

## CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

### Minutes of a meeting of the Full GOVERNING BODY held remotely via Zoom at 4.00pm on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020

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

1. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming new Parent Governor Sarah de Souza-Ingle to her first Full GB meeting.

#### ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. There were no apologies for absence to receive, all expected attendees were present.

#### ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3. 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 were made.

#### ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4. The minutes of the Full GB meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and the Governor Conference and Company AGM both held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020 were formally approved as a true record.

#### ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

5. AGM – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020 - Item 6, Para 7 – School Auditor - Decision. Agreement of School auditor had not been possible at the Full GB meeting in March 2020 as the meeting had been cancelled due to COVID-19. The Management Committee had subsequently approved a one-year extension of the current auditor, Edmund Carr. The Full GB formally approved the decision.

#### ITEM 5 – CHAIR’S ACTION & EMAIL ACTION

6. Item 5.1 - Chair’s Action. A written summary of all Chair’s Actions taken since the last meeting were received and noted.
7. Item 5.2 - DfE & ESFA Letters. Governors confirmed receipt of an ESFA letter from Eileen Milner dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and had noted its content.
8. Item 5.3 – Management Accounts. Governors confirmed receipt of the School’s Management Accounts, Balance Sheets and Cashflow Forecasts from November 2019 to April 2020.

#### ITEM 6 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

9. Item 6.1 – Standing Orders - Decision. GB Standing Orders had been revised to allow holding remote meetings and decision approval by email providing full evidence or documentation was received. Two other issues were also raised and the Clerk agreed to amend the document as discussed. With the additional corrections, the revised Standing Orders were approved.

ACTION

**Clerk**

10. Item 6.2 – GB Membership. A summary of GB membership had been received and the Chair summarised the election outcomes for the formal GB posts for the next academic year (AY). The issue of Governor vacancies was discussed in light of two forthcoming departures from the GB. It was reported that the Management Committee had approved two transfers from Parent Governor to Nominated Governor roles which would allow a Parent Governor election to be held early in the Autumn Term. It was stated that parents from BAME backgrounds would be strongly encouraged to stand at the next election.

11. **Decisions**: The meeting formally approved the following:
- An additional 4-year term of office for Steve Miles (deferred from the March GB meeting).
  - The election of Steve Miles as Chair of the Governing Body and Richard Vass as Vice Chair of the Governing Body for AY 2020-21.
  - The election of Richard Vass, Ros Cornish and Andrew Bonwick as chairs of the Facilities & Finance Committee, Staff & Student Matters Committee and Curriculum Committee respectively. All Committee chairs agreed to take over the role with immediate effect.
  - The Management Committee had approved the transfer of Andrew Bonwick and Lauren Smith to be Nominated Governors, this was now ratified by the Full GB.
  - The Clerk was to arrange a Parent Governor election for two new Governors early in the Autumn Term 2020.

**Clerk**

12. Item 6.3 – GB Meeting Dates 2020-21 - Decision. The proposed dates for GB and GB sub-committee meetings for AY 2020-21 were approved as presented.

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

13. Item 7.1 – Current Schooling. The Headteacher gave a summary on the schooling situation since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. KS3 students had started remote schooling on 18<sup>th</sup> March which was followed on 23<sup>rd</sup> March by the KS4 & 5 students when total lockdown was announced by the Government. The School had reopened to Year 10 and 12 students on 15<sup>th</sup> June with very strict social distancing guidelines. Year 10 were allowed to attend for one day per week and received a full day of teaching on the core subjects. Year 12 were being taught in subject-driven bubbles. On their return to schooling, all students had received a pastoral interview. KS3 students had also been invited into the School for 15-minute pastoral interview in recent weeks and allowed to meet with their peers for a short while. Additional students from the vulnerable and critical worker groups had also returned to School since mid-June. The resumption of teaching and the welfare interviews had been well-received by both staff and students. The Headteacher paid tribute to all the staff in the School for their hard work over recent months.

14. Item 7.2 – Re-opening & Risk Assessment. The Government had now given permission for schools to open fully in September and SLT planning on how it was to be organised was now underway. Details of classroom clustering and minimised staff interaction with students were explained. A detailed risk assessment for reopening had been produced by the School and had been received by Governors, this was to be reviewed again in relation to reopening in September. Governors posed questions on: the clarity of Government guidance, the viability of Sixth Form clustering and student social distancing requirements in September and the Headteacher gave additional clarification. It was confirmed that all students were expected to return to full on-site schooling in September and that sufficient classrooms would be available. Information was given on additional sanitising points and details of how the School would be zoned to avoid unnecessary overcrowding of students.

15. Governors queried the transport situation for September as more than 70% of students travelled to school by using public transport. It was reported that some Government guidance has been received on the issue but that it was not ideal, students would be required to wear face masks following the normal social distancing rules. It was confirmed that a small number of staff were currently COVID-19 shielding but that this was due to end in August. The methods of how the School intended to return to most normal methods of teaching were explained. It was noted that there may be opportunities for employment disputes relating to returning to work at School. The Headteacher advised that confidence building measures had been undertaken in order to minimise concerns amongst staff. Governors queried whether staggered start and end times had been

considered by the School, it was stated that the concept had been rejected by the School as being unworkable, mainly because of student dependence on public and private transport.

16. Item 7.3 – Staffing, Safeguarding & Wellbeing. The Headteacher confirmed that the School was fully staffed for September and that two appointments had been made during the closure using remote interviews. It was noted that pastoral care during the closure had been excellent with students receiving regular contact from their form tutors and year leaders, any issues that had arisen had been addressed swiftly by the pastoral team. There had been a few issues with a small number of staff members mainly relating to the stress of home/work balance and they had been supported by the SLT. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) gave a verbal report on student safeguarding and wellbeing during the School closure and advised that the MyConcern system had been well-utilised by staff to report any issues that had come to their attention. It was stated that loneliness had been the most frequent area of concern with students. Governors were reminded that the safeguarding responsibility would be moving Fiona Harrison, the new acting Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) in September. The Headteacher also advised the meeting that both Fiona Harrison and Jo Cross, the new Assistant Headteacher (Teaching & Learning) in September, had been working very closely with the current SLT during the School closure and had been of significant assistance.

17. Item 7.4 – September 2020 Admissions. The meeting was advised that DfE guidance on the grammar school entrance test situation in the Autumn Term was still awaited and that the School was already beginning to make its own plans. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that 1,224 Year 5 students had registered to sit the CCHS entrance test next term for entry into Year 7 in September 2021, this figure had been unaffected by the COVID-19 situation. Details of how the School intended to run the test in October were given but final guidance from the DfE was awaited before it could be published to parents. Details of how disadvantaged students were being assisted in advance of the test were also explained, it was stated that 15 pupil premium students had registered to sit the entrance test from within the 12.5-mile category and 24 students from outside it. In light of the School closure the usual on-site welcome activities for the new Year 7 students in September had been cancelled and the meeting was advised of the alternative virtual activities and support that had been organised instead. It was also reported that Simmonds, the uniform suppliers, had issued all the pupil premium students starting next term with a free uniform pack. There had been 7 appeals for entry to Year 7 next term but all had been upheld.

18. At this point the Headteacher gave details of a recent adverse social media incident affecting the School which related to the Black Lives Matter cause. Governors were given details of how the incident arose and its effect on the School and its staff. The unpleasant, unsubstantiated nature of the comments were noted and the Headteacher stressed to Governors that no formal complaints about racism had ever had been received by the School relating to the conduct of a member of staff nor had any relating to the recent incident. The School had reacted swiftly to the issue and within 72 hours had started the 'change@CCHS' initiative. There had been positive feedback from all sections of the School community and the new 'change' themes would run through the School SDP next year. The Chair and Governors commended the Headteacher, along with the other members of the SLT, on his swift and sensitive handling of the situation and noted the very proactive way forward which was planned by the School. It was reported that the issue had also arisen at other schools in Chelmsford and across the country, particularly in relation to girls' grammar schools. The Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) confirmed that a new 'change'-related committee was to be formed and further details would be published in due course.

**5.00pm – Andrew Bonwick briefly left the meeting.**

## **ITEM 8 – FINANCE MATTERS**

19. Item 8.1 – School Finance. The Business Manager informed the meeting that the School's financial situation changed daily, all lettings had been shut down and information on when things could restart was awaited. Current Government guidance did not allow swimming pools and dance studios to be used or contact sports to happen, the Barracuda Summer letting had been cancelled, all of which had a knock-on effect on School income. The only thing which was recoverable from Government funding was the £15 per week allowance for free school meals vouchers. It was

confirmed that all additional cleaning and PPE items would have to come out of School funding. It was hoped that a little expenditure may be recouped from utility savings. The meeting was advised that it was too early to be able to give an accurate final end-of-year figure.

20. **Item 8.2 – School Budget 2020-21 & 3-Year Financial Forecast.** Governors received the proposed School Budget for 2020-21 and 3-year forecast, it was stressed that there were a lot of assumptions which needed to be noted. The loss of trips and lettings income was highlighted and it was assumed that the DfE pension rebate and Teachers' Pay Grant would also stop after this year. The Business Manager explained how critical student numbers were to income and the figures assumed for the number of Year 12 students in the forecast were discussed. The 2020-21 budget presented a surplus of £53,895 but this would be lost if Year 12 student numbers were less than assumed. The issue of external Year 12 joiners was raised and it was reported that a more robust system of external student recruitment was to happen this Summer. Student losses after Year 11 was also raised and discussed. The additional loss of income from the extra ten students entering Year 10 in September, caused by the inability to test during the closure, was also noted. The Business Manager also advised that no insurance claims had yet been paid for the cancelled School trips this year, they totalled around £70,000.

21. **Decision.** The School Budget for 2020-21 and 3-year forecast, along with its associated assumptions, were agreed as presented.

22. **Item 8.3 – Financial Regulations - Decision.** Two minor amendments relating to GB virement level were proposed for the School Financial Regulations. The revised School Financial Regulations were approved as presented.

23. **Item 8.4 – ICE Reports.** The Juniper Internal Controls Evaluation reports for January and June 2020 were received for information. It was noted that the few comments made were of a minor nature and that the School had very strong financial systems.

## **ITEM 9 – PREMISES UPDATE**

24. **Item 9.1 – SSEF Project.** The SSEF project was on track with a revised schedule produced as a result of the 5-week COVID-19 closure. It was noted that delays may arise when internal work begins. The Teaching Block is currently due to be completed in May 2021 and the Sports Hall in July 2021. Financial aspects were generally on track although a few of the proposed scope changes were currently being challenged by the Business Manager. The project is currently running £300,000 favourable to the project. Students visiting the School recently had been very excited to see the progress of the building project. No Health & Safety issues had been reported.

25. **Item 9.2 – Photovoltaic Electricity Proposal - Decision.** Details of an opportunity to expand the proposed photovoltaic electricity system of the SSEF project had been put forward to the School. The proposal was a power-purchase agreement within a consortium of other schools which suggested an initial £3000 saving to the School's electricity bill. The Business Manager gave outline details of the proposal and was questioned by the Governors. Whilst the Governing Body agreed to the proposal in principle, it was agreed that the Business Manager would circulate the current figures to the Full GB after the meeting and that the Facilities & Finance Committee would discuss the proposal further at their next meeting.

**M Mulgrew  
R Vass**

**5.25pm – Sarah Clements left the meeting.**

26. **Item 9.3 – Premises and Health & Safety Matters.** There were no Health & Safety issues to report.

**5.34pm – Richard Vass left the meeting.**

## **ITEM 10 – RISK REGISTER**

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

## **ITEM 11 – GDPR**

28. The ECC IGS Annual GDPR audit report was received and the contents noted. No issues of concern had been found, all minor recommendations related to new GDPR requirements.

## **ITEM 12 – GB SUB-COMMITTEES**

29. **Decision.** The minutes of the following GB sub-committee meetings were received and approved and no questions were raised for discussion:

- a. The Management Committee meetings held on 5<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020,
- b. The Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020,
- c. The Curriculum Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020, and
- d. The Staff & Student Matters Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020.

## **ITEM 13 – SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – VISITS & TRIPS**

30. An updated list of Residential & Overseas Trips for 2019-20 and outline trips for 2020-21 and 2021-22 was presented. All previously approved Summer and Autumn Term 2020 trips had been cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation. Additional Government guidance was awaited before any further residential or overseas trips would be planned by the School. The effect on future trips of next year's Year 7 students having missed their Year 6 residential trips was discussed.

## **ITEM 14 – SCHOOL TERM DATES**

31. **Decision.** The School term dates for 2021-22 had not yet been finalised. It was agreed that they would be presented at the next meeting

## **ITEM 15 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

32. Item 15.1 – School Development Plan 2020-21. The School headline ideas for the School Development Plan for 2020-21 were received for information. The headlines were to form the basis of the School Development Plan 2020-21 which would be presented at the next meeting.

## **ITEM 19 – ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

33. No other items of business were raised for discussion.

## **ITEM 20 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

34. **Decision.** It was agreed that the next Full Governing Body meeting would be held at 8.15am on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

## **FAREWELLS**

35. The Chair closed the meeting by saying farewell to: Maria French, Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) who was leaving the School after 10 years' service to become Headteacher at Chislehurst School in Kent; Yvonne Wickers, Chair of the Staff & Student Matters Committee, who was leaving after 8 years as a Governor, and Mike Worboys, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, who was leaving after 10 years as a Governor. They were thanked for their service and commitment to the School which was commended by all.

The meeting closed at 5.56pm.

Agreed as a true record at the Management Committee meeting held remotely on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and signed electronically due to Coronavirus school closure.



S Miles, Chair of Governors

15<sup>th</sup> October 2020