

# CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

## Minutes of a meeting of the GOVERNING BODY held at the School at 8.48am on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Present:	Steve Miles	Chair of Governors
	Peter Cook	Vice Chair of Governors
	Nicole Chapman	Headteacher
	Mary Argent, 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:	Richard Brown, Ros Cornish, Lauren Smith	

### ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ros Cornish, Richard Brown 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 2018-19.

### ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. After one typographic amendment and one revision concerning the reporting on expansion to 6FE, the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were agreed.

### ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 4, Para 4 – Cambridge Contact - Decision. Details of a contact at Cambridge University for school visits had not yet been received from Lauren Smith, the matter would be chased.

5. Item 4, Para 7 – GDPR. The Business Manager advised that since the last meeting the Management Committee had delegated general responsibility for GDPR compliance to the Facilities & Finance Committee. The Full GB would receive an annual report on GDPR.

6. Item 10, Para 18 – SSEF Bid. The Chair confirmed that an SSEF bid had been sent in and that the outcome was expected by the end of November 2018.

### ITEM 5 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

7. Item 5.1 – GB Membership. A summary of the current GB membership was received and the Chair advised that Lee Palmer had recently submitted his resignation with effect from the end of the Autumn Term 2018. As this would result in three vacant Governor posts, the Management Committee had agreed for a Governor Information Session to be arranged for any interested new parents. The effect of the vacancies on sub-committee membership was noted.

8. Item 5.2 - Associate Members. The meeting was reminded of the annual requirement to re-elect Associate Members. The re-election of Priti Patel MP as an Associate Member was a concern to some Governors in light of her participation. It was reported that Priti Patel had visited the school the previous week and that she had been advised that more interaction with the School was required if she was to continue as an Associate Member, she had stated that she would

### ACTION

Head

Chair  
Head

endeavour to come to the Full GB meeting in March 2019. The Chair recommended that Priti Patel should remain as an Associate Member for the immediate future. A suggestion was put forward that Vicky Ford, the local MP, might be a more appropriate choice of Associate Member and noted. Mary Argent, the second current Associate Member, was commended for her contribution to the GB and her continuing support of the School. The meeting voted on the re-election of the Associate Members.

9. **Decision.** There was unanimous approval for the re-election of Mary Argent to remain as Associate Member for academic year 2018-19 and, with 10 votes for and one vote against, Priti Patel MP was also re-elected as Associate Member for academic year 2018-19.

10. **Item 5.3 – 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 Mr Chris Christofides, the former School Improvement Partner, who acted as the external adviser to the Panel. The Vice Chair of Governors had acted as Appeal Officer.

11. **Decision.** The meeting agreed that the Chair of Governors and the Chair of the Curriculum Committee would remain as the Headteacher’s Performance Review Panel for 2018, assisted by Mr Chris Christofides. The Vice Chair of Governors had agreed to continue as Appeal Officer.

**Chair  
M Worboys  
P Cook**

**9.05am – Maria French, Deputy Head (Pastoral) left the meeting to teach.**

## **ITEM 6 – GB GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS**

12. The Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Full Governing Body, each sub-committee, the GB Standing Orders and GB Scheme of Delegation were presented for re-approval. The committees who had met that term had reviewed and approved their TORs and the remainder were to be reviewed at their first meeting. It was noted that amendments relating to the proposed cessation of the Audit Committee would be required for the GB TORs and that an additional GDPR-related responsibility had been added to the Facilities & Finance Committee TORs. A number of additional delegations had been included in the GB Scheme of Delegation for GB approval. An NGA-ECC based Governor Code of Code was presented for consideration of adoption. The meeting discussed the need for a Code, what it covered and questioned whether it would be published on the School website.

### **13. Decisions.**

- a. The TORs for the Full Governing Body were approved as presented.
- b. 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 as presented, subject to final committee review.
- c. The GB Standing Orders were approved as presented.
- d. After one amendment, the Scheme of Delegation was approved as presented.
- e. The Clerk agreed to update the DPA date on the Code of Conduct and confirm its source and requirement; with that action, the CCHS Governors’ Code of Conduct was approved for annual signing by all Governors and also uploaded onto the School website.  
(**Post meeting.** The Clerk confirmed by email that the DfE Governance Handbook stated that GBs should have a Code of Conduct.)

**Clerk**

**All**

## **ITEM 7 – HEADTEACHER’S REPORT TO GOVERNORS**

14. The Head highlighted significant areas of her Report to Governors dated October 2018. Ongoing contact was being made with Chinese school and some members of their staff had visited CCHS recently, possible lines of future interaction were noted. Governors questioned the effect of the Year 5 Masterclasses, it was reported that whilst they attracted girls to sit the entrance test there was only limited success in relation to actual entry into the School. Future workshops aimed at raising success levels were planned for local primary schools but the effect of staff attitude in some primary schools and the student’s home environment was noted. The A Level Performance System (ALPS) data figures were queried and the Deputy Head (Curriculum) explained the system

and how the figures were produced, it was noted that it was hard to show improvement from KS4 to KS5 in light of the very high achievement at KS4. The Head advised that higher KS5 progress was generally expected and that the School would be addressing the issue very closely this academic year. Governors raised other questions on staff workload management figures, long-term staff absences and the impact of cover lessons was explained by the Head.

15. The School's STEM and Artsmark Renaissance Project was noted and the Head also advised that the School had recently been re-designated as a Healthy School. Summer public examination results had led to 145 requests for re-marks, these had resulted in a number of grade increases, 21% of GCSE and 4% of A level re-marks. It was suggested that the quality of some examination markers was academically poor.

### **ITEM 8 – ADMISSIONS POLICY**

16. The meeting received an update on the current OSA appeal to the Admissions Policy for 2019, the background to the appeal and action taken to date were summarised and it was noted that the OSA may yet require the School to amend the 2019 policy in its final adjudication. The proposed Admissions Policy for 2020 was presented with two options for consideration: one option related to having an entry of 150 Year 7 students and the second related to having 180 Year 7 students, necessary if the current SSEF expansion bid was successful. It was also reported that an increase to 180 students would require the School to go out to public consultation and that the very latest that it could go out was 20<sup>th</sup> December. The Chair confirmed that the outcome of the SSEF bid would hopefully be known by the end of November and this information was essential before the Admissions Policy for 2020 could be agreed. It was noted that an extraordinary general meeting of the GB would be required as soon as the SSEF bid outcome was known in order to make the final decision on whether to expand to 6FE or not and to agree the final Admissions Policy for 2020.

17. **Decision.** It was agreed that no further action could be taken on approving the Admissions Policy for 2020 at the current time.

### **ITEM 9 – EXPANSION & BUDGET DEFICIT**

18. The Business Manager advised that further expansion and the current budget deficit situation had been discussed by both the Management and Facilities & Finance Committees this term and that it had agreed not to provide any paperwork in relation to these two issues at this point as it was an ongoing topic. A number of school scenarios had been requested by the GB in July and financial forecasts were being provided by the School. Student numbers in Year 12 in September 2018 had not been as expected and forecasts had been recalculated to show the actual intake figure of 116 students. It was suggested that for the forecasts slower Sixth Form growth was more prudent and that an intake of 150 Year 12 students was unlikely to happen until the current expansion to 5FE reached the Sixth Form in September 2020. The Business Manager advised that further work had been undertaken on the figures for expansion to 6FE as this was considered to be a budget deficit reduction strategy as well as some other more focussed areas where cost reduction was considered possible, including staffing, teaching workload and subject offers at KS5. Further financial work was ongoing by the School and it was intended to provide Governors with a more detailed report at the Governors' Conference in January 2019.

19. The Chair of the Facilities & Finance Committee stressed that the School is very conscious of being in a significant deficit position and that there would be a need to make some difficult choices, a number of options were currently being considered and would be brought to the Full GB once finalised. The number of students in the Sixth Form was having a fairly significant financial impact on the School and whilst the current 5FE expansion would assist this issue, DfE funding which was based on student numbers was lagged and would not be received for a while. It was not deemed possible to wait until that time and that action needed to be taken sooner. Promotion of student entry into the Sixth Form was deemed essential. It was acknowledged that all budget deficit options had other effects within the School and that the least damaging impact had to be found. The Full GB would be presented with a list of budget deficit options as well as their impacts and savings at the Conference in January 2019. Governors noted that all possible options to fill the

Sixth Form needed to be considered.

**10.05am – Ruth Neave left the meeting, prior to departure she was presented with her ECC Certificate of Governance.**

20. The importance of addressing the School's current financial situation was raised as a matter of urgency. It was stated that an in-year budget deficit of £(130,000) was forecast for 2018-19. The cumulative budget deficit is forecast to rise to £288,000 in 2019-20 and to £481,000 in 2020-21. The School's Curriculum and Restructuring reserve of just under £600,000 would not cover these figures. It was deemed a grave concern which needed answering and that a major step-change was required.

**21. Decisions.**

- a. The Clerk agreed to ascertain Governor availability for an early evening EGM in mid-November or early December to discuss expansion to 6FE and the Admissions Policy 2020.
- b. The Business Manager requested feedback from the Management Committee on the expansion and budget deficit paperwork received at their last meeting.
- c. The School was requested to produce an outline agenda for the EGM along with a list of supporting documents for Management Committee approval by email.

**ITEM 10 – RISK REGISTER**

22. **Decision.** The Full GB section of the CCHS Risk Register was reviewed. It was agreed that Risk GB7 was no longer required and should be removed. With that amendment, the Full GB section of the Risk Register was approved.

**ITEM 11 – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

23. The School Financial Regulations Manual and Scheme of Delegation 2018-19 was presented for approval with minor amendment. The Facilities & Finance Committee had already reviewed the document and recommended it for approval. A new ECC-model Whistleblowing Policy was presented for approval, the policy had previously been included within the Financial Regulations document.

24. **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 12 – GB SUB-COMMITTEES**

25. **Item 12.1 – Management Committee – Decision.** The minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were received and approved; no specific questions were raised for further discussion.

26. **Item 12.2 – Facilities & Finance Committee.** The Facilities & Finance Committee had met on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018, there was nothing further to report than had already been covered in the earlier Audit Committee meeting.

**ITEM 13 – SENIOR SPEECH DAY**

27. Senior Speech Day is to be held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The Head reported that Olympian Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE had agreed to act as Guest Speaker for the event.

**ITEM 14 – SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – VISITS & TRIPS**

28. An updated list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2018-19 and outline trips for 2019-20 was presented for approval. The Deputy Head (Curriculum) advised that following the success of this year's expedition to Mexico the School planned to repeat the trip in 2020.

**ACTION**

**Clerk**

**Management  
Committee  
Head  
S Hoefling**

**S Hoefling**

29. **Decision.** The list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2018-19 was approved as presented. The Italian exchange trip for October 2019 and the Mexico Trip for July 2020 were also approved.

**ACTION**

### **ITEM 15 – GOVERNOR REPORTS**

30. **Item 15.1 – Governor Visits.** It was reported that there had been no formal Governor visits to the School since the last meeting, however four Governors had been present at the New Year 7 Parents Welcome Evening in September and Mary Argent and Richard Brown were due to attend the Year 11 Leadership Conference the following day. The Chair stressed the need for Governors to undertake formal visits to the School at least once a year.

31. **Item 15.2 – Governor Training.** The Clerk advised that very few ECC training courses had undertaken in recent months. The Training Link Governor was due to attend a course on 'Headteacher appraisal' in November.

32. **Item 15.3 – Safeguarding.** Yvonne Wickers, Safeguarding Governor, advised that due her increased Governor workload and her work commitments that she felt it prudent to stand down as the lead Safeguarding Governor. It was hoped that Ros Cornish, the current Deputy Safeguarding Governor, would be able to take up the main role in the Spring Term 2019 and that a new Deputy Safeguarding Governor could now be found, preferably but not essentially, from the Staff & Student Matters Committee. The requirements of the Safeguarding Governor role were summarised.

33. **Decision.** The Clerk agreed to email all Governors with a request for a volunteer for the role of Deputy Safeguarding Governor.

**Clerk**

34. **Item 15.4 – Parents' Association Matters.** In light of her absence from the meeting, Ros Cornish, PA Link Governor, had prepared a summary of recent PA activities and forthcoming events which was received by the Governors. It was reported that support for the PA from other parents was unfortunately poor. The good work undertaken by the PA was commended by the Chair.

**10.30am – Mark Rowell left the meeting to teach.**

35. **Item 15.5 – Better Buildings Committee.** Jason Oster, Link Governor to the Better Building Committee, advised that the New Year 7 Parents Welcome Evening on 24<sup>th</sup> September had been very well received by parents and the prefect presentation was particularly good. The fund-raising ring-rounds were underway and it was intended that all Year 7 parents will have been called before the end of November. Contrary to the report in the last minutes, Chris Wickers had decided to continue with the ring-rounds and his support was welcomed. It was noted that more parental support was needed on the Committee. The issue of how to attract additional parental financial support was discussed. It was reported that recent media coverage on school finance shortages had brought the issue to the attention of parents. There was a discussion on MAT finances and the possible economies of scale which are expected from such arrangements.

### **ITEM 16 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

36. **Item 16.1 – School Development Plan 2018-19.** The new School Development Plan for 2018-19 was received for information.

37. **Item 16.2 – Examination Review 2018.** The Public Examination Review 2018 was received for information. The Head advised that since the document was printed there had been some changes. Following remarks, the A level A\*/B grades has risen slightly from 75.3% to 75.34% and GCSE A\*/A grades had risen from 86.7% to 87.05%. Governors queried which subjects had been involved, apart from GCSE English Language it was deemed across the whole range.

38. **Item 16.3 – SSGS GCSE Comparison Data 2018.** The SSGS GCSE Comparison Data 2018 was received for information.

## **ITEM 17 – CHAIR’S ACTION & EMAIL ACTION**

39. There was no Chair’s Action or Email Action to report.

## **ITEM 18 – ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

40. **CCHS Capital Development Guarantee - Decision**. The Business Manager advised that the Full GB was required to formally agree that the School would guarantee CCHS Capital Development Ltd’s liabilities in order to avoid a statutory audit of its accounts, hence saving the School additional expenditure. The meeting agreed to continue to guarantee CCHS Capital Development Ltd as has been done previously.

41. **Audit Committee - Decision**. The meeting was advised that the GB was not required to have a formal Audit Committee and that it was now proposed that the issues covered by the Audit Committee would be a separate agenda item on future Full GB meeting agendas. The Facilities & Finance Committee would continue to oversee the audit issues as already undertaken. The meeting agreed with the proposal.

42. **Business Manager**. The Chair reminded the meeting that Susan Hoefling, Business Manager, was to leave the School at the end of the current term and thanked her for her hard work and contribution to the School over the past five years. Governors wished her well for the future. **(Clerk’s Note:** Interviews for the post of Business Manager were undertaken on 29<sup>th</sup> October and Mrs Melissa Mulgrew was appointed starting in February 2019.)

43. **Capital Funding Bids**. The Vice Chair raised the issue of the four unsuccessful capital development bids and whether new external consultants should be sought in respect of the issue. Details of alternative consultants had been received and a new company was recommended for use and Governor approval sought. It was suggested that a comparison report of all the options needed to be received.

44. **Decision**. The Business Manager agreed to prepare a summary of options for new capital development consultants.

45. **Swimming Pool Incident**. Governors were given an update on an incident that occurred in the School swimming pool the previous week. The actions of the School and emergency services were noted. It was reported that all of the girls involved were now fully recovered and were back at School after a couple of days. The swimming pool was now out of action until the incident was fully investigated by an independent company. A RIDOR report was required to be sent to the HSE and a number of actions had been identified to prevent the possibility of re-occurrence. **(Clerk’s Note:** This incident has now been closed as the situation was reviewed by both the HSE and an external swimming pool consultant and both were happy with the outcome.)

## **ITEM 18 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

46. **Decision**. It was agreed that the next Full Governing Body meeting would be held at 8.15am on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019. The meeting was reminded that the Governors’ Conference was currently due to take place on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

The meeting closed at 11.00am.

Agreed as a true record.

S Miles, Chair of Governors      29<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**ACTION**

**S Hoefling**

**All**