

## **CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

### **Minutes of an update meeting of the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held remotely via Zoom at 4.00pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Present:	Steve Miles	Chair of Governors
	Mike Worboys	Vice Chair of Governors & Chair of Curriculum Committee
	Richard Vass	Chair of Facilities & Finance Committee
	Yvonne Wickers	Chair of the Staff & Student Matters Committee
	Stephen Lawlor	Headteacher
In Attendance:	Melissa Mulgrew	Business Manager
	Wendy Newton	Clerk to Governors

This was the second update meeting of the Management Committee during the Coronavirus School closure. The two Deputy Headteachers were not in attendance.

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

1. There were no apologies for absence to receive.

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

2. The Chair of Governors advised that he was now a volunteer worker for the NHS, assisting with the sourcing of COVID-19 test kits, this was not deemed to be a conflict of interest. No other 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 were reported.

#### **ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS**

3. The minutes of the last full Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were agreed as a true record. After one typographic correction, the minutes of the update meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were agreed as a true record.

#### **ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING**

4. 9<sup>th</sup> March – Item 12, Para 17b - Freedom of Information (FOI) Publication Scheme. The standardisation of the School's FOI Publication Scheme was in hand and would be completed shortly.
5. 5<sup>th</sup> May – Item 2, Para 14 – Gas Contract. It was confirmed that the new gas contract had been agreed by Committee members by email after the receipt of the Business Manager's analysis report.
6. 5<sup>th</sup> May – Item 3, Para 18 – Revised Meeting Schedule. It was confirmed that the required number of Governor meetings had been maintained in the revised schedule of remote Governor meetings.

#### **ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION**

7. There was no Chair's Action to report.

#### **ITEM 6 – HEADTEACHER'S UPDATE**

8. The Headteacher commenced by advising of the recent death of a teacher's husband following a long-term illness. The teacher would be contacted in due course to discuss her future plans.
9. The concerns which had arisen following the Government announcement on the re-opening of schools were summarised. It was reported that some LAs were instructing schools not to re-open and some of the largest teaching unions, particularly the NEU and NASUWT, were against opening schools according to the Government timeline and had doubts over the scientific data. The Headteacher had been in discussion with the local Mid-Essex Secondary Heads group who agreed that any schooling undertaken should prioritise Years 10 and 12 teaching rather than just one-to-one contact and that

#### **ACTION**

**M Mulgrew  
Clerk**

any contact with students should be meaningful. Remote school was going well, there had been some revision of the KS3 timetable to allow for a more balanced approach and to give more flexibility to students in relation to their hobbies and family situations. Feedback on the changes had been generally well-received but a few parents had raised concerns which were discussed.

10. Yvonne Wickers, having advised for the record that she was a member of the NEU, queried the School's union membership and how it may affect re-opening. It was stated that over 40 staff were a member of a union and that there were two NEU representatives with whom there had been frequent and cordial contact. A survey had gone out to staff explaining the proposed plan for a Year 10 return to schooling and how it would affect them. Half the Year 10 cohort would come in for one day per week, starting from 8<sup>th</sup> June, for 5 hours of core subject teaching (Maths, English and Sciences). This would give students 30 hours of core teaching before the end of term. The remaining subjects would be taught remotely. The site arrangements for re-opening were fully explained and questioned by Governors. There had been union queries about using teachers on a rotation basis but this was in line with Government guidance but detailed guidance for secondary schools had not yet been published. A survey had been sent to Year 10 parents and, of the 160-student cohort, 70% had responded to date. 64% replied that they would allow their daughter to return to school, 29% said possibly and 7% said definitely not. The demand was deemed encouraging but the issues with public transport were noted. Enough staff had volunteered to come into school to make opening viable.

11. The situation for Year 12 was stated as being more complicated. A survey had been sent out to Year 12 parents and, of the 107-student cohort, 82% had responded to date. 51% replied that they would allow their daughter to return to school, 39% said possibly and 10% said definitely not. It was suggested that the quality of online teaching and the age and confidence of the older students may make the continuation of schooling by remote means more acceptable to the students. It was stated that it would be possible to provide a curriculum-based model for specific faculty groups assigned to specific areas of the school to receive lessons with teacher rotation. The School site was to be split into two parts, one for Year 10 and the other for Year 12, and entirely separate of each other. It was suggested that returning to school in June would aid knowing plans for September might work. The Government confirmation on 28<sup>th</sup> May on whether schools would open would be key to future planning; the current thought was that there may be a delay until tracking and testing was available. The Headteacher confirmed that the School would be ready for re-opening in June if permitted and that a full risk assessment was in progress. The larger issue of what would be required for opening in September was discussed.

12. Governors queried the staffing for a possible June opening. The Headteacher confirmed that staff had been surveyed and enough voluntary offers had been received to permit re-opening. About 24 members of staff were currently unable to return to teaching in school for various reasons. It was stated that staff had received communication throughout the closure and that staff felt valued and well-looked after. Remote schooling would remain in place to cover KS3 and the non-core subjects for KS4 and teaching loads would be re-assigned to distinguish between teachers who came into school and those who could not. The Committee debated the concept of when all students would be allowed into school and noted major issues with social distancing, class sizes, break and lunchtime problems. It was stated that Years 10 and 12 would remain a key focus in September along with the new Year 7 cohort of 180 girls. The Headteacher reminded the Committee that KS3 students had left the School first due to staffing issues and, if possible, were to be invited into School on a one-to-one basis before the Summer holiday. The aim of this would be to help in the production of a recovery curriculum for next year as there were known curriculum deficits caused by the School closure.

13. Governors asked if any major student issues had been identified relating to home situations and access to IT. A recent KS3 student survey had identified some issues with IT, sharing computers with siblings, etc. There were a couple of students with IT issues and the School had been assigned two laptops from the DfE Year 10 Disadvantaged programme, and one School laptop had already been issued to a Year 10 PPG student. The situations of all students were being monitored closely by School pastoral staff. The issue of public transport was discussed and was recognised as being a significant problem, there has been no specific DfE guidance on this issue. The School had been in touch with the private coach company which delivers students to the School but they are currently still doing their own risk assessments as to whether they will be able to operate. All travel plans must await further guidance in relation to social distancing and it was likely to be a significant issue as many

students rely on public transport. The possible need to liaise with KEGS in relation to siblings attending both schools was suggested and it was confirmed that initial contact had been made with KEGS.

**ACTION**

14. It was reported that the School was looking at bringing staff into School for preparation work with effect from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June and that the first students could possibly begin on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June; subject to future Government announcements. The Business Manager confirmed that deep cleaning of the School was to start from 28<sup>th</sup> May and that all necessary site checks would be completed before staff return. The Committee were advised that returning to any sort of teaching on site was a big step and everyone was focussed on the safety aspects surrounding any return. Assuming that the Government confirmed that schooling was to restart, both staff and students would need to live with managed levels of risk. The Headteacher advised that there would have to be great flexibility with staff and how and when they worked in order for them to fit in with their own personal situations.

### **ITEM 7 – FINANCIAL UPDATE**

15. The Business Manager confirmed that the School had not participated in the Government free-school meal voucher scheme but had organised its own system, the costs of which were refundable from the Government. Confirmation had been received from the insurers that most of the trips' cancellation claims up to 24<sup>th</sup> July departure dates would be honoured but that it would take time to receive the money back. An estimate of £2,000 savings per month from utility costs had previously been predicted but £4,800 had actually been saved in April. The Committee were advised that Chartwells had finally agreed to furlough their staff and had also now responded to a one-year extension of contract proposal put forward by the School.

16. **Decision.** The Business Manager agreed to circulate the revised catering contract proposal from Chartwells by email.

**M Mulgrew**

**5.00pm – Richard Vass left the meeting.**

17. The Business Manager confirmed that work was continuing on the three-year forecast and that managements reports would continue to be sent to Governors but that it should be noted that they would not be particularly meaningful in the current situation. The Committee thanked the Business Manager and the Finance Team for their continuing hard work.

### **ITEM 8 – SSEF UPDATE**

18. The SSEF building project had resumed after a 5-week shutdown and an update on the planning permission situation was received. A 5-week extension of project had been agreed with the builders but would be closely monitored as work may be slower as the result of social distancing. It was hoped that some time would be regained due to the lack of public examinations and a revised schedule would need to be agreed in the future. Any major delays had to be reported to the DfE. The floor of the Sports Hall was due to be laid the following week and steel joists for the building were due to arrive in the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> June. It was noted that by the time that staff and students returned to School, the superstructure would be up and would be a good boost for morale. The Committee were informed that PCH had visited the building site the previous week and had been impressed by the social distancing measures implemented by the building contractors.

### **ITEM 9 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

19. **Governor Approvals.** The Clerk advised that clerking information recently received stated that Governor approvals made by email were not officially sanctioned and the Committee discussed the issue. It was noted that all CCHS committee email approvals did follow full discussions by email and any issues raised by email were addressed, this could be evidenced if ever needed. It was noted that the current Coronavirus situation made online approval more open and transparent than purely straight Chair's Action.

20. **Decision.** The Committee agreed that, in the current Coronavirus situation, if any approvals were required outside the normal Governor committee meetings, approval by email would be allowed for a 6-month duration; this decision would be reviewed in November 2020. The Clerk agreed to ascertain if any GB documents needed formal amendment.

**Clerk**

**ITEM 10 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

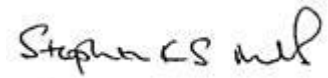
**ACTION**

21. **Decision.** The date of the next full Management Committee meeting was agreed as 4.00pm on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The meeting would be held remotely on Zoom.

**All**

The meeting closed at 5.15pm.

Agreed as a true record.



(Electronically signed due to Coronavirus closure)

S Miles

Chair of Governors

11<sup>th</sup> June 2020