



Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy

# Governor's Profiles

## 2026

“ Together we grow, learn and succeed ”

Trust

Respect

Courage

Ambition



## Members

Mrs June Kelly

Mr Albert Leaf

Mrs Caroline Matthias

## Members Trust Board

Mr Chris Smith – **Chair of the Trust Board**

Dr Jane Halpin – **Vice-Chair**

Mrs Alison Logan – **Vice-Chair**

Mr David Charles – **Trustee**

Mr Guy Currey – **Trustee**

Mr Dan Dales – **Parent Trustee**

Mrs Gemma Lawson – **Trustee**

Miss Claire Gibson – **Parent Trustee and Chair of Student Progress Committee**

Mr Tim Kemp – **Trustee**

Mr David Priestley – **Observer**

Dr Andrew Fowler – **Principal (Accounting Officer)**

Ms Louise Doran – **Observer (Chief Financial Officer)**

Mr Joe Dicocco – **Observer (Deputy Principal)**

Mr Ian Cooper – **Observer (Deputy Principal)**

# Members Trust Board Profiles

I joined the Board in 2012 and served as vice chair from 2016-2018 and as chair from 2018-2021. A solicitor by trade, I practised for 10 years in commercial litigation in Newcastle. I am passionate about education and volunteering. Since 2013 I have been teaching law and I am currently Head of Law at York St John University. I am studying a doctorate in education at Newcastle University. In addition to my 10 years at Lord Lawson, I currently volunteer as a magistrate having previously spent 6 years as a Special Constable with Northumbria Police. I am also a governor of another large secondary school in York and a primary federation in Ripon, where I live.



Mr Chris Smith –  
**Chair of  
the Trust Board**



Dr Jane Halpin –  
**Vice-Chair**

Originally from Cumbria, I have lived in the North East since attending medical school at Newcastle University. I have worked as a GP in the local area since 2002. I have an interest and experience in safeguarding and mental health in respect to both adults and children. I have served as vice chair of the Board of Trustees since September 2021.

I joined the governing body in 2010, initially as a parent trustee. My three children all attended the academy, the youngest having left in 2022. I have a degree in Education and Mathematics and I am a qualified primary school teacher, training as a maths specialist (age range 8 - 12). Following some volunteering many years ago when a teenager, I've always had a particular interest in SEND and have previously worked as a SEND teacher in addition to class teaching. Currently, I care for adult relatives with a diverse range of needs. I am also a governor at a City of Sunderland primary school (since 2001) where several years ago we established an ASD resourced provision and served as chair for thirteen years. I am vice chair of the Board of Trustees.



Mrs Alison Logan –  
**Vice-Chair**

# Members Trust Board Profiles



Mr David Charles –  
**Trustee**

I joined the Board in July 2025 as an appointed Trustee. I have worked in the aviation industry and Civil Engineering since graduating from University in 1984. I am now a semi-retired Civil Engineering Consultant. I pride myself on being a pupil at Lord Lawson from 1974 - 1981 and have benefited from a good education. I am currently also the Chair of Trustees for a Transport Museum next to Nissan. I currently have one child at the Academy. I greatly believe that education is for all. I look forward to making a positive contribution to the school, staff and pupils.



I joined the Board in 2018 as a parent Trustee. I have recently retired, having worked in local government for over 32 years in a range of economic development and regeneration roles. Throughout this time, I have been reminded of the fundamental role education plays in preparing our young people for the future. I currently have one child at the Academy; my two older children also having previously attended the Academy. I was elected as chair of the Board of Trustees in September 2021. I stepped down from this role in July 2025 but continue as a governor.



Mr Guy Currey –  
**Trustee**



Mr Dan Dales –  
**Parent Trustee**

I joined the Board of governors in January 2025, after having been involved in the vision 2030 activity in late 2024. Having seen how my daughter (now coming to the end of year 8) has settled in, and the focus of the school on personal development for the students, I wanted to get involved to see how I could support the already good work being done. My professional background is in project management within automotive manufacturing, and outside of work I'm a keen runner and swimmer. I'm really enthused about the opportunity to support the kids and the school in whatever way I can.



# Members Trust Board Profiles

I joined the Board in 2025. I bring over 15 years of experience in programme delivery, transformation, and governance within HMRC. As a full member of the Association for Project Management (MAPM), I've led high-profile programmes within the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP), specialising in strategic alignment, stakeholder engagement, and enterprise-level governance.

In my current role as Design Governance and Strategy Lead, I focus on embedding scalable, user-centred governance frameworks and driving culture change across portfolios. I'm passionate about the role that organisational culture and behavioural insight play in enabling effective leadership and decision-making, something I believe is equally vital in education.

My work has involved leading cross-functional collaboration, mentoring teams, and influencing senior stakeholders to deliver meaningful change. As a governor, I'm excited to bring this experience to support the Academy's vision and values. I'm particularly interested in how governance can foster inclusive, high-performing environments for both staff and students.



Mrs Gemma Lawson –  
**Trustee**



Miss Claire Gibson –  
**Parent Trustee and  
Chair of Student  
Progress Committee**

I joined the Academy in December 2021 as a parent governor. After completing a BSc Biological Sciences and MSc Environmental Conservation in the early 2000s, I worked for Gateshead Council in Community Based Services and Countryside Teams until 2013 when I left local government to begin my career in further education.

From 2014 to 2019, I worked as a lecturer in the land-based teams at both East Durham College and Northumberland College, while completing a PGCE then MA Education. In 2019, I became Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Manager for Education Partnership North East's land-based and SEND provisions, visiting campuses across the region. More recently, I started as Curriculum Manager at Northumberland College, with responsibility for higher education, land-based adult provision and agriculture.

# Members Trust Board Profiles



I have over 40 years' experience in secondary education, serving as both Headteacher and Executive Headteacher in Durham. Alongside this, I contributed to Durham University's PGCE programme, supporting new teachers and championing the role of RE in schools.

I've also worked with a wide range of charities and partnerships to help young people and their families thrive. Now retired, I remain active in leadership development with the Durham University Leadership Academy and as a trustee of the North East Religious Education Resources Centre.

I'm passionate about creativity, curiosity, and mentoring young people to achieve their full potential.



Mr David Priestley –  
**Observer**



Dr Andrew Fowler –  
**Principal (Accounting  
Officer)**



I joined the Academy as Principal in June 2019. After a music degree at Exeter University, I worked as an accountant for 7 years. After retraining as a teacher of music and mathematics, I taught in Warwickshire, Berkshire and then for 10 years at Wolsingham in County Durham. I was assistant headteacher at a high performing school in Cumbria before becoming headteacher at Dane Court Grammar School, an outstanding 11 to 18 school in Kent. I worked as Senior School Improvement Adviser in North Tyneside before joining Lord Lawson. I have recently completed a doctorate in educational assessment.



# Members Trust Board Profiles

I joined the Governing Board in 2025 with responsibilities for Safeguarding, Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Attendance. I am also a governor at a local primary school, where I oversee Special Educational Needs and Social, Emotional and Mental Health.

As a dual-registered nurse (Adult and Mental Health), I have over 25 years' experience working with both adults and children in a wide range of settings, including intensive care roles in the UK and overseas, and 20 years specialising in mental health.

My career has centred on complex casework, safeguarding, crisis intervention and risk management, working extensively within multi-agency safeguarding frameworks. I also serve as a Registrant Member of the Nursing and Midwifery Council's Fitness to Practise Committee, making regulatory determinations that uphold professional standards and protect public safety.

As a long-standing local resident and the parent of twins at the school, I am committed to supporting its strategic work to create the conditions in which every pupil can thrive.



Mr Tim Kemp –  
**Trustee**