



The Abbey

The independent school for girls aged 3-18.

Governor Profiles



Mrs Elizabeth Harrison, Chair of Governors attended the Abbey School from 1960 to 1967, and her daughter followed her in 1987. She read Classics at Southampton University, and then took a post-graduate Diploma in Personnel Management in what was then Manchester Polytechnic. Liz's working life was mostly in the public sector, as a researcher, lecturer and consultant at the Civil Service College, as head of Personnel in the Cabinet Office, and as a policy adviser in the field of gender equality. In this role she was the UK lead on gender equality for the EU and at the United Nations. She studied for an MBA at London Business School. Liz has been a magistrate for the past thirty years, and is the present Chair of the Berkshire Bench. She sits on the Board of the Judicial College, the provider of all judicial training in England and Wales. She is an enthusiastic participant in two local choirs, and an equally enthusiastic audience member at a wide variety of arts events, and at most of Reading FC home matches.



Dr Carole Print, Deputy Chair of Council and Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee has worked in finance roles in industry and as an educator for many years. She has recently fully retired from her role in management education at a business school which involved personal research, research supervision and teaching in the managerial application of finance with participants from many parts of the world, as well as coaching and management. She has been a governor of The Abbey School since 1993, and her daughter was a pupil from the age of 5 until leaving after the Upper VI. She continues some work in finance education and is also a governor at a local primary school.



Dr Ian Kemp, Chair of Governance Committee has recently retired having been a GP in Reading for 30 years with a special interest in gastroenterology and medical education. He continues to work with the Health Authority and other areas relating to medicine. He has been a governor of the Abbey School since 1992 and knows the school from different angles since his daughter was a pupil from the Junior School to the VI form, ending up as Head Girl, and his wife was Head of History. Both his children have followed him into medicine. He has been a life-long runner and is very interested in travel.



Mr Michael Emmanuel, Chair of Estates Committee has a daughter in the Senior School; his sister is a former pupil and his mother a former Governor. Educated locally at Crosfields and Shiplake College, he served his apprenticeship in the kitchens of Richard Shepherd's Langan's Brasserie, Paul Bocuse's three Michelin starred restaurant in Lyon, and Roger Verge's three Michelin starred Moulin de Mougins. His main role is as managing director of the French Horn, Sonning. He enjoys most sports having represented school and county and has ridden as an amateur jockey. Michael has been a Governor at The Abbey since 2008.



Mrs Susan Colebrook, Chair of Leadership in Girls' Education Committee and Lead Governor for Child Protection has had a career in secondary school education, teaching Chemistry in the independent sector and holding a variety of positions. She was instrumental in developing the new build of 2 science departments including those at The Abbey School. In 1995 she moved to The Abbey as Director of Science and Head of Chemistry and in 2004 she was promoted to Assistant Head of the Senior School. Since retiring she has become treasurer of a local charity, does voluntary work for another and plays golf where she is also treasurer of the Ladies Section.

Her husband is a chartered engineer, as is her younger daughter, and her elder daughter is a biochemist



Mrs Juliet Anderson, Chair of Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee is an Assistant Director at Health Education England, Thames Valley. Her Professional background is as a nurse, starting her journey in Reading. As her career progressed she specialised in the field of Critical care, working across the Thames Valley and further afield. Having progressed to a senior level Juliet decided to follow her passion for education and innovation, changing direction and becoming an academic. During her 14 years at Bucks New University she gained a master's degree in Education and several teaching qualifications. Publishing and presenting both in the UK and internationally, on topics including team working, leadership in higher education, quality enhancement, innovation in education and simulation. Before her move to Health Education England, Juliet was also Chairperson of the British Association of Critical Care nurses. Juliet has skills in workforce development, workforce transformation, the learner voice, innovation, programme management, governance, team working and interprofessional working. These skills are utilised in her role on the governing body and as chair of the Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee. Juliet has a daughter currently attending the school.



Mrs Julie Cornell, Chair of The Abbey Community Committee, has a professional background in advertising, promotion, marketing and PR, specifically in the retail and shopping centre industry across the US. Now a dual citizen of the UK and the USA, she has worked closely with her American University's alumnae relations and development (fundraising) departments. She has been a governor since 2006. Both her daughters were pupils at The Abbey, one completing A-Levels, the other the International Baccalaureate.



Mr Simon Dimmick is a Partner of Blandy & Blandy LLP solicitors, and specialises in Planning law. He advises in relation to strategic planning, environmental, highways law, and has been practising in Reading for over twenty years. He became a governor of the Abbey School recently and previously has been a governor of his sons' primary school, and a parent governor of his sons' secondary school, Reading Blue Coat School, where his wife is Head of Biology. His first contact with the Abbey School was when his then future wife Sue (a young Dr Fifield) was in her first teaching post



Mr Paramjit Uppal had two daughters who were educated at The Abbey. During his career in consulting and industry, Paramjit has helped many organisations make change happen arising from advances in technology, changing competitive landscapes and broader changes in society. He is currently the founder and CEO of ANDigital, an innovative professional services company accelerating the digital aspiration of its clients and people. This follows on from a successful start-up and sale of North Highland UK, a next generation management consulting business, which amongst many things was ranked in the top 5 of by The Sunday Times in the “best small companies to work for”.



Miss Sanya Burgess is a Digital News Producer at Sky News. Previously, Sanya was the Digital News Editor at The Sunday Times. She was the youngest person to hold an editor role at the paper and her role saw her preside over the news sections on the website, smartphone and tablet. She has previously worked at Mail Online and The Royal Television Society. She holds a Newspaper Journalism Masters from City University and she read English Literature as an undergraduate at The University of Exeter.



Mr Jeremy Sheehan is a senior executive operating in the telecom and IT sector. He has over 30 years of commercial management and negotiation experience contracting large and complex ‘Design, Build and Operate’ fixed and mobile telecom networks. Having worked in both the public and private sectors he has led numerous culturally diverse and international teams. He has travelled extensively and worked with a variety of companies across Asia, North America and Europe. He is presently leading the international expansion of a multinational French construction company. Throughout his career, Jeremy has expressed a keen interest in the development of young people, maintaining a strong belief in the role of extra-curricular activities. He is a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award holder, joined an expedition to Kenya and has mentored and sponsored young adults through a variety of internships and activities. One of his daughters was Head Girl at The Abbey in 2013.



Mrs Elisabeth West is a lawyer by qualification, training and practising initially at an international law firm in London, then lecturing and editing in law part time while raising her children. She is a volunteer adviser and supervisor at Citizens Advice, and has advised in a male prison and at court. Her husband is a lawyer, her first son works in Switzerland, and her second son is in America studying. Her daughter Annabel was at the Abbey from the age of four, and was Head Girl. Annabel read engineering and boxed at Oxford, and works in New York. Elisabeth’s interests are classical music, sport and gardening.



Mr Colin Singer is a consulting actuary at one of the UK’s leading firms of actuaries and advises some of the largest pensions schemes in the country. He is also his firm’s Senior Actuary. His three daughters attended The Abbey School all of whom have a keen interest in music and teaching. Two of his daughters became school teachers after graduating from university. He is also a previous Chair of the Woodley Festival of Music and Arts and sees the value of developing children’s artistic, and other, experiences beyond the classroom. Colin has diverse interests which include music, travel and fitness, being a regular jogger and, some while ago, enduring a couple of London marathons.



Mr Nigel Williams recently retired after 35 years in the teaching profession. Having begun his career at St Albans School in Hertfordshire, for the last five and half years he was Head of Leighton Park School in Reading, where he had also been Deputy Head, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Director of Studies, Housemaster and Head of History, Politics and Ancient History during a 24 year career at the school. A big supporter of the International Baccalaureate, he played a central part in the introduction of the IBDP to Leighton Park, he was trained as the Programme Administrator and to teach Higher Level History, which he thoroughly enjoyed. His wife, Jane, is a Trustee of an Academy Trust for Primary schools and Nigel has served two stints as a Governor at Crosfields School. He is currently mentoring a new Headmaster and keen to retain his involvement in education. He is also a member of the Worshipful Company of Educators.