

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held at the School at 7.45am on Wednesday 17th November 2021

Present:	Richard Vass Stephen Miles Stephen Lawlor Richard Brown Mark Rowell Mary Argent	Chair Chair of Governors Headteacher (From 8.10am) Associate Member (via Zoom)
In Attendance:	Melissa Mulgrew Wendy Newton Fiona Gilmour Jonathan Gorridge Anna Bakonyvari	Business Manager Clerk to Governors Senior Finance Officer (8.00am to 8.15am) Auditor, MWS (8.00am to 8.15am) Auditor, MWS (8.00am to 8.15am)

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies for absence to receive.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. There were no declarations of business interest further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2021-22, or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 6th October 2021 were approved as a true record.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 5, Para 6 – SSEF Buildings. The Headteacher confirmed the proposal to hold one formal opening for all the new SSEF buildings in the Summer Term. It was suggested that previous long-serving members of CCHS staff could be approached to be VIP guests to open the buildings. A full plan would be presented to Governors in due course.
5. Item 10, Para 10c – Asbestos Training. The Business Manager confirmed that there was no statutory H&S requirement for asbestos re-training for the level of work undertaken by the Site Team. The School is only required to identify and appropriately manage asbestos on site.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR’S ACTION

6. There was no Chair’s Action to report. Only routine financial approvals had been made.

8.00am –Fiona Gilmour, Jonathan Gorridge & Anna Bakonyvari joined the meeting.

ITEM 6 – ANNUAL COMPANY ACCOUNTS 2020-2021

7. Item 6.1 – Company Accounts. Jonathan Gorridge, MWS auditor, reported on their audit of the CCHS Consolidated Company Accounts for the year ending 31st August 2021. It was stated that the audit had gone extremely smoothly, and the Finance Team were commended for the in-house production and quality of the annual accounts. The School’s tight financial systems and staff expertise gave the auditors confidence in the School’s ability to keep tight controls. There were no major findings from the audit and the School’s financial systems worked well. Governors queried if there were any specific areas to note within the accounts and the high level of external income from lettings was raised. The additional financial work and project management required

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by the SSEF project were highlighted, along with the possible risks that had been avoided. The impact of the additional buildings and increasing student numbers was discussed in relation to future finances and the School's Fair Access Plan. It was stated that the School was currently in a good financial position, much improved from a few years ago when significant changes had been taken to address possible future financial problems.

8.10am – Mark Rowell joined the meeting and apologised for late arrival.

8. Item 6.2 – Auditor's Management Letter & Letters of Representation. The MWS draft Management Letter was received and two minor points for consideration were explained. The first item related to the new, preferred ESFA academy structure, which was already being addressed by the Governing Body, and the second related to a couple of delayed financial authorisations that had been caused by the Covid situation at the time. Both items were considered minor and were reported for Governor information only. The auditor's Letters of Representation for audit and regularity assurance were also received by the Committee and would be signed after the formal approval of the accounts by the Management Committee in December.

9. Item 6.3 – Audit & Regularity Findings Report. The auditors' Audit & Regularity Findings Report on accounting and internal controls was received. It was reported that MWS had now changed wording relating to the prior year's management letter to be 'Not Significant' and the revision was explained. No findings were to be reported to the ESFA. The strong financial systems and control checks within the School were commended by the auditor.

10. The Chair thanked the auditors for their work and for attending the meeting, and the work of the School's Finance Team in producing the complex set of accounts was commended.

8.15am – Fiona Gilmour, Jonathan Gorridge & Anna Bakonyvari left the meeting.

11. Item 6.4 – CCHS Capital Development Ltd. The Annual Report and Financial Statements for CCHS Capital Development for the year ending 31st August 2021 were received and noted. The accounts were to be formally presented for approval at the CCHS Capital Development meeting on 3rd December. It was noted that the School had applied the statutory guarantee provision which would be filed with Companies House in due course. The statutory guarantee meant that the CCHS Capital Development accounts did not need to be formally audited and that the School guaranteed to cover any liabilities resulting from the subsidiary company.

12. Item 6.5 – Reserves Policy. The Chair raised the issue of the School's current Reserves Policy and unrestricted designated funds and suggested that following the completion of the SSEF project, the unrestricted designated funds could now be redistributed to address the School's current situation. It was also suggested that the timescale of the refurbishment of the artificial pitch needed to be brought forward. The Committee discussed the wording of the current Reserves Policy, the current figures and the various options available.

13. **Decisions.**

a. The Headteacher and Business Manager agreed to review the allocation of the School's unrestricted designated funds and the wording of the Reserves Policy for Committee approval by email.

b. The Committee recommended the approval of the 2020-21 Company Accounts by the Management Committee on 3rd December 2021, subject to the approved revisions of Para 13a to follow.

**S Lawlor
M Mulgrew
Clerk**

ITEM 7 – FINANCIAL UPDATE

14. The consolidated Management Accounts for Months 11 & 12 (July & August 2021), full year outturn, which had previously been received by email, were reviewed and their content noted. The Chair of Governors thanked the Finance Team for their work in obtaining additional financial grants for the School.

ITEM 8 – SSEF PROJECT & CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

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15. The Business Manager gave a verbal update on the SSEF Project and advised that the project was in the defects and snagging remediation stage. The final project accounts had not yet been discussed with the project managers, PCH. The accounts had been trending towards being £150,000 over budget but there were a number of items still to be discussed and it was hoped that the final accounts figure would be closer to break even and not over the allocated budget. Governors would be updated once the accounts had been finalised. It was reported that the cost of materials had risen significantly during the project due to the Covid crisis.

ITEM 9 – POLICIES

16. Item 9.1 – School Lockdown Policy - Decision. The School Lockdown Policy was reviewed and approved as presented with an annual review period.

ITEM 10 – HEALTH & SAFETY

17. The Business Manager reported that there were no material Health & Safety issues to report.

ITEM 11 – GDPR

18. The Business Manager reported that there were no material GDPR issues to report. There had been four Freedom of Information requests and more would be expected after the Year 7 offers day.

ITEM 12 – IT UPDATE

19. An updated IT Asset Replacement Plan dated November 2021 was received and discussed. Following the suggestion at the last meeting for further smartboard replacement, the Business Manager advised that it was not cost-effective to replace additional boards at the current time and that the School's bigger need was for the replacement of staff laptops. The Business Manager advised that the purchase of 20 new staff laptops was now proposed, as opposed to 10 at the last review. The increase in the cost of IT equipment since the last meeting was brought to the attention of the Committee and noted. It was stated that most of the IT purchases proposed for this academic year would be bought from within the IT budget but that additional funding was likely to be needed from reserves in the next two years. Governors queried whether the proposed equipment was sufficient to cover staff needs, and this was confirmed by the Business Manager.

20. Decision. It was agreed that £600 could be drawn from current reserves for IT purchases.

ITEM 13 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21. Hall Lighting. The Staff Governor put forward the suggestion that new lighting in the School Hall would be beneficial to productions and was likely to cost around £15,000 to £20,000. The Committee noted the need and suggested that this would be a good fund-raising project for the students or the PA. Full project costing would be required and would be considered.

ITEM 14 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22. Decision. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held remotely by Zoom at 7.45am on Wednesday 9th February 2022. (Clerk's Note – Date subsequently changed to 11th February)

23. This was likely to be the last meeting for Mark Rowell, Staff Governor, and he was thanked for his input and support after 8-years of service.

The meeting closed at 9.00am.

All