

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the GOVERNING BODY held at the School at 8.30am on Tuesday 15th October 2019

Present:	Steve Miles Mike Worboys Stephen Lawlor Mary Argent, Andrew Bonwick, Ros Cornish, Sarah Clements, Jenny Fowle, Jason Oster, Mark Rowell, Richard Vass, Yvonne Wickers, Mike Worboys	Chair of Governors Vice Chair of Governors Headteacher
In Attendance:	Maria French Melissa Mulgrew Wendy Newton	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) Business Manager Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Richard Brown, Lauren Smith, Emma Ledwidge	

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Richard Brown, Lauren Smith and Emma Ledwidge, the new Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum).

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 2019-20, 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 12th July 2019 were agreed as a true record.

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 5, Para 9 – Cambridge Visits. Details of a contact at Christ's College for possible future school visits to Cambridge had now been received and was being investigated by Dr Palmer.

5. Item 16, Para 30 – Governor Training. The Headteacher advised that Stephen Rollett, an ASCL Curriculum and Inspection specialist, had been approached to undertake a training session for the Full GB and his reply was awaited. The GB was advised that an Ofsted inspection was highly likely in the near future and that Governors should familiarise themselves with Ofsted requirements and also the School's safeguarding information available on the Governor Portal.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION & EMAIL ACTION

6. Chair's Action. There was no Chair's action since the last meeting to report.

7. DfE & ESFA Letters. Governors confirmed receipt of two ESFA letters from Eileen Milner dated 19th July and 3rd October 2019, and two DfE letters from Lord Agnew both dated 17th September 2019, and noted their content. It was stressed that receipt of these letters was to encourage Governance transparency and the Business Manager confirmed that the survey required by the Lord Agnew letter had been completed and returned before the deadline.

ITEM 6 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

8. Item 6.1 – GB Membership. A summary of the current Full GB membership was received and three Nominated Governor vacancies and one Parent Governor vacancy were noted. Since the last meeting resignations had been received from Duncan Stevens, Ruth Neave and Associate Member Priti Patel. A Governor Information Session was to be held on 22nd October 2019 for any

ACTION

interested parents which would be followed by a Parent Governor election after Half Term. The Nominated Governor vacancies and skills currently missing on the GB were discussed and it was suggested that a new Governor with fund-raising skills would be valuable. The Head advised that a new 'Building a Future for our Girls' appeal with a £200,000 target had recently been initiated in order to fund the kitting out the new SSEF buildings. The effect of the Governor vacancies on sub-committee membership was noted but deemed manageable. Two Nominated Governors, Ros Cornish and Richard Vass, were approaching the end of their term of office at the end of the current Term. Both Governors were happy to continue and the meeting agreed that both Governors should be re-elected for a further 4-year term. The agreement would be formally ratified at the next Management Committee meeting on 9th December 2019.

Clerk

9. **Item 6.2 - Associate Member - Decision.** The meeting was reminded of the requirement to annually re-elect Associate Members. Following the resignation of Priti Patel, there was now only one Associate Member, Mary Argent, and the Chair proposed re-election. With her consent, Mary Argent was unanimously elected as an Associate Member of the GB for academic year 2019-2020, her ongoing support of the School was thanked.

10. **Item 6.3 – Headteacher’s Performance Review.** The Chair advised that the Headteacher’s Performance Review Panel last year had consisted of the Chair of Governors, the Chair of the Curriculum Committee and Chris Christofides, an external adviser to the Panel, who was no longer available. The meeting discussed the requirement for an external adviser and the need to appoint a Performance Review Appeal Officer was raised.

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

- a. The Chair and Vice Chair of Governors would act as the Headteacher’s Performance Review Panel for 2019.
- b. The Headteacher would investigate possible ECC provision of an external adviser.
- c. Richard Vass would act as the Performance Review Appeal Officer, if required.

**Chair
Vice Chair
Head
R Vass**

9.00 – 9.15am – The meeting adjourned briefly to meet and thank recently resigned Governors, Ruth Neave, Duncan Stevens and Peter Cook.

ITEM 7 – GB GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

12. The Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Full Governing Body, 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. A membership wording change was proposed for the TORs of the three major sub-committees and discussed.

13. **Decisions.**

- a. With one title amendment, the TORs for the Full Governing Body were approved.
- b. With the amendment to state ‘a minimum of 4 governors’ for the TORs of the three major sub-committees, the TORs for the Management, Curriculum, Facilities & Finance, Staff & Student Matters, Staff Pay, Staff Pay Appeal, Audit, Staff Disciplinary and Staff Disciplinary Appeal Committees were approved.
- c. The GB Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation and Code of Conduct were approved as presented.

**Clerk
Clerk**

ITEM 8 – HEADTEACHER’S REPORT TO GOVERNORS

14. The meeting received a newly-styled Headteacher’s Report to Governors dated 15th October 2019 and the Headteacher summarised the changes. The fact that Ofsted had not inspected the School since 2007 was stressed and that after September 2020 ‘Outstanding’ schools would not be exempt from a full inspection. It was suggested that the change of headteacher and the SSEF monies would make a short inspection likely at some stage this academic year. Governors put forward questions on certain items in the document and additional clarification was received. A query was raised on the correlation between the School’s primary outreach work and the success in actually gaining a place at the School and the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) summarised the

situation. It was reported that the recent changes in Admissions Policy to assist Pupil Premium students were slowly showing results and that up to 10 students would have been helped to gain a place next year (up from 2 the previous year). Governors were informed of the various methods undertaken to specifically assist Pupil Premium students, encourage them to sit the test and formally apply for the School. The method of examination result banding was queried, explained and discussed. The meeting was advised that the additional money received from the Government for Pupil Premium students would have to be used on extra interventions, particularly in Maths and English, in order to bring the students up to the required standard, if required.

15. Governors queried the low KS5 Subject Value-Added scores reported, via a commercial data package – ALPS - for six subjects and asked for reasons behind the low scores and how the School was addressing the problem. The Head explained the measuring system behind the figures and how, by having very able students enter with excellent previous grades, making even greater progress was hard, hence the lower value-added scores. It was stated that the data was used to identify areas for the School to investigate further. The School's own department self-evaluation and SLT monitoring processes were summarised. It was noted that the lowest scores were in subjects with very few students which would be disproportionately affected if one student performed poorly. The meeting was advised that the official DfE-approved figures would be published later in the Autumn Term. The issue of students leaving the School after Year 11 was raised. It was reported that 38 students had chosen to leave after Year 11 in July 2019, 22 of whom had gone to KEGS. The reasons for their departure had been given as being the student's own choice and/or that they were under the impression they would get better A level results at an alternative school. The Headteacher stated that a far more robust approach was to be taken this year to correct the impressions of other educational establishments received by CCHS students. Governors were informed that the School had achieved better A level results than KEGS in some important subjects in the recent Summer examinations, including Biology, Physics and Further Maths. The meeting discussed the effect of having poorer A level results in 2017 and 2018 and the negative effects of moving schools in relation to UCAS applications. Greater efforts were to be made on attracting new external Year 12 students for September 2020, with a new approach to recruitment.

ITEM 9 – ADMISSIONS POLICY 2021

16. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) presented information on the School's current system of offering up to 10 additional places for entry at the start of Year 10 and confirmed the intention to continue with the scheme until the Year 9 cohort reached 180 in 2023. Governors noted the situation. It was stated that the students entering in Year 10 in the previous two years had integrated without problem and were progressing well. The proposed Admissions Policy for 2021 was presented for approval with only minor administrative changes. The meeting reviewed the policy changes and discussed the entry banding system in relation to Pupil Premium applicants.

17. **Decision.** The Admissions Policy for 2021 was determined (approved) as presented.

ITEM 10 – CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & BUDGET DEFICIT

18. The Business Manager presented the SSEF Project Status Dashboard as at 23rd September 2019 and summarised the progress to date. The Bancroft Building had been demolished with only minor snagging remaining. A few scope variations to the original bid had been required which had resulted in the current financial situation being around £100,000 favourable. The biggest deviation to date had been the cost of Chelmsford City Council planning permission fees which had cost £15,708, £10,000 over expected. The tenders for the main build project were due back by 18th October with the final appointment expected to be made the following week. Planning permission had been submitted and the decision was expected on 24th October but no problems were anticipated.

10.10am – Mark Rowell left the meeting to teach.

19. A structural report on the swimming pool was received for discussion and the Business Manger summarised the various options available; these ranged from doing nothing, piling and

refurbishing the present building (c£300,000), to building a completely new pool complex costing (c£750,000). All options were being investigated which would be presented to Governors before a Management Committee decision which would be required by December 2019 prior to the start of the main project building work started. The meeting discussed the situation and noted that the building could also be utilised for other School purposes such as Sixth Form use. Governors recognised the usefulness of the pool to both the School and the community plus was an additional stream of income for the School, keeping the pool was considered to be the best option if financially viable. The Chair of Governors and Chair of the Facilities & Finance Committee thanked the Business Manager for the extensive work she had undertaken on the SSEF project since her arrival at the School.

20. Following the lower than expected student numbers in Year 12, the Business Manager had prepared revised high-level budget forecast figures which included similar student losses in future years in order to show prudent budgeting figures. The current impact of the lower student numbers led to a cumulative deficit of £(488,232) by the end of 2024, however the Business Manager advised that KS5 funding was now known to be increasing from £4000 to £4188 and future minimum funding for KS3 and KS4 is expected to be £5000 per student. It was reported that the recent funding information now suggested a more favourable funding situation with small deficits for a couple of years before heading towards a relatively balanced budget. Concern was raised that unknown additional costs could be put onto schools by the DfE in the future which would affect the outlook. The issue of School reserves was raised and discussed, it was confirmed that a large proportion of the School's reserves were allocated and ring-fenced for specific reasons.

ITEM 11 – AUDIT COMMITTEE

21. The meeting was advised that the new ESFA Financial Regulations required the Governing Body to have an Audit Committee, as had been in place previously until October 2018. The Management and Facilities & Finance Committees had already discussed the new requirements and it was proposed that the duties of the Audit Committee should be delegated to the Facilities & Finance Committee and that Steve Miles should undertake the role of Responsible Officer and would therefore be Chair of the Audit Committee. There was also a need to officially appoint the new Headteacher, Stephen Lawlor, as the School's Accounting Officer. The scope of work for the School's external auditor's (Juniper, formerly EES) Internal Controls Evaluation visits for 2019-20 was presented for approval, the ICE auditor had recommended that the School should reduce to a two-visit schedule. The Business Manager presented the 2018-19 ICE action plan summary and explained the actions taken to address the findings. The two high-priority findings had been immediately addressed by the School. Governors noted the actions taken by the School.

22. Decisions:

- a. It was agreed that the members of the Audit Committee would be the members of the Facilities & Finance Committee less any staff members.
- b. Steve Miles was appointed as the School's Responsible Officer. (**Clerk's Note:** Post this meeting the Facilities & Finance Committee was advised that there was no need for the School to appoint a Governor as Responsible Officer as the role, which is to evaluate the internal financial controls, is outsourced to Juniper Education.
- c. Stephen Lawlor was appointed as the School's Accounting Officer.
- d. The Juniper scope of work for two Internal Controls Evaluation visits for 2019-20 was approved.

Clerk

S Miles

S Lawlor

ITEM 12 – RISK REGISTER

23. **Decision.** The Full GB section of the CCHS Risk Register was reviewed and approved as presented.

ITEM 13 – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS & WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

24. The School Financial Regulations Manual and Scheme of Delegation 2019-20 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 for annual re-approval.

25. **Decisions**. The School Financial Regulations Manual and Scheme of Delegation was approved as presented. The Whistleblowing Policy was approved as presented with review by Governors whenever ECC changes occurred.

ITEM 14 – GB SUB-COMMITTEES

26. **Item 14.1 – Management Committee – Decision**. The minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on 30th September 2019 were received and approved; no specific questions were raised for further discussion.

27. **Item 14.2 – Facilities & Finance Committee – Decision**. The minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 2nd October 2019 had only been just approved by the Chair and would be presented at the next meeting. The Business Manager advised that the School was required to formally submit the School's benchmarking data by 14th November 2019 and would draft the information for the Chair's approval.

M Mulgrew

ITEM 15 – SENIOR SPEECH DAY

28. Senior Speech Day is to be held in Chelmsford Cathedral on Wednesday 1st April 2020. The Headteacher reported that Professor Jane Clarke, President of Wolfson College, Cambridge, had been invited to act as Guest Speaker for the event and that her acceptance was awaited.

ITEM 16 – SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – VISITS & TRIPS

29. An updated list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2019-20 and outline trips for 2020-21 was presented for approval. The Headteacher advised that the proposed music tour to Italy in July 2020 was not going ahead due to excessive costs and that a closer European location was being investigated for the following academic year.

30. **Decision**. The list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2019-20 was approved as presented.

ITEM 17 – GOVERNOR REPORTS

31. **Item 17.1 – Governor Visits**. There had been no formal Governor visits to the School since the last meeting. The Headteacher encouraged Governors to undertake formal visits to the School, arrangements to visit can be made via the Clerk to Governors. Four Governors had attended the New Year 7 Parents Welcome Evening and the quality of the speeches was commended.

32. **Item 17.2 – Governor Training**. Jenny Fowle reported that she had attended her Governor induction training in September and also had a safeguarding course booked in February 2020. The Clerk encouraged Governors to investigate the Juniper (formally ECC) training courses in order to make the most of the expensive annual subscription fee.

33. **Item 17.3 – Safeguarding**. Ros Cornish, Safeguarding Governor, advised that she and Jenny Fowle, Deputy Safeguarding Governor, were due to visit Maria French, Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) and School Safeguarding Lead, before the next Staff & Student Matters Committee meeting. The requirement for all Governors to be aware of the safeguarding information on the Governor Portal was stressed.

34. **Item 17.4 – Parents' Association Matters**. Ros Cornish, PA Link Governor, advised that the last PA meeting had been well attended with a number of new members who hopefully would continue to support the PA in the future. Details of forthcoming PA activities were received along with a summary of fundraising outcomes in the previous year. It was reported that the PA had also agreed to cover the cost of sending the two Deputy Headteachers to the National Coalition of Girls' Schools Symposium in Texas in January 2020, with possible similar support in future years.

35. Item 17.5 – Better Buildings Committee. Jason Oster, Link Governor to the Better Building Committee, advised that the New Year 7 Parents Welcome Evening on 23rd September had been very well received by parents and the senior prefect presentation at the event was highly commended. The current fund-raising aim was for the kitting out of the new SSEF buildings. A specific SSEF-related newsletter was to be produced to keep parents informed on how the project was progressing and additional fund-raising efforts were to be aimed at the Alumni Association. Parent ring-rounds were to begin shortly but had not been particularly successful last year.

ITEM 18 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

36. Item 18.1 – School Development Plan 2019-20. The School Development Plan for 2019-20 was received for information. Objective points agreed at the GB meeting in July had now been expanded into School action points and the Head advised that there was a deliberate KS5 strand running through all sections addressing the issue of student retention from Year 11 into Year 12 plus additional points addressed at improving Value Added outcomes in certain KS5 subjects, as well as the recruitment of external students into the Sixth Form.

37. Item 18.2 – Examination Review 2019. The Public Examination Review 2019 was received for information, key points of which had been included in the Headteacher's Report received earlier. It was noted that the document showed initial raw results and validated DfE scores would be received later. Preliminary indications suggested that the KS4 Value Added score (Progress 8) would be around +0.8 which was a very strong score. The School was aspiring to achieve a positive Value Added score for KS5. The Chair of Governors expressed his thanks to the teaching staff for achieving the Summer 2019 public examination results and particularly the significant improvement in certain A level subjects. Specific parts of the examination data were queried by Governors and the Head gave additional clarification. It was reported that the School had achieved better success than KEGS in some A level subjects and Governors stressed the need to ensure that this type of information is passed on to Year 11 students in order to assist retention. There was further discussion on the issue of Year 11 retention and it was confirmed that KEGS were not planning to expand their Sixth Form any further.

38. Item 18.3 – SSGS GCSE Comparison Data 2019. The SSGS GCSE Comparison Data 2019 was received for information. It was suggested that it would be more beneficial to receive additional Essex school comparison data than SSGS information as it would give more information about local competitors to our Sixth Form.

ITEM 19 – ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

39. Year 11 Leadership Conference. The Clerk advised the meeting that the Year 11 Leadership Conference was taking place on Friday 25th October and that all Governors were invited to attend. Further details would follow by email shortly.

40. SEN Governor. The meeting was advised that the role of SEN Governor was currently vacant and volunteers for the role were requested to contact the Clerk to discuss the role.

ITEM 20 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

41. Decision. It was agreed that the next Full Governing Body meeting would be held at 8.15am on Friday 27th March 2020.

All

Note. The Governors' Conference is currently due to take place on Saturday 25th January 2020.

All

The meeting closed at 11.20am.

Agreed as a true record.

S Miles, Chair of Governors 8th July 2020