

# **CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

## **Minutes of a meeting of the GOVERNING BODY held at the School at 8.20am on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

Present: Steve Miles Chair of Governors  
Mike Worboys Vice Chair of Governors  
Nicole Chapman Headteacher  
Mary Argent, Andrew Bonwick, Sarah Clements, Ros Cornish, Jenny Fowle,  
Mark Rowell, Lauren Smith, Duncan Stevens, Richard Vass, Yvonne Wickers

In Attendance: Stephen Lawlor Deputy Head (Curriculum)  
Maria French Deputy Head (Pastoral)  
Melissa Mulgrew Business Manager  
Wendy Newton Clerk to Governors  
Mark Hatley + 3 PCH Associates Ltd (for Items 1 – 3 only)

Apologies: Richard Brown, Ruth Neave, Jason Oster

1. The meeting opened with an official farewell to Lee Palmer, a former Nominated Governor who had recently left the Governing Body. The Chair then welcomed new Parent Governors, Andrew Bonwick and Jenny Fowle, to their first Governing Body meeting.

### **ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Richard Brown, Ruth Neave and Jason Oster, all due to work commitments.

### **ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

3. Ros Cornish advised that she was now a trustee of the charity 'Friends of Broomfield Hospital' and the Clerk confirmed that the Register of Governor Business Interests on the School website had been revised. The new trusteeship was not considered to be a conflict of interest. There were no other declarations of interest further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2018-19.

### **ITEM 3 – SSEF PROJECT & CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT**

4. Mark Hatley from PCH Associates Ltd gave a summary of his company's involvement with the School and the current situation relating to the SSEF project. A PCH project report was tabled for Governor information. It was stated that the planning permission application for the new build section of the project was due to be submitted within a few days. A design and build contract was to be used for the new buildings. The administration behind the building project was explained to the meeting and Governors put forward questions on the procurement process, contract content, employer's requirements and building type. The importance of having very precise employer's requirements was stressed and discussed in relation to the pricing of the project. A shortlist of four contractors was proposed from the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) responses received and the background and suitability of the companies were discussed. Some Governor concern was raised about the seeming lack of detail within the employer's requirements at the current time and it was stated that further refinement was still possible at a later stage and that there was no risk until tenders were returned and contractor selected and a letter of acceptance sent.

5. The Chair stressed the need for all Governors to be informed of the overall progress of the project but with decision-making within specific delegated financial limits being made by a small working party and reporting back to the Full GB. The first meeting of the working party would be required the following week in order to go through the employer's requirements and agree the PQQ specifications. Regular meetings would then be held at the School throughout the project. Governors queried the cost of project delay and whether it was included in the liquidated damages

### **ACTION**

section of the contract. The cost of any project delay was deemed to be the cost of needing demountable buildings and the issue was debated in relation to whether an indemnity clause should be in the contract.

**ACTION**

#### **9.20am - Mark Hatley and his colleagues left the meeting.**

6. The Business Manager gave an update of the SSEF project cost projections, £151,000 had been spent to date, £99,000 ahead of the project budget, and details of scope changes were explained. Demolition of the Bancroft Building had commenced a week ahead of schedule but the application for planning permission been slightly delayed by one week. The Head advised that the parent body had been approached for professional expertise to assist with the SSEF project and details of four parent responses were received. The meeting discussed the composition of the SSEF working party and the possible need for a project manager to work on behalf of the School once the SSEF design and build contract was let. The continued use of PCH Associates for the second stage of the project was debated by the meeting, it was noted that this decision would need to be made before August 2019.

7. **Decisions**. It was agreed that:

- a. The Head would write back to the volunteer parents, acknowledging their offer and asking them to keep their skillset on file for possible future use.
- b. The SSEF Working Party would comprise of the Head, Business Manager, Chair of Governors and Andrew Bonwick. The first task of the working party would be to agree the PQQ contractor shortlist of four contractors and review the employer's requirements. The working party would also need to consider the continuing need for a School project manager.

**Head**

**All**

#### **ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

8. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were agreed as a true record.

#### **ITEM 5 – MATTERS ARISING**

9. **Item 4, Para 4 – Cambridge Contact - Decision**. Lauren Smith asked for additional guidance on the form of contact required at Cambridge University. The Clerk reminded the meeting that it had previously been agreed that having a governor from Cambridge University had not been ideal logistically and that new contacts were being sought in relation to school visits. Lauren Smith agreed to send contact details for Dr Seb Savory at Churchill College to the Head of Sixth Form, and Andrew Bonwick agreed to send contact details for Susan Bayly at Christ's College.

**L Smith**

**A Bonwick**

10. **Item 9, Para 15a – Swimming Pool**. The Business Manager advised that the work relating to the viability of the swimming pool was ongoing and that some remedial work would be required to stabilise the building during the adjacent demolition work, the cost of which would come from the contingency of the enabling work project.

#### **ITEM 6 – CHAIR'S ACTION & EMAIL ACTION**

11. **Chair's Action**. The meeting was advised that since the last meeting the Chair had approved the increase of in-year entries into Year 10 from 5 to 10 students per year, this change would now need to be included in the next revision of the School's Admissions Policy. It was noted that the increase would only be possible until the increased Year 7 cohort size of 180 reached Year 10.

12. **DfE & ESFA Letters**. The meeting confirmed the receipt of the DfE letter from Lord Agnew dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and the ESFA letter from Eileen Milner dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and noted their content.

#### **ITEM 7 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS**

13. A summary of GB membership as at 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 was received for information. It was noted that there had recently been a change of incumbents in the Governor Safeguarding roles and that there were currently two vacant Nominated Governor positions. The Clerk formally advised of the

result of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors election which had been undertaken electronically: Steve Miles had been re-elected as Chair of the Governing Body and Mike Worboys had been elected as Vice Chair of the Governing Body, both positions ran from 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019 until the end of the 2019-20 academic year. The Clerk advised the meeting that elections for the chairs of the three sub-committees would follow by email in due course.

**ACTION**

### **ITEM 8 – HEADTEACHER’S REPORT TO GOVERNORS**

14. The meeting received the Headteacher’s Report to Governors dated June 2019 and summarised the content of a conclusion added on the occasion of her retirement. The recent bereavement of Nick Minnican, Assistant Headteacher, was reported with great sadness and the impact on the SLT and whole School noted. A query was raised about the actual number of students participating in each of the curriculum enrichment trips and further information was given.

15. **Decision**. It was agreed that future Headteacher Reports would include the number of students participating in each curriculum enrichment trip.

**Head**

### **ITEM 9 – FINANCIAL MATTERS**

16. **School Budget**. The Business Manager put forward the proposed School budget for 2019-20 which had the recommendation of the Facilities & Finance Committee. An end-of-year surplus of £8000 was forecast but it was hoped that this figure would increase during the year. The budget included a £40,000 contingency. The Chair commended the Business Manager on achieving a positive value after a number of deficit years and thanked the whole School for all their efforts in addressing and being able to lower School costs. Details of the 3-year budget return now required DfE were given by the Business Manager and the assumptions behind the figures were explained. A surplus of £58,000 was proposed for 2019-20, £(41,000) for 2020-21 and £(5000) for 2021-22, each year assumed a £50,000 contribution from CCHS Capital Development Ltd. It was confirmed that the figures assumed Year 12 Sixth Form numbers of 160 in 2020-21 and 165 in 2021-22, these figures were deemed critical in relation to the future budgets. The budget figures also included the usual £40,000 contingency. It was stressed that no information on future Government income had yet been received and that School cost savings would continue.

17. **Decision**. Both the School budget for 2019-20 and 3-year DfE budget return figures were approved as presented.

**M Mulgrew**

18. **Deficit Reduction**. A status report on the budget deficit strategies proposed since May 2018 was received and details of each proposal were summarised by the Business Manager. The report had previously been received and discussed by both the Management and Facilities & Finance Committees. Future lettings income had been reduced in light of the delay to the SSEF project. KS5 subjects had been reviewed and those with small take-up had been stopped (Mandarin and Russian). KS5 group sizes had been increased when possible which resulted in fewer teaching groups. The School had decided that restricting KS5 students to 3 A levels was too risky in relation to student retention and also inconsistent with other grammar schools. Increasing contact time for teaching staff had been put forward to staff at a recent JCC meeting and concerns had been raised about well-being and staff workload. The related savings achieved would only be the avoidance of an NQT for one year and so the proposal had not been implemented as yet but was available as an option in the future if required. Staff savings continued whenever possible when staff changes occurred. It was suggested that there was scope for substantial savings within the School’s current utility costs and the Business Manager would be addressing the situation. The financial impact of each of the deficit reduction strategies was presented and noted by the meeting. The Head summarised the current situation behind LA and DfE funding of school places. The meeting was advised that another local grammar school had already increased its class sizes and the positive effect on finances was noted, it was stated that this option may need to be considered in the future.

19. **Decision**. The Business Manager agreed to present revised figures relating to the budget deficit savings and the 3-year forecast at the next Facilities & Finance Committee meeting.

**M Mulgrew**

**10.15am – The Deputy Head (Pastoral) left the meeting.**

## **ITEM 10 – MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

20. The meeting confirmed that since the last Full GB meeting, management accounts and cash flow reports had been received by all Governors for the months ending February, March and May 2019.

## **ITEM 11 – GDPR**

21. The School's annual GDPR audit by ECC had been undertaken on 10<sup>th</sup> July and the formal report was received. The School had achieved the highest level of 'Good Assurance'. There had been findings but was travelling towards higher compliance. It was reported that some schools had declined in performance due to new, stricter GDPR requirements. The meeting put on record the gratitude of the Governors for the large amount of GDPR work which the Business Manager had undertaken since her arrival at the School in order to achieve such an outstanding report.

## **ITEM 12 – CCHS RISK REGISTER**

22. **Decision.** The GB section of the School Risk Register was presented for termly review. After the correction of one erroneous colour coding, the document was approved. The meeting was informed that a new section of the Risk Register had been produced for Facilities & Finance Committee review which related solely to the SSEF Project as it was deemed to have its own specific risks. The full School Risk Register would be received for annual approval in March 2020.

## **ITEM 13 – DATE APPROVAL**

23. Item 13.1 - GB Meeting Dates 2019-20 - **Decision.** The proposed dates for GB and GB sub-committee meetings for academic year 2019-20 were approved as presented.

24. Item 16.2 – School Term Dates 2020-21 - **Decision.** After one Governor query on staff INSET day allocation, the proposed School term and INSET dates for academic year 2020-21 were approved as presented.

## **ITEM 14 – GB SUB-COMMITTEES**

25. The minutes of the following GB sub-committees were received and approved as presented:

- 14.1. Staff & Student Matters Committee meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March and 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019.
- 14.2. Facilities & Finance Committee meetings held on 1<sup>st</sup> May and 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019.
- 14.3. Curriculum Committee meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.
- 14.4. Management Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

## **ITEM 15 – SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – VISITS & TRIPS**

26. An updated list of previously approved Residential & Overseas Trips for 2019-20 and new outline trips for 2019-20 was presented for approval. Governors queried the reasons behind core curriculum trips and a suggestion was made that an indication of the number of students participating on each trip would be useful.

27. **Decision.** The list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2019-20 was approved as presented. It was agreed that an additional column would be added showing the estimated number of students who would be participating on each trip.

## **ITEM 16 – GOVERNOR REPORTS**

28. Item 16.1 – Governor Visits. Since the last meeting, formal Governor visits had been undertaken by Duncan Stevens (1<sup>st</sup> May 2019) and Yvonne Wickers (14<sup>th</sup> June 2019) and their visit reports were received for information. No additional comments were made.

## **ACTION**

All

All

Dep Head  
(Curr)

29. Item 16.2 – Governor Training. The meeting was advised that Andrew Bonwick had recently attended the Juniper (formerly EES) New Governor Induction course but no other training had been undertaken since the last meeting. It was also reported that Jenny Fowle was also booked on a New Governor Induction course plus a Safeguarding course in the next academic year. The Chair stressed the benefits for all Governors to use the available Juniper courses to update their knowledge. The Governance information available on 'The Key' website was also commended. The meeting discussed the possible benefits of the School organising its own training course next year and the concept of the 'New Ofsted Framework' was suggested as being a useful topic.

**ACTION**

30. **Decision.** It was agreed that Stephen Lawlor and the Clerk would liaise to arrange a Full GB training session in the next academic year, the topic would also be added to the next Management Committee agenda.

**S Lawlor  
Clerk**

**10.32am – The Deputy Head (Pastoral) re-joined the meeting.**

31. Item 16.3 – Safeguarding. Ros Cornish, Safeguarding Governor, and Yvonne Wickers, former Safeguarding Governor, had undertaken a safeguarding-based School visit on 14<sup>th</sup> June and a summary of their findings was received for information. Since the visit Jenny Fowle had agreed to take over the role of Deputy Safeguarding Governor. The Chair thanked Maria French, Deputy Head (Pastoral) and all the pastoral team for their hard work in relation to safeguarding matters. The meeting was informed that most School staff had been re-trained recently and that a few staff members would be trained in September. Governors raised the issue of obtaining and wearing security lanyards within the School and particularly after hours and the problem was discussed.

32. **Decision.** It was agreed that Governors would keep possession of their own security lanyards which were to be worn at all times when within the School.

**All**

33. Item 16.4 – Parents' Association Matters. Ros Cornish, PA Link Governor, presented a written summary of PA information and stressed how hard the members of the PA worked in their fundraising efforts for the School. It was noted that support from the main parent body was sometimes lacking, often with the same parents repeatedly supporting events. It was confirmed that the School regularly put forward specific requests for additional items to be funded by the PA.

34. Item 16.5 – Better Buildings Committee. In the absence of Jason Oster, Link Governor and Chair of the Better Building Committee, the Head advised that the Better Buildings Committee had met recently. The hard work of Jason & Janice Oster and Chris Wickers in trying to get parents to donate money was commended particularly in light of the recent SSEF grant. The Committee had decided that from September 2019 it would aim to raise money specifically for the fitness equipment which would be required for the new Sports Hall.

**ITEM 17 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

35. Item 17.1 – School Development Plan (SDP) 2018-19. The Final Review of the SDP 2018-19 was received for information and its contents noted.

36. Item 17.2 – School Development Plan 2019-20. A summary of the new objectives for the SDP 2019-20 was received for information, these objectives would be transferred into the new SDP and expanded into full action points prior to receipt of the document next term.

**ITEM 18 – ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

37. No other items of business were raised.

**ITEM 19 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

38. **Decision.** It was agreed that the next Full Governing Body meeting would be held at 8.15am on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

**All**

## **HEADTEACHER'S RETIREMENT**

39. On the occasion of the retirement of Nicole Chapman at the end of the term, the Chair ended the meeting by thanking her for 12½ years' service as Headteacher of CCHS and for her 47 years' service in the teaching profession. Her passion, energy and commitment to the School were commended without reserve, and the results of her hard work recognised by all. The success of the School in finally obtaining the funding for a sports hall and a new teaching block, and so being able to expand further, was deemed a direct result of her own personal drive and determination. The Governors presented the Head with flowers and gift of jewellery as a token of their great appreciation. The Head thanked the Governors for their kind gift and for their support during her time at the School.

40. The meeting closed at 11.00am.

Agreed as a true record.

S Miles, Chair of Governors      15<sup>th</sup> October 2019