

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the GOVERNING BODY held at the School at 8.27am on Friday 9th March 2018

Present: Steve Miles Chair of Governors
Peter Cook Vice Chair of Governors
Nicole Chapman Headteacher
Richard Brown, Sarah Clements, Ruth Neave, Jason Oster, Lee Palmer,
Mark Rowell, Duncan Stevens, Richard Vass, Yvonne Wickers, Mike Worboys

In Attendance: Stephen Lawlor Deputy Head (Curriculum)
Maria French Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Susan Hoefling Business Manager
Wendy Newton Clerk to Governors

Apologies: Mary Argent, Ros Cornish, Lauren Smith

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mary Argent, Ros Cornish and Lauren Smith.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. There were no declarations of interest further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2017-18.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th October 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record.

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 3, Para 14 – Cambridge Contact - Decision. Details for a contact at Churchill College had not yet been received from Margaret Cousins, the Head agreed to investigate.

5. Item 3, Para 9 – Headteacher’s Performance Review Panel. The Chair advised that in light of the resignation of Mitra Janes, it had been necessary to revise the Headteacher’s Performance Review Panel and that it had consisted of himself and Mike Worboys, Chair of the Curriculum Committee.

6. Staff & Student Matters Committee. The meeting was informed that it had been agreed that Yvonne Wickers, the current Vice Chair of the Staff & Student Matters Committee, would formally take on the chairmanship of the Committee until the annual elections of committee chairs at the end of the Summer Term. A new Vice Chair of the Staff & Student Matters Committee would be sought at their next meeting on 21st March 2018. Yvonne Wickers was thanked for taking up the chairmanship.

7. Item 5, Para 13 – Training Certificate - Decision. It could not be confirmed if Ros Cornish had received her Certificate of School Governance from ECC. The Clerk agreed to check the situation with Ros Cornish.

8. Item 7, Para 18 – Behaviour Data. It was confirmed that further clarification of the persistent absence figures and behaviour incidents figures shown in the last Head’s Report had been sent to Governors by email after the last meeting.

ACTION

Head

Clerk

9. Item 8, Para 21 – Admissions Policy. The Chair advised that following the Determination of the School's Admissions Policy for 2019, a formal objection had been sent to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA). Details of the objection were summarised for the meeting, it was stated that the objector was known to both the GSHA and OSA and had made objections to other schools. A query was raised as to whether the concept of vexatious complainants was known to the OSA.

ACTION

10. Decision. The Clerk agreed to pass the information concerning vexatious complainants to the OSA.

Clerk

11. Item 13, Para 31 – Speech Day. The meeting was advised that Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Essex, had agreed to act as guest speaker at Senior Speech Day.

ITEM 5 – MINUTES OF THE GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE & COMPANY AGM

12. Decision. The minutes of the Governors' Conference and Company AGM were presented and approved as presented.

ITEM 6 – CHAIR'S & EMAIL ACTION

13. There was no Chair's Action or Email Action to report.

ITEM 7 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

14. The meeting was informed that the Management Committee, in their capacity of Company Members, had offered the position of Nominated Governor to Jason Oster who had accepted the position. In an aim to reduce the size of the GB the remaining two vacant Nominated Governor and Parent Governor positions were to be left unfilled for the time being.

ITEM 8 – HEADTEACHER'S REPORT TO GOVERNORS

15. The meeting received the Head's Report to Governors dated March 2018 and an update on Year 7 admissions for September 2018 was tabled. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) summarised the admissions information and advised that 2 additional pupil premium girls had benefitted from the new 2% priority category in the Admissions Policy. A positive change in applications and allocations from local primary schools was noted in relation to the outreach work undertaken by the School. It was stated that inroads were being made to the local primary schools with the largest number of pupil premium students and it was hoped that the success of obtaining a place at CCHS would spread by word of mouth, encouraging more students to sit the Entrance Test. A query was made on the data which showed over large reduction in Year 7 figure for students with English as an Additional Language, no specific reason was known for the change. It was reported that the primary schools chosen for the Enrichment Day Masterclass and Outreach schools were the top 10 schools with the highest percentage of students receiving free school meals.

16. It was noted that the School had not had a full Ofsted inspection since 2010, the meeting discussed the issue and the likelihood of receiving an inspection. Triggers for inspections could include a change of head or safeguarding problems. The meeting was reminded that the School's examination and performance data was received by DfE annually.

9.05am – The Deputy Heads and Mark Rowell left the meeting to teach.

17. A query was raised concerning the Progress 8 data for disadvantaged students which was 0.72 against 0.76 overall, the difference was deemed minimal and not significant. It was stated that this figure had varied in previous years, with some years when disadvantaged students had outperformed their peers. Within the benchmarking data for SSGS schools it was noted that CCHS was 20/20 for Academic Value Added Score, this was stated as being specific to that particular year group and that the placing was expected to go up again this year. A request was made for additional information on Year 13 university applications for engineering subjects.

Head

ITEM 9 – GOVERNOR COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK & FULL GB TRAINING SESSION

ACTION

18. Further to the discussions of the Governor Conference the Chair advised that the GB was obliged to assess its own competencies. A Governor self-assessment had been undertaken in 2014 and it was now planned to undertake a new assessment based on the recent DfE Governor Competency Framework. An electronic questionnaire was currently being compiled for Governor completion and the results collated by Mike Worboys and Lee Palmer. A GB workshop session was to be held on Tuesday 24th April to review the outcome of the competency survey and draw from the results anything concerning the GB which may need to go into the new Strategic Plan. Governors were asked to identify what they felt were the three main priorities for the Strategic Plan, these were to be reported at the end of the electronic questionnaire.

9.15am – Sarah Clements left the meeting.

19. The meeting discussed the content of the Competency Framework and how the GB could address any issues raised by the questionnaire. It was stated that the Strategic Plan was a Governor-owned strategy delivered by the School. There was discussion on the high level vision for the School and possible content of the Strategic Plan. It was noted that the outcome of the current capital development bid was critical in relation to the new Strategic Plan and it was confirmed that the outcome should be known before the workshop. The Head tabled an ASCL document on Governor expectations for general reading.

20. **Decision.** The Clerk agreed to email the new NGA booklet entitled 'Being Strategic' to all Governors.

Clerk

ITEM 10 - CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

21. The Business Manager advised that the outcome of the current capital development bid for a Sports Hall and teaching block was expected by April. The building plans were being refined and planning applications prepared. It was suggested that both projects might be undertaken at the same time in order to benefit from economies of scale. Plans were underway to convert the old Technology rooms: T2 into two classrooms and T3 into a larger teaching/lecture space during the Summer holiday. A plan for financing the conversion was to be received by the Facilities & Finance Committee the following week. The Head advised that Jason Oster and the Better Buildings Team were working hard on a new £100,000 fund-raising appeal for the project. Students were heavily involved in the project and would hopefully encourage their parents to donate.

ITEM 11 – FINANCIAL FORECAST

22. The Business Manager tabled a 5-year financial forecast for information. An In Year deficit of £(168,641), including a £40,000 contingency, was forecast for the end of FY2017-18, slightly lower than previously forecast; it would be the first year with a significant deficit. The background of the income and expenditure figures were explained and questioned by Governors. The meeting was advised of new additional funding for Maths and Further Maths at A level starting in 2019-20, clearer details of which were awaited. It was confirmed that teaching versus non-teaching staff costs were comparable to other grammar schools. Details of staffing changes and subject groups were received in relation to making additional financial savings. It was reported that the figures for 2019-20 income were based on previous financial allocations and that the new national funding formula would be introduced in 2020-21.

23. It was stated that the income figures for September 2018 were based on having a Sixth Form entry of 135 students and details of curriculum changes and Sixth Form group sizes were received. The meeting was reminded that a budget deficit situation had been forecast previously and that reserves had been set aside to cushion the effects in the short-term. Information was received on the ring-fenced reserves. Governors requested information on the best ways of getting the School budget back into balance without having to touch reserves particularly if the School was not able to expand. It was stated that the Facilities & Finance Committee would have to produce options for consideration depending on the outcome of the capital development bid.

24. **Decision.** The Head agreed to explore further ways of addressing the budget deficit situation.

ITEM 12 – CCHS RISK REGISTER

25. The CCHS Risk Register was presented for annual review and the meeting reminded that all GB sub-committees review their own specific sections on a termly basis.

26. **Decision.** The Full CCHS Risk Register was approved as presented.

ITEM 13 – HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

27. A new updated Health & Safety Policy was presented for approval. The policy had been reviewed and approved by the Facilities & Finance Committee in November 2017. Governors asked when the last major incident had occurred, the Business Manager advised the last reportable incident had been about two years ago and summarised the current accident reporting system. It was stated that there were no outstanding health and safety related item requests unfilled because of financial concerns. The Science Department was considered to be one of the higher risk areas and they had just undergone an H&S spot audit with 100% success. The health and safety issue of students walking around using mobile phones and headphones was discussed. The very hazardous nature of the road junction directly outside the School was raised and the Head reported that requests for improvement had been turned down by the Council on the grounds of cost.

28. **Decision.** With one typographic amendment, the Health & Safety Policy was approved.

ITEM 14 – GB SUB-COMMITTEES

29. The minutes of the following GB sub-committees were presented and approved:

- a. Curriculum Committee meetings held on 21st November 2017 and 7th February 2018,
- b. Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 15th November 2017,
- c. Staff & Student Matters Committee held on 4th December, and
- d. Management Committee meetings held on 8th December 2017 and 9th February 2018.

30. The issue of GDPR was raised and the meeting informed that the services of ECC were to be used at the cost of £1500 per year. The Business Manager summarised the activities required to be undertaken by the School. It was stated that as long as schools were attempting to address GDRP requirements no adverse ICO action would happen.

31. **Decision.** It was agreed that the Business Manager would circulate an email advising of the School's current position in relation to GDPR at the end of May 2018.

S Hoefling

ITEM 15 – SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – VISITS & TRIPS

32. An updated list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2017-18 and outline trips for 2018-19 was presented for approval with a few administrative amendments. The Head informed the meeting that the School had reached the final of the Bar Mock Trial taking place in Cardiff and that a parent had agreed to pay for all the trip expenses.

33. **Decisions.** The list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2017-19 was approved as presented. The Head agreed to convey the thanks of the GB to the Bar Mock Trial donator for his support.

Head

ITEM 16 – GOVERNOR REPORTS

34. **Item 16.1 – Governor Visits.** Since the last meeting, formal Governor visits had been undertaken by Lauren Smith (15 Nov 17), Yvonne Wickers (28 Nov 17), Ruth Neave (11 Jan 18), Richard Brown (2 Feb 18) and Ros Cornish (21 Feb 18) and their visit reports were received for information. The Chair thanked Governors for their visits and reports, and encouraged Governors to undertake formal visits to the School at least once a year.

35. Item 16.2 – Governor Training. Mike Worboys, Training Link Governor, summarised the EES training courses undertaken by Governors since the last meeting and encouraged Governors to register for training. Ruth Neave advised that she had not yet received her certificate for completing her Certificate of School Governance which was thought to have been sent directly to the School.

ACTION

36. **Decision**. The Clerk agreed to obtain new ECC certificates for Ruth Neave and Ros Cornish.

Clerk

37. Item 16.3 – Safeguarding. Yvonne Wickers, Safeguarding Governor, advised that Ros Cornish had undertaken a Safeguarding visit in February and commended the School on their safeguarding procedures. It was reported that there were plans to migrate the Single Central Record onto SIMS. The issue of IT access from outside the School was raised in relation to security. It was stated that the external link into the School IT system was considered very safe.

38. Item 16.4 – Parents’ Association Matters. A report summarising PA fundraising activities and donations to the School was received from Ros Cornish, PA Link Governor, and noted.

39. Item 16.5 – Better Buildings Committee. Jason Oster, Link Governor to the Better Building Committee, advised that ring-rounds to parents continued and was achieving similar success to the previous year, about 1/3 of parents make a contribution. Details of the new £100,000 fund-raising appeal were received along with a summary of the associated activities of the students. The involvement of the students within the School was deemed very positive and was commended.

ITEM 17 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

40. Item 17.1 – School Development Plan 2017-18 Mid Term Review. The Mid Term Review of the School Development Plan for 2017-18 was received for information.

41. Item 17.2 – Performance Information. An updated comparison of SSGS performance data was received post the publication of DfE data in January 2018 and the background of the information summarised.

42. Item 17.3 – ESFA Letter. A letter received from Peter Lauener, Chief Executive of the ESFA, was tabled for information as it was required to be shared with Trustees.

ITEM 18 – ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

43. Snow Days. The Head summarised the actions of School staff in relation to the recent Snow Days and praised the hard work of the Site Team in keeping the School site clear and safe. The Committee thanked the Site Team and staff for their efforts during the Snow Days.

44. Drugs Letter. The meeting was informed of a letter from Mid Essex Secondary Heads which had recently been sent to all parents warning them of the problem of A Class drugs in the area.

ITEM 19 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

45. There was discussion on the proposed date of the next meeting, Friday 6th July, as a number of members of the SLT were due to be teaching on the proposed date.

46. **Decision**. It was agreed the Clerk would investigate alternative dates for the Full Governing Body meeting at the end of the Summer Term.

All

The meeting closed at 10.55am.

Agreed as a true record.

S Miles, Chair of Governors 6th July 2017