

# **CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

## **Minutes of a meeting of the GOVERNING BODY held at the School at 8.15am on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Present: Steve Miles Chair of Governors  
Nicole Chapman Headteacher  
Mary Argent, Richard Brown, Ros Cornish, Ruth Neave, Jason Oster,  
Mark Rowell, Duncan Stevens, Richard Vass, Yvonne Wickers, Mike Worboys

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

Apologies: Sarah Clements, Peter Cook, Lauren Smith

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

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Sarah Clements, Peter Cook 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. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018 were agreed and signed.

### **ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING**

4. Item 4, Para 4 – Cambridge Contact. Details of a contact at Cambridge University for school visits were still awaited from Lauren Smith.

5. Item 5.1, Para 7 – GB Membership. The meeting was advised that two new Parent Governors, Mrs Jenny Fowle and Mr Andrew Bonwick, had been elected as the result of the recent election with the standard 4-year term of office. They would both be invited to Senior Speech Day prior to receiving their Governor Induction early in the Spring Term.

6. Item 15, Para 33 – Safeguarding Governor. The Clerk advised that at the recent Staff & Student Matters Committee Ros Cornish had agreed to take on the full Safeguarding Governor role and that Yvonne Wickers would act as deputy until the situation was reviewed at the next meeting.

7. Item 18, Para 44 – Capital Development Consultants. The decision to investigate the need for alternative capital development consultants had been superseded by the successful SSEF bid.

### **ITEM 5 – OTHER GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS**

8. The minutes of the Full GB EGM held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018, the Governors' Conference held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019 and the Academy Trust Company AGM also held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019 were received and approved. One typographic error in the GB EGM minutes was corrected.

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

9. The Clerk advised that since the last meeting the Chair had approved three School trips details of which would be received in Item 15. Governors acknowledged that they had received the

### **ACTION**

**L Smith**

School's Financial Management Accounts by email three times since the start of the academic year and the Business Manager stated that the accounts were now being sent on a monthly basis.

**ACTION**

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

10. A summary of GB membership as at 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 was received, the report had been prepared prior to the outcome of the recent Parent Governor election. It was stated that the two new Parent Governors would be allocated to a GB sub-committee at their induction meeting.

**8.30am – Ruth Neave joined the meeting.**

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

11. The Head presented her Report to Governors dated March 2019, stressing that it was prepared jointly by all of the SLT, and received questions from Governors. A query was raised on the difference between the KS4 Progress 8 figures for disadvantaged pupils against the rest of their cohort and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) advised that the figures were skewed by the results of one particular student with major pastoral problems. The adverse message that the data sent out was raised and it was suggested that the full Data Dashboard showed that the figures only related to very few girls. The figures given in the 2018 ALPS Report were also queried in relation to the variation between the subjects and additional clarification was received. The data showed that on average A level students had achieved  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a grade less than expected; this was partially due to the fact that the students over-achieved by  $\frac{3}{4}$  grade at GCSE. The ALPS data was based on A\*/B achievement and some subjects had been adversely affected by an issue in Year 13.

**(Clerk's Note:** Post meeting it was confirmed that results for Year 13 leavers (Year 14) who re-sat public examinations are not included in the School's official statistics the following year.)

12. Governors noted a large range in the ALPS Subject Value Added scores between the subjects and queried whether there were genuine issues which needed to be addressed. The Head confirmed that there was inconsistency between subjects but that this was being addressed by the School. The meeting discussed the general situation and suggested that additional explanatory commentary was required to explain the context of the figures. The need for further comparison with similar schools was suggested to ascertain if similar schools had similar subject issues, and high-level comparison data with SSGS schools in the report was noted. It was stressed that identifying similar themes and continuing significant trends was important when reviewing the data.

13. **Decision.** The Head agreed to add additional commentary for the lower subject scores to explain how the issues were being addressed in the next report.

**Head**

**8.45am – Stephen Lawlor joined the meeting.**

### **ITEM 9 – SSEF PROJECT**

14. The Head advised the meeting that after investigation it looked likely that the School would be required to undertake the EU procurement process in relation to the SSEF project and summarised recent School actions. A new planning permission application was to be submitted to Chelmsford City Council which would now include the additional teaching block. In order to expedite the project, it was proposed to begin the demolition of the Bancroft Building and some enabling work in the School Summer holiday. The meeting was also informed that investigation work had been undertaken on the financial viability of the School swimming pool in light of the fact that essential maintenance expenditure of around £110,000 was required to upgrade the facility. There was a possibility of matched funding of up to 50% of the cost from Sports England with a maximum grant of £150,000. Additional information was received on the current swimming pool lettings income and associated expenditure and the meeting discussed the benefits of the facility against its removal. It was suggested that the swimming pool was generally beneficial to the School facilities. The urgent need to make a decision on the future of the swimming pool before the SSEF groundworks contract went out was noted. The meeting was informed that the conditions attached to any Sports England grant needed to be carefully investigated as they frequently involved time conditions and legal charges relating to the site. It was noted that if the swimming pool was found

not to be economically viable, demolishing the pool at the same time as the SSEF building work could present significant savings for the School.

**ACTION**

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

- a. The Business Manager would circulate a paper on the swimming pool to Governors once discussed with Sport England and any structural survey implications had been assessed.
- b. The Chair and Duncan Stevens would visit the School to familiarise themselves with the SSEF project.
- c. The new, revised SSEF building plans would be sent to Governors

**M Mulgrew  
Chair  
D Stevens**

## **ITEM 10 – FINANCIAL FORECAST & BUDGET DEFICIT**

16. Following the successful SSEF bid and in light of the future increase in student numbers, the financial situation of the School had been reviewed by the new Business Manager. A revised 3-year financial forecast was presented and the meeting was advised that it showed the worst case scenario. The deficit for the current academic year was £(124,000) with a £(30,000) variance due to increased recruitment, utility and staffing costs, although a contingency figure of £40,000 still remained. The new forecast showed end of year figures of £24,000, £(116,000) and £(143,000) for AY2019-20, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 respectively, all of which included a £40,000 contingency. The cumulative deficit by the end of 2021-22 was expected to be in the region of £(359,000). The details for each academic year were received and the effect of the additional Government funding relating to the teachers' pay increase and pensions grant was noted. The Business Manager stressed that the key driver of future year deficit projection was the assumption of only 2 years' pension impact funding, Government funding of only 80% of the £180k impact was assumed. The meeting was advised that the sum of £200,000 for curriculum changes had been removed from the calculations whilst more detailed analysis was undertaken, this had resulted in the variance to the positive forecasts which had been received previously. The forecast for lettings income had been reduced in light of the probable effect of the SSEF project.

17. The Business Manager advised that future reports to Governors would show variances to forecasts in order to see the reasons for any changes. Governors questioned the figures relating to student numbers in the Sixth Form and how they impacted the figures quoted in the forecast. Details of Sixth Form capacity and the problems associated with student applications to the Sixth Form were explained. It was currently assumed that the size of Year 12 would be 130 students in September 2019 and 160 in 2020. Governors noted how the student figures affected the finances and it was suggested that other competitor schools were now likely to be reaching their capacities and have fewer spaces for students from CCHS. The Head advised the meeting of the adverse change to pupil funding over recent years: KS3/4 funding in 2014-15 had been £5250 per student and was now £4800, Sixth Form was £4693 and now £4500. Employer contributions to pensions funding had increased significantly from £681,000 to £893,000 for the same years.

18. A query was raised about the Sixth Form student numbers used in the forecast assumptions when figures received in the past which had not transpired. The Head explained why the figures were considered to be achievable in light of the increase in cohort numbers in the Lower School and the issue was discussed. It was stated that the sensitivity of the forecast figures needed to be known. Every effort was made by the School to encourage students in the Lower School to remain for the Sixth Form. Governors queried which of the budget deficit measures agreed last year had been implemented and the Business Manager clarified the situation and stressed that the future increase in Teachers' Pensions employer contributions had not been included in the forecast. The meeting was informed of increasing commercialisation by schools in order to increase their income through other means. Governors noted the current financial situation of the School and the major issues affecting future income and expenditure.

19. **Decision**. It was agreed that the Facilities & Finance Committee would discuss the revised 3-year forecast in more depth at their next meeting. The topic is a standing item on their agenda.

**M Mulgrew  
R Vass**

**ITEM 11 – GDPR**

20. The meeting received an Annual Statement of Compliance produced by the ECC Information Governance Support team who act as the School's official Data Protection Officer. The Business Manager advised that a lot of GDPR work had been undertaken in the last few months and new procedures had been put in place within the School. The School was currently deemed to have adequate assurance of compliance but there was still more work to do in order to be fully GDPR-compliant. There had been some administrative issues with the mandatory online GDPR training for staff which gave an erroneous figure for course completion but the issue was being addressed, it was stated that around 80% of staff had actually completed the course.

**ITEM 12 – SCHOOL DOCUMENTS**

21. The revised CCHS Strategic Plan 2018-22, which had been discussed at the GB Conference in January 2019 and reviewed by the Management Committee in March 2019, was presented for formal GB approval. The Full School Risk Register was also presented for re-approval. Governor sub-committees had reviewed their sections on a termly basis since the last full approval in March and the Full GB risks were reviewed by the meeting.

22. **Decision.** The CCHS Strategic Plan 2018-22 and the Full School Risk Register were approved as presented.

**ITEM 13 – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

23. A revised Child Protection Policy was presented for approval. The policy, last approved in July 2018, had since been amended by ECC in September 2018. The Staff & Student Matters Committee had already reviewed the policy and recommended it for GB approval. It was confirmed that the recent Governor role change had been incorporated on the website version of the policy. The meeting was advised of a school whose Ofsted assessment had changed from 'Outstanding' to 'Inadequate' due to safeguarding failures. The meeting noted the situation and were reminded of what Governors were required to know. It was stressed that all relevant safeguarding documents are available on the School Portal for Governor revision. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) summarised the changes within the policy which included information on county lines and peer-on-peer abuse.

24. **Decisions.** The Child Protection Policy was approved as presented with annual review. All Governors were asked to refresh their knowledge on Child Protection procedures from the information on the Governor Portal.

**All****ITEM 14 – GB SUB-COMMITTEES**

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

- Management Committee meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019,
- Facilities & Finance Committee meetings held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018 and 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019,
- Curriculum Committee meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019,
- Staff & Student Matters Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017, and
- Audit Committee final meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

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

26. An updated list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2018-19 and outline trips for 2019-20 was presented for approval. Attention was brought to the three approvals given by Chair's Action since the last meeting. The Deputy Head (Curriculum) reported on the success of the recent Year 9 Cyber First Competition trip to Edinburgh.

29. **Decision.** The list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2018-19 was approved as presented.

## **ITEM 16 – GOVERNOR REPORTS**

## **ACTION**

30. Item 16.1 – Governor Visits. The Clerk reported that there had been no formal Governor visits to the School since the last meeting, however there had been a lot of attendance at School events and on other occasions when giving assistance to the School eg student and staff interviews. (**Clerk’s Note - Addendum** – Richard Vass had undertaken a formal visit on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018.)

31. Item 16.2 – Governor Training. No Governors had undertaken any ECC training courses since the last meeting and were encouraged to look at the courses available. The Clerk reported that the members of the Management Committee had been required to undertake an online NSPCC Safer Recruiting course prior to the Headteacher interview process and presented Steve Miles, Yvonne Wickers and Mike Worboys with their certificates of completion.

32. Item 16.3 – Safeguarding. Ros Cornish, Safeguarding Governor, advised that members of the Staff & Student Matters Committee had received a presentation on the new electronic safeguarding reporting system from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and had been very impressed with the system. In light of the recent role change, she intended to book safeguarding refresher training and would be organising a formal safeguarding visit to the School. Yvonne Wickers stressed the increased risk of an Ofsted visit triggered by the future change of headteacher and the need for all Governors to be fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

33. **Decision**. The Clerk agreed to email the current safeguarding documents to Governors.

**Clerk**

34. Item 16.4 – Parents’ Association Matters. Ros Cornish, PA Link Governor, gave a verbal report of recent PA activities and their success. The PA had committed £12,000 so far this year to items requested by the School, they had also agreed to pay for a licence to stream live performances for the Drama and English Department on an ongoing annual basis.

35. **Decision**. Ros Cornish was asked to pass on the thanks of the GB to the PA for their continuing hard work in assisting the School.

**R Cornish**

36. Item 16.5 – Better Buildings Committee. Jason Oster, Link Governor to the Better Building Committee, advised that ring-rounds had continued with a similar frequency to last year but that there had been a significant difference in getting support from parents, they were not signing up as quickly as in the past. It was reported that parents were aware of the SSEF but that this may make parents feel the School has sufficient money. It was stated that parents needed to be incorporated into a particular part of the SSEF project and requested that the School identify possible options for specific Better Building fundraising. A query was raised as to whether the name of the committee was still applicable in light of the SSEF grant and the suggestion was discussed. Jason Oster also reported the intention to explore the use of an external fundraising company to see if it could assist in raising income.

## **ITEM 17 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

37. Item 17.1 – School Development Plan 2018-19. The Mid Term Review of the School Development Plan for 2018-19 was received for information. The revised document had already been received by three of the GB sub-committees.

38. Item 17.2 – SSGS Comparison Data 2018. The SSGS A Level and GCSE Comparison Data dated January 2019 was received for information.

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

39. Deputy Head. The Chair advised that the Management Committee had agreed to refill the role of Deputy Head (Curriculum) in light of Stephen Lawlor’s promotion to Headteacher in September 2019. The advert had gone out and interviews were planned for the end of April.

40. GB Paperwork - Decision. The issue of GB meeting packs continuing to be sent in paper form paperwork was raised as the cost of producing the paper packs was increasing and all documents

were available via the Governor Portal. The meeting debated the suggestion and part production was deemed possible if necessary. It was agreed that all future GB and sub-committee meeting packs would only be produced in electronic form, available for review on the Governor Portal.

**ACTION**

**All**

41. **Governor Resignation.** The Chair advised that Peter Cook, Vice Chair of Governors, had tendered his resignation from the GB. Initially his resignation was to be from the end of the current Spring Term but, in light of his expertise and current involvement with the SSEF project, Peter had kindly agreed to remain in contact with the School until such a time that he deemed the SSEF project was in a secure and transferrable position. Peter was elected as a Parent Governor in September 2000 and his long-standing commitment to the School and particularly his work relating to capital development would be sorely missed by the GB.

**ITEM 18 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

42. **Decision.** It was agreed that the next Full Governing Body meeting would be held at 8.15am on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

**All**

The meeting closed at 10.15am.

Agreed as a true record.

S Miles, Chair of Governors      12<sup>th</sup> July 2019