; Learning Link is now the market leader.

At NGA we value:

- **Selflessness:** We prioritise supporting governance to benefit children and young people, staying true to our purpose as a charity.

- **Integrity:** We uphold the highest standards of credibility and trust, using evidence and objectivity to give our members confidence in our work and actions.
- **Courage:** We address challenges boldly, influencing and driving positive change for members.
- **Inclusivity:** We value and promote diverse perspectives, ensuring every member is listened to, valued and represented in shaping governance.
- **Innovation:** We embrace creative solutions to better serve the sector and members' evolving needs in an agile way.

We embrace:

- [The Nolan Principles of Public Life](#) and
- [The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education](#)

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

For 20 years, in January 2026, NGA has aimed to be the go-to authority for school and trust governance, and to ensure the voices of those involved in school and trust governance are heard. We strive to influence relevant policy and shape the practice and culture of governance in a way which strengthens accountability. We empower those in school and trust governance with valuable resources, expert support and e-learning so that pupils can flourish.



We review our three-year-strategy annually, looking at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous 12 months, but this year has also enabled a review of the charity's achievements over a 20-year period, alongside reflecting on the way governance has evolved in that time. The annual review considers the extent to which each strategic priority has been achieved and the benefits they have brought to those groups of people we exist to help. The review allows the trustees to ensure that our strategy and activities remain focused on our stated purpose, and the chief executive reports on our priorities throughout the year.

This anniversary year provides an important opportunity to celebrate two decades of championing, strengthening and supporting school and trust governance. We began the year with an in-person partner event at EdCity, London, where NGA

launched *The Case for Governance*. The event brought together sector leaders to reflect on the distinctive contribution of governors, trustees and governance professionals, and the vital role governing boards play in connecting schools and trusts to the communities they serve. The keynote, delivered by Dame Christine Gilbert, Chair of Ofsted and the Education Endowment Foundation, supported the launch and thanked those who govern, alongside recognising NGA's work leading and supporting the evolution of governance within the sector. The anniversary will continue to be marked through the year, with the national conference in summer 2026 providing a major member celebration of 20 years of governance, service and impact.

In this important year, as part of NGA's commitment to ongoing service improvement, staying current and listening to members, trustees agreed to invest in a series of technology-based improvements, under the title Project Phoenix. The project has included the consolidation of our existing member-facing online platforms. Our new platform has been created in-house to provide members with streamlined access to our Knowledge Centre resources, events and e-learning. It included the launch of our own AI based tool, NGA assist, enabling members to ask questions and receive AI responses from only NGA or DfE sources. From early in 2026/27, the platform will also include our own board management system, where boards can upload meeting documents, add comments and post updates. The newly implemented platform is a step forward for NGA in terms of technology but also improves the experience for our members providing a quality assured platform to meet all governance needs and enquiries. Going forward these changes will reduce NGAs reliance on expensive external providers when we want to make changes or improvements.

Achievement and performance

Charitable activities

Key achievements and successes during the period include the following:

The annual membership survey in autumn confirmed that NGA's core services continue to be valued by members. Learning Link was rated 4.3 out of 5 for satisfaction, the highest of all services. The Knowledge Centre, Gold Advice service and training each scored 4.2, while the weekly e-newsletter scored 4.0. These results show continued strong satisfaction with NGA's main member services.

"NGA has an excellent range of resources and templates. This has had an excellent impact for me and helped me to support the board in a very positive way. I am also able to direct them to resources and training on Learning Link which is extremely useful."

NGA member, Governance Professional (Response to 2025 membership survey)

NGA's core publications; *The Chair's Handbook*, *Welcome to Governance* and *Governing a Multi Academy Trust* continue to be valued by members. Notably over the course of this year, these three publications have moved to a primarily digital format in order to continue to support governors, trustees, and governance professionals by providing clear, practical guidance across key areas of governance in a more cost-effective, accessible way.

The number of queries received by the advice team fell by 25% in 25/26. However, the number of queries received from trusts and academies remained consistent, making up 70% of queries. The most popular topics of queries made to the team were around complaints, exclusions, recruitment and governance roles.

NGA Assist, our 24/7 AI powered guidance tool was launched in Autumn 2025 and has processed almost 8,000 messages with 100% positive feedback.

NGA website views increased significantly (+45%) compared to the previous reporting period, indicating continued strong engagement with member services. Resource downloads for the year ending March 2026 reflect the scale of change in the education sector that members need to keep pace with. Our most popular download was a Schools white paper summary followed by a briefing covering the new approach to Ofsted inspection.

The membership survey also highlighted positive ratings for events, with virtual events maintaining their popularity. Between April 2025 and March 2026, we ran 35 events consisting of 11 webinars, 22 other virtual events, and two in-person conferences (The National

Governance Conference for Schools and Trusts, held in July and Annual Conference and AGM, held in November). The overall attendance for this period totalled 5,950 (reaching almost 1000 more members than the previous year), with significant additional post-event views of recordings. For the first time since 2019 we held our AGM and accompanying seminars as face-to-face events. We trialled holding it as an event within the Schools and Academies Show, giving our members the chance to access the rest of the show around our own content. This was evaluated incredibly well, and we will continue to explore this and similar opportunities to further enhance member experiences.

Our Outstanding Governance Awards take place every two years. The 2025 awards set a high standard, showcasing inspirational governance stories from across the country. With a prestigious ceremony at the Houses of Parliament, winners and finalists demonstrated how strong governance leads to improved outcomes, innovative practices and resilient leadership. Their stories provided not only recognition but valuable lessons for others looking to enhance governance in their own schools and trusts.



Professional development offer

Our virtual and face-to-face training service exceeded expectations, with growth supported in part by the introduction of new public access courses which include understanding independent review panels, the role of members, governing AI in schools and trusts, and health & safety. Leading Governance's differentiated programmes continue to provide CPD for chairs and governance professionals, with particular growth seen in the financial year for those new to clerking.

Our consultancy services have grown exponentially and whilst our external reviews of governance continue to be our flagship offering, last year saw the expansion of other key areas, including our investigation service. Our team of consultants has grown to meet demand, and the team now has over 700 cumulative years of education leadership and governance experience.

Our Learning Link platform was brought in-house for the first time, with the development of our own portal reducing our reliance on third party for-profit companies. We published five brand new Learning Link modules, including for the first time two differentiated pathways to achieve statutory annual safeguarding CPD. We also re-wrote our newly branded 'induction suite' which now includes six refreshed modules. Satisfaction data remains high with 98% of those completing modules saying they would recommend them to other governors or trustees.

Working with partners

In the last year, NGA has continued to collaborate with partners to produce resources and work together for the wider benefit of the sector. This has included:

- **Google for Education** provided specialist support, culminating in our AI toolkit and policy builder.
- **FFT** provide data tools for schools and have worked with NGA to co-host webinars focused on monitoring pupil performance.
- **The PSHE association** shared their expertise to support the production of NGA guidance and a blog covering the new RSE curriculum.
- Our partnership with **Parentkind** continued, with updated guidance on parental engagement that draws on national parent survey insights.
- We updated our careers guidance in partnership with **The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)** and **The Gatsby Foundation**.
- **The DfE** – we continue to work collaboratively with the Department to ensure NGA resources are timely, accurate and help members to interpret often complex official guidance. Our Prevent duty toolkit is an example of this work.
- **Browne Jacobson** – as well as acting as NGA’s official legal partner, supporting our Gold Advice service, Browne Jacobson attended several NGA events to provide detailed legal updates to our governance professional members.

In the spring term, NGA contributed to a series of **NAHT regional roadshows**. The events brought together school leaders, governors and trustees, creating a rare opportunity to learn together, ask questions and reflect on shared challenges. This provided a valuable opportunity to engage directly with school and trust leaders to extend NGA’s reach.

In April 2025, NGA contributed to a **national school funding lobby on school cuts**, with the subsequent STRB pay award including a surprise announcement of some additional funding.

Research and thought leadership

NGA continued to develop its thought leadership and research programme, using member insight and sector evidence to highlight the contribution of governance and inform national education policy. Key publications included:

- [*Creating connections*](#), **June 2025**. This research explored how effective relationships and connections support strong governance, including the links between governing boards, school and trust leaders, local communities and wider stakeholders.
- [*The Annual School and Trust Governance Survey*](#), **July 2025** continued NGA’s contribution to the national evidence base on governance, providing ~~and provides~~ insight into issues including workload, financial pressures, SEND and the effectiveness of governance arrangements.
- [*The school complaints landscape*](#), **September 2025**. This report examined the context in which schools and trusts manage complaints, and the implications for governance, accountability and stakeholder relationships.

- [The three strands of leadership.](#)

November 2025 – this research report is the result of a valued partnership between three national organisations representing the core strands of leadership across the English education system: NGA, the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the Institute of School Business Leadership (ISBL). It considers the relationship between school and trust leaders, governance and the wider education system and explores how clarity of roles, effective relationships and shared purpose contribute to strong leadership and decision-making.



- [How do you solve a problem like the SEND system?](#) **December 2025.** This policy paper brought a governance perspective to the challenges facing SEND provision and considered how governance can contribute to better outcomes, accountability and system-wide improvement.

- [The case for governance.](#) **January 2026.** This report set out why governance is essential to the effectiveness and accountability of schools and trusts. It reinforces the value of independent oversight, strategic challenge and community representation, making the case for governance as an integral part of a strong education system.

Influence and representation

NGA has continued to prioritise representing and creating change for the governance community as a core part of our mission and in delivering on our charitable objective.

In September 2025, the Minister for Schools, Georgia Gould came to NGAs outstanding Governance Awards to thank and congratulate governors, trustees and governance professionals for their continued support in improving the educational experiences of children and young people.



Through our work, we continue to be instrumental in informing and influencing change in policy, practice and guidance. NGA continues to be represented at many important sector meetings, both at roundtables and direct meetings with officials, ensuring the voice of the governance community is heard. Key meetings include:

- Direct meetings with Ministers of state for Education;
- Regular meetings with:
 - Ofsted national director
 - DFE directors and deputy directors

- DfE governance unit

Regular meetings with the Department alongside other education sector stakeholder working groups and forums include:

- Improving Education Together sub-groups on workforce, accountability and SEND;
- School Academy Funding
- Academies Finance and Assurance
- Ofsted stakeholders' and responsible bodies
- DfE flexible working advisors
- DfE AI working group
- Ofsted MAT expert advisors
- DfE National Associations
- DfE school and colleges update
- Primary aged childcare
- DfE procurement guidance task and finish group
- DfE admissions
- DfE exclusions
- Ofqual exam stakeholders

Regular meetings with partners include:

- School Cuts Coalition with NEU, NAHT, ASCL and Parentkind
- Fair Education Alliance
- Diocesan Governance Group
- Well Schools Advisory Panel
- Education Anti-Poverty Coalition

NGA responded to several formal consultations including:

- School Teachers Review Body 2025-26
- Mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting
- New Ofsted framework
- DfE accountability approach including RISE

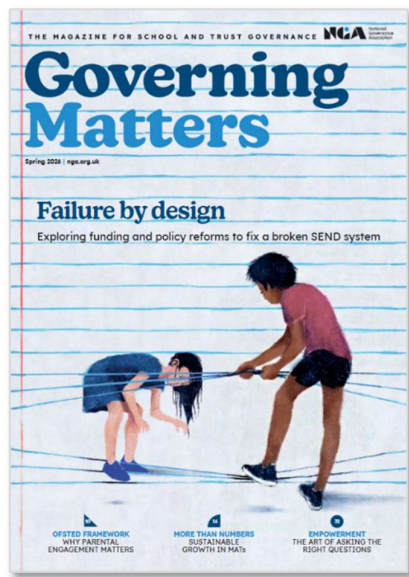
Priority topics

In the 2025-26 academic year, we focused on three priority policy areas:

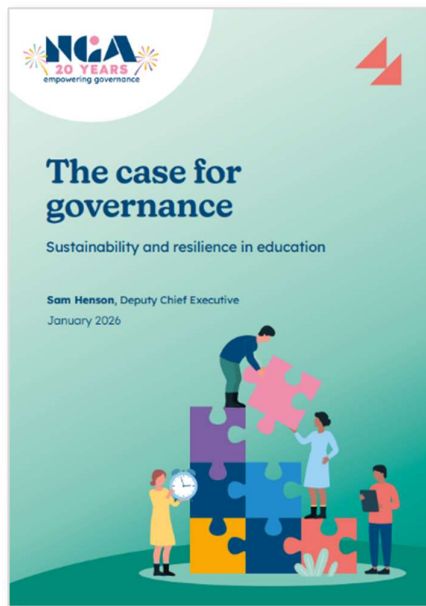
- **Autumn: Workforce** – staff wellbeing, flexible working, the governing board's role as employer and CEO pay.
- **Spring: Funding & 'finding the 1%'** to include benchmarking and reserves oversight.
- **Summer: School improvement** to include a pupil progress and attainment/data focus.

SEND and inclusion was embedded throughout our work as an overarching priority area.

Governance professionals were also an important focus throughout the year. Additional NGA resources have been invested in reviewing the scope and quality of our services and



resources for this highly engaged audience who have a significant impact on the effectiveness of governance practice.



We have continued to raise awareness and understanding of the role of governance in schools and trusts. Our ***Case for Governance*** report sets out a clear and compelling case for governance as a foundational pillar of a sustainable, resilient and high-performing education system. Our subsequent work has built on this with a focus on the four distinct elements of governance within a trust, placing special emphasis on the role of those governing at local level in order to ensure schools and trusts are held accountable to the communities they serve.

Staffing

The board would like to thank NGA staff and consultants for their continued hard work and support; staff continue to go above and beyond. The board are also very proud of the support for governance within our staff with many governing either at school or trust level themselves.

NGA has recruited a Finance Assistant, a Membership Services Advisor, a Marketing Coordinator, a new graduate E-Learning Assistant and new Strategic Lead for Governance Professionals to support our strategic priority and reach to this key audience. In addition, we are proud to say five internal promotions we made following effective investment and development of our people.

Financial review

Principal funding sources

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners for promoting NGA membership and services alongside their own during the year. NGA values these partnerships and is looking forward to continuing to work closely with our partners in the coming year.

Investment policy and objectives

The trustees have full powers under the Memorandum of Association to make ethical investments on behalf of the charity. The trustees, having regard to the liquidity requirements of the NGA's operations, have operated a policy of keeping available funds in short-term interest-bearing deposit accounts and seek to achieve the best available market return on such deposits, commensurate with the requirement for absolute security of capital.

Reserves policy

National Governance Association has a reserves policy to help secure the Association's viability beyond the immediate future and to provide reliable services over the longer term. NGA has set a reserves policy, based on a review of income, expenditure, projects and risks. The reserves policy and risk register are regularly reviewed. In March 2026, trustees kept the level of fixed reserves same as 2025, required to £250,000, and free reserves, to £350,000. Total reserves required was set at £600,000 to reflect the size and costs of running the organisation. NGA's board reconsiders the level of any legal requirements in the event of any potential winding-up of NGA, on an annual basis.

Financial review

The Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2026 shows total incoming resources of £3,116,425 (£3,378,016 2025) and total resources expended of £3,167,352 (£3,080,841 2025) generating a net deficit of (£50,927) (2025 net income resources £297,175). Membership subscriptions decreased during the year ended 31 March 2026 from £1,708,858 to £1,673,310.

Future plans

NGA will prioritise continuing to provide excellent support and services to existing members & Learning Link customers to retain members and extend our services to others. While we wish to reach governing boards that are not currently engaged with our work to improve governance, this must be achieved in a way which is sustainable for the NGA as well as value for money for all types of schools, and which does not detract from the services delivered to existing members. We anticipate the number of MATs and Gold memberships growing after recent and ongoing reviews, and improvements to our products and services. New technology has increased functionality to drive better use of all our resources, and we have further plans to improve our offer in the coming year.

Structure, governance and management

Governing document

National Governance Association (NGA) is a company limited by guarantee (registered number 03549029) which was incorporated on 20 April 1998 and which achieved charitable status on 1 July 1998 (registered number 1070331).

NGA was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of NGA and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of NGA being wound up, members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The governance of the company is the responsibility of the Directors who are elected and appointed under the terms of the Articles of Association. Under charity law the directors are deemed to be trustees of the charity. All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the NGA are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The Board of Directors contains a maximum of nine elected Directors and up to four further co-opted Directors. The current Board will continue in office until NGA's next Annual General Meeting in November 2026.

The NGA has worked hard to ensure that there are some elections held each year and that together with the limits on length of service ensures there should always be a mix of new and more experienced trustees. We are also conscious of diversity on the board and regularly make efforts to ensure the diversity of the board, particularly regarding ethnicity and age.

Organisational structure

Each December the Board of Directors appoints, from its members, four or five honorary officers: The Chair or co-chairs, one or two Vice-Chairs, a Treasurer and an Honorary Secretary. There is a People and Policy Committee which meets annually. The inaugural meeting was 29 April 2025. The board's meetings are supported by the company secretary who is externally appointed.

The Directors meet five times during the year as a full board, in person, if possible, to confirm a strategy to guide the organisation's work and to monitor its implementation. The board also holds two specific shorter virtual 'strategy and risk' meetings which successfully enable more generative discussion.

Operational implementation of the strategic objectives is delegated to the Chief Executive, who is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met. To facilitate effective operations, the Chief Executive also has authority, within terms of delegation approved by the Directors, for operational matters including finance, employment and service delivery.

Induction and training of new trustees

New board members undergo an induction training session before their first board meeting to brief them on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the schedule and structure of meetings, board protocols and the organisation's strategic plan. This is usually led by the Chair (if elected at the time) and its Chief Executive and, or the Company Secretary. During this session, new trustees meet the staff of the organisation and are briefed on their roles. A trustees' section of the NGA's SharePoint contains past and forthcoming papers, relevant policies and other useful resources.

Board development

The Board undertakes an annual Development Day at the start of each autumn term, in recognition of the importance of regular whole-board training to ensure trustees remain focused on their core mission and have the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective in their roles. The training is provided by external experts in the charity governance field. Every three years the board undertakes an external review of governance from an independent, externally appointed charity governance expert to enable them to plan for continual improvement.

Key management remuneration

In the trustees' opinion, the key management personnel of the NGA responsible for the direction, control, running and operation of the NGA on a day-to-day basis consists of the Board of Trustees, and the Chief Executive.

Key management personnel – trustees

All trustees give their time freely and no trustee received remuneration during the year.

Details of trustees' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in the financial statements. There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Key management personnel – Chief executive and deputy CEO

The pay of the NGA's senior staff is reviewed annually following the organisation's pay policy and is normally increased by the cost of living where the board of trustees decides that is affordable. In April 2025 the board of trustees decided the cost-of-living increase was affordable and so it was awarded to all staff.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. The Chief Executive reviews the risk assessment at regular intervals and reports on any changes in this risk assessment to the Board.

Progress against the priorities in the strategy forms the basis of the exception reporting by the Chief Executive to each meeting of the Board. The annual budget, first considered before the start of each financial year, is agreed by the Board at its March meeting and is monitored through quarterly reports to trustees. Internal risks are minimised by sound financial procedures.

Reference and administrative details

Registered Company number
03549029 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number
1070331

Registered office
The Boutique Workplace Company
102 Colmore Row
Birmingham
West Midlands
B3 3AG

Trustees

Lawayne Jefferson – from 26.10.18 co-opted then elected - appointed Chair 11.12.25
Anthea Kenna – from 28.11.20 appointed Vice Chair 11.12.25
Bobby Thandi - from 27.11.21 appointed honorary treasurer 11.12.25
Annie McMaster - from 12.11.22 – appointed Vice Chair 11.12.25
Anthony Langan - from 17.11.23
Michelle Foster - from 17.11.23
Jane Edminson - from 15.11.24
Cheryl Kuit - from 20.11.25
Simon Blackburn - from 20.11.25
Joanne Sanchez-Thompson - from 20.11.25 appointed honorary secretary 11.12.25
James Tulley - until 20.11.25
Jeff Quantrill - until 15.10.25 death in service
Alastair Cowen - until 15.05.25

Trustee attendance at Board Meetings

Lawayne Jefferson	Attended 9 of 9
Alastair Cowen	Attended 0 no meetings that required attendance
Bobby Thandi	Attended 5 of 7 – 2 apologies
Annie McMaster	Attended 7 of 9 – 2 apologies
Anthea Kenna	Attended 7 of 7
Jeff Quantrill	Attended 2 of 2
Anthony Langan	Attended 7 of 7
Michelle Foster	Attended 4 of 7
Jane Edminson	Attended 5 of 7 - 2 apologies
James Tulley	Attended 5 of 5
Cheryl Kuit	Attended 4 of 4
Joanne Sanchez -Thompson	Attended 3 of 4 - 1 apology
Simon Blackburn	Attended 4 of 4

Company secretary

Lara Angell-Wood

Chief executive

Emma Balchin

Deputy chief executive

Sam Henson

Senior statutory auditor

David Farnsworth

Independent auditors

Feltons

Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers

8 Sovereign Court

8 Graham Street

Birmingham B1 3JR

Bankers

HSBC Bank

130 New Street

Birmingham

West Midlands

B2 4J

Statement of trustee responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of National Governance Association for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees on 1 October 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

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Lawayne Jefferson –Chair of Trustees