

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the GOVERNING BODY **held remotely via Zoom at 8.00am on Thursday 15th October 2020**

Present:	Steve Miles Richard Vass Stephen Lawlor Mary Argent, Andrew Bonwick, Sarah Clements, Ros Cornish, Sarah de Souza-Ingle, Jenny Fowle, Jason Oster, Mark Rowell, Lauren Smith,	Chair of Governors Vice Chair of Governors (from 9.00am) Headteacher
In Attendance:	Emma Ledwidge Melissa Mulgrew Wendy Newton	Deputy Headteacher Business Manager Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Richard Brown	

Clerk's Note: Prior to the meeting Governors had returned an electronic list of approved agenda items for meeting efficiency and the Clerk conveyed significant comments to the meeting at the appropriate item.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Richard Brown and for late arrival from Richard Vass (found by Clerk post meeting).

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 2020-21, or conflicts of interest, or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2020 were agreed as a true record.

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 6, Para 9 – GB Standing Orders. The Clerk confirmed that the GB Standing Orders had been amended as agreed.

5. Item 6, Para 11e – Parent Governor Election. Arrangements were in hand to undertake a Governor Information Session and Parent Governor election this term.

ITEM 5 – CHAIRS' ACTION & EMAIL ACTION

6. Chairs' Action. A summary of Chairs' actions since the last meeting was received and noted.

7. DfE & ESFA Letters. Governors confirmed receipt of two ESFA letters from Eileen Milner dated 16th July and 26th August 2020 by email previously and had noted their content.

ITEM 6 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

8. Item 6.1 – GB Membership. A summary of GB membership was received and one typographic error noted. There were currently three Nominated Governor vacancies and two Parent Governor vacancies and it was confirmed that a Parent Governor election for two new governors was to be undertaken this term. The diversity of the current GB was raised and discussed, it was hoped that the forthcoming election would bring greater diversity, if this did not occur the vacant Nominated Governor positions would be re-considered. It was suggested that the use of virtual meetings may encourage parents living further away from the School to come forward for consideration. It was

ACTION

also suggested that informing the student body about the Parent Governor election may assist in getting parents to nominate themselves. The reduced sub-committee membership was noted.

ACTION

9. **Decision.** The Headteacher agreed to publicise the Parent Governor election to the students.

S Lawlor

10. **Item 6.2 - Associate Member - Decision.** The Chair proposed the re-election of Mary Argent as an Associate Member of the GB and this was seconded by the Headteacher. With her consent, Mary Argent was unanimously elected as an Associate Member of the GB for academic year 2020-21 and her ongoing support of the School was thanked.

11. **Item 6.3 – Headteacher’s Performance Review.** The Chair advised that the Headteacher’s Performance Review Panel last year had consisted of himself and Richard Vass and proposed that this remained the same. The meeting discussed the need for an external adviser and for a Performance Review Appeal Officer, if required.

12. **Decision.** The meeting agreed that:

- a. The Chair and Vice Chair of Governors would act as the Headteacher’s Performance Review Panel for 2020 and that no external adviser would be used.
- b. Ros Cornish would act as the Performance Review Appeal Officer, if required.

**Chair
Vice Chair
R Cornish**

ITEM 7 – GB GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

13. The Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Full GB and each sub-committee, the GB Standing Orders, GB Scheme of Delegation and Governors’ Code of Conduct were presented for re-approval. The committees who had already met this term had reviewed and approved their TORs and the remainder would be reviewed at their first meeting. The deletion of one reference to religious character was proposed for the GB Standing Orders and the phrasing of one duty relating to key stage targets was proposed for the Full GB TORs.

14. **Decisions.**

- a. The Clerk agreed to revise the TORs for the Full GB and GB Standing Orders in line with the discussions of the meeting.
- b. With the agreed correction, the TORs for the Full GB and GB sub-committees (Management, Curriculum, Facilities & Finance, Staff & Student Matters, Staff Pay, Staff Pay Appeal, Audit, Staff Disciplinary and Staff Disciplinary Appeal Committees) were approved.
- c. With the agreed correction, the GB Standing Orders were approved.
- d. The GB Scheme of Delegation and Code of Conduct were approved as presented.

Clerk

ITEM 8 – HEADTEACHER’S REPORT TO GOVERNORS

15. The Headteacher’s Report to Governors dated 15th October 2020 was received and the Headteacher gave a verbal update on current schooling situation. It was confirmed that the School had not yet had any cases of COVID-19 but that it was likely to happen at some stage. The manner in which the students had responded to the new schooling situation was commended as was the hard work of all the staff. Student attendance was reported as averaging around 95% daily and staff attendance was also good. Governors were advised that new ways were being found to undertake as many of the usual school activities as possible within the current health restrictions. The use of the student bubbles and timetabling changes were explained. The lack of student movement around the School was highlighted but dedicated outside areas had been assigned and students were encouraged to go outside during break and lunchtime whenever the weather permitted. The School was now moving to blended schooling where lessons were being broadcast out to students who were unable to be in School and conversely teachers who were out of School could broadcast their lessons into the classroom. Governors noted the extra workload put on teaching staff by blended schooling.

16. It was reported that Chelmsford was likely to be in a raised to COVID-19 Tier 2 in the near future however the Government had stressed that schools and universities would remain open at all COVID-19 levels. It was reported that staff wellbeing was a standing item on the weekly SLT

agenda and that all efforts were being made to minimise any extra work and unnecessary stress of School staff. The School's pastoral system was working well, overseen by the new Assistant Headteacher. Autumn Term A level re-sit examinations were underway for a small number of students at an off-site location and GCSE re-sits were to take place in November at the School.

8.50 – 9.00am – The Headteacher left the meeting to attend School Assembly.

17. The Deputy Headteacher gave a summary of how the COVID catch-up funding was being utilised by the School with support being given to: re-sit examination students; the current Year 11 and Year 13 students taking public examinations this academic year, and individual students who had difficulties during the lockdown period and needed to catch up. An extra teacher had been employed to assist on a one-to-one basis. Pupil Premium money was also available to assist catch-up for students in that category. The Business Manager advised that the School had been allocated £61,200 in catch-up funding which had to be tracked and was auditable. The funding would be primarily used on additional staff costs as required during the year.

ITEM 9 – CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL UPDATE

18. The Business Manager advised that very little had happened relating to capital development in recent months because of the School closure and the sensitive nature of fund-raising at this current time. Jason Oster, Link Governor to the Better Buildings Committee, confirmed that COVID-19 had stopped fund-raising but that there had been a few donations during lockdown. A new fund-raising plan was to be formulated over the next few weeks. The Business Manager presented the SSEF Project Status Dashboard as at 30th September 2020, the enforced five-week lockdown had led to revised completion dates of 24th May 2021 for the teaching block and 12th July 2021 for the Sports Hall. There had been few variations to date and the contingency figure remained healthy. Investigations had begun on the repurposing of the Gym into the new Library and the current Library into another Art Room, initial estimates were around £500,000.

19. One required project variation related to the Main School CIF-funded roof replacement work as some of the current insulation did not meet current building standards. The additional cost of £9000 had been approved by the Headteacher and would come out of the SSEF re-modelling contingency. The Chair thanked the Business Manager for her continuing hard work on the SSEF project. The date for the formal handover and opening was queried and it was suggested that September 2021 was most likely to allow for any necessary period of snagging.

9.00am – Richard Vass joined the meeting and the Deputy Headteacher left to teach.

20. Following the return of the Headteacher, Governors asked how students had coped with the period of remote teaching and the possible effect on outcomes. It was reported that the remote schooling had worked effectively overall but had been challenging for staff and some students. All students had received a personal interview with their form tutors in Week 3 of the term in order to assess the situation of individual students and assess if any extra support was required. The first round of formal teacher assessments (TA1) was due to take place imminently and may identify further problems. External support from counsellors and the school nurse was still available within School. The employment situation of the Acting Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) was queried and discussed, and appreciation was voiced for Fiona Harrison's assistance to the School.

21. **Decision**. The Business Manager agreed to investigate the statutory requirements relating to the re-classification of the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) role.

M Mulgrew

9.10am – Mark Rowell left the meeting to teach.

22. The Business Manager gave an update on School finances; the year-end audit was taking place the following week and July/August month end reports would be sent to Governors in the near future. There had been an end-of-year budget target of around £8,000 but current indications suggested that it could be nearer £10,000 although the outcome of a £9,000 COVID-related claim from the Government was still awaited. The overall financial situation was a lot better than had previously been expected. The Chair thanked the whole Finance Team for their efforts over the

past few months and asked the Business Manager to pass on the thanks of the Governors.

ACTION

ITEM 10 – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS & WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

23. The School Financial Regulations Manual and Scheme of Delegation 2020-21 was presented for approval with minor amendments. The Facilities & Finance Committee had previously reviewed the document and recommended it for approval. The School's ECC-model Whistleblowing Policy was also presented, un-amended, for annual re-approval.

24. **Decision.** The School Financial Regulations Manual and Scheme of Delegation 2020-21 and the Whistleblowing Policy were approved as presented with an annual review.

ITEM 11 – AUDIT ACTIONS

25. **Decision.** The meeting approved the continued use of Juniper as the School's external Internal Controls Evaluation auditor for 2020-21 and the Juniper two-visit scope of work for Internal Controls Evaluation visits for 2020-21.

ITEM 12 – ADMISSIONS POLICY 2022

26. The proposed Admissions Policy for 2022 was presented for approval. The Clerk summarised comments received from Governors concerning the policy. Queries were raised on: the definition of 'Right to Reside' in relation to Brexit, Sixth Form entry numbers, and how the entrance test results banding was agreed and the issues were clarified by the Headteacher. The meeting also raised the issue of gender re-assignment and how the issue may affect the Policy. It was noted that information on the entrance test banding had been received by Governors in the past.

27. **Decision.** With the agreed correction to the 'Right to Reside' definition, the Admissions Policy for 2022 was approved for public consultation. The policy would be received again for formal determination at the Governors' Conference in January 2021 post the consultation process. The Clerk agreed to locate the test banding information and re-send it to Governors for information.

Clerk

ITEM 13 – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

28. **Decision.** The Child Protection Policy dated September 2020 was received and approved as presented. The Headteacher pointed out that the team of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads had risen by two and now included the two new Assistant Headteachers.

ITEM 14 – RISK REGISTER

29. **Decision.** The Full GB section of the CCHS Risk Register was received and approved as presented. The Clerk advised that new pandemic risks were being formulated by the School.

ITEM 15 – SCHOOL TERM DATES 2021-22

30. **Decision.** The School term dates for 2021-22 had not yet been finalised due to the impact of the COVID-19 situation and would be sent to Governors for approval by email in due course.

S Lawlor

ITEM 16 – GB SUB-COMMITTEES

31. **Item 16.1 – Management Committee – Decision.** The minutes of the Management Committee meetings held on 2nd July and 25th September 2020 were received and approved; no specific questions were raised for further discussion.

32. **Item 16.2 – Facilities & Finance Committee.** The minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 7th October 2020 were not yet available and would be circulated by email in due course.

ITEM 17 – SENIOR SPEECH DAY

33. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic the decision has been made to cancel Senior Speech Day at Chelmsford Cathedral on 14th April 2021 and the guest speaker, Bridget Kendall, deferred until 2022. Consideration was underway on whether some form of virtual event was possible.

ITEM 18 – SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – VISITS & TRIPS

34. The meeting was reminded that overseas and residential school trips were currently prohibited by the DfE and COVID-19 regulations and would also not be covered by insurance. Local day trips had been organised to replace the residential Biology and Geography coursework trips. It was confirmed that students were permitted to go out in groups of more than six as long as they were in their year group bubbles. Governors queried how careers provision had been affected by the current schooling situation and were advised that only regular, critical visitors were allowed to visit the School, this ruling prevented guest speakers of any sort. The School was looking at ways of addressing careers and other external contacts through virtual means.

ITEM 19 – GOVERNOR REPORTS

35. Item 19.1 – Governor Visits. There had been no Governor visits to the School since the last meeting. It was suggested that Governor visits would need to be addressed at some stage.

36. Item 19.2 – Governor Training - Decision. Ros Cornish advised that she had viewed a Birkett Long webinar on School Governor Liabilities which was commended, the Business Manager had also viewed the webinar and agreed to send the Clerk a link to the webinar for other Governors to view. Sarah de Souza-Ingle reported that she had undertaken a Juniper training course on SEND and would send the course documentation to the Clerk for distribution. Jenny Fowle had completed a 2-morning Safeguarding course. The Clerk reminded the meeting that Juniper webinars were available on a range of Governance topics and did not involve any personal cost.

M Mulgrew

37. Item 19.3 – Safeguarding. Ros Cornish, Safeguarding Governor, advised that she had liaised with the School and had received confirmation that the Single Central Record was up-to-date. She had also had a telephone meeting with the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral), who had been very busy over recent months, and received an update on current pastoral activity which included: addressing examination and university concerns of students, mental health mornings, art therapy groups and positivity talks. MyConcern was still widely used by the staff. There were currently no students on any social service registers and no ongoing cases at present. The meeting was advised that the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) chairs a joint safeguarding meeting covering both the Main School and Sixth Form which was proving very productive for both parties, and that Sixth Form students were currently presenting the most pastoral problems.

38. Item 19.4 – Parents' Association Matters. Ros Cornish, PA Link Governor, reported that little PA activity was possible at the present time but that the clothes bin and second-hand uniform continued to raise funds. Student competitions and the sale of Christmas puddings had recently begun. The Headteacher advised that the PA had kindly agreed to purchase board games for student use during lunchtimes and were thanked for their financial support.

39. Item 19.5 – Better Buildings Committee. Jason Oster, Link Governor to the Better Building Committee, re-iterated that there would be a cautious approach to fundraising this year in light of the financial uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. A new plan of action was to be agreed in the next few weeks. The Headteacher reported that the SDP for 2020-21 contained a development point on increasing alumni participation in capital development fundraising.

ITEM 20 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

40. Item 20.1 – School Development Plan 2020-21. The School Development Plan 2020-21 was received for information. The Headteacher advised that due to the disruption of the last academic year some developments items had been carried forward to this year and blended into the new Plan. Major development points included Fair Access and the change@CCHS4G project, updated

details of which were in the 'About' section of the School website.

ACTION

41. **Item 20.2 – Examination Review 2020.** The Public Examination Review 2020 was received for information. The meeting was advised that the Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) process had been challenging for both staff and students and the CAG system was explained. Overall students had achieved a stronger set of grades than recent years although some individual students had been disappointed with their CAG. It was stated that public examinations were currently still going ahead next Summer and that there had been some small changes to the course content. The public examination period had been delayed to give an additional three weeks of teaching time and would have a much narrower time-frame. It was suggested that further changes to the examination process next year might still occur. It was confirmed to Governors that the good examination results and university entrance successes were widely publicised amongst the student body in order to encourage retention into the Sixth Form. The Headteacher advised that there had been an agreement amongst local schools that actual examination percentage figures would not be published this year in light of the problems encountered. Governors noted that there had been less student movement to KEGS after Year 11 and that the School was congratulated for its efforts in retaining students. The reason for Year 11 students leaving for other secondary school sixth forms was queried, this tended to relate to specific A level courses not available at CCHS.

ITEM 21 – ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

42. **Car Parking.** A Governor concern was raised about the parking situation around the Rectory Lane car park and the issue was discussed. It was suggested that a period of free parking in the Rectory Lane Car Park at the start and end of the school day would greatly assist the issue. The additional problems arising from current road works on Broomfield Road were also noted.

43. **Decision.** The School agreed to contact ECC to raise the current traffic and parking concerns and to also propose a period of free parking at the Rectory Lane car park.

**S Lawlor
M Mulgrew**

44. **Letter of Thanks – Decision.** It was agreed that the Chair would write a letter of thanks to all the staff for their hard work since the start of the term.

Chair

ITEM 22 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

45. **Decision.** It was agreed that the next Full Governing Body meeting would be held at 8.00am on Thursday 25th March 2021. The meeting was reminded that the Governors' Conference was currently due to take place on Saturday 23rd January 2021, the event would be discussed by the Management Committee in December.

All

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the Headteacher and all the staff for their continuing hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The meeting closed at 10.20am.

Agreed as a true record.

S Miles, Chair of Governors 25th March 2021