

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the Full GOVERNING BODY held remotely via Zoom at 8.15am on Friday 9th July 2021

Present:	Steve Miles Richard Vass Stephen Lawlor Andrew Bonwick, Richard Brown, Ros Cornish, Sarah de Souza-Ingle, Jenny Fowle, Jason Oster, Priya Rangaswamy, Lauren Smith, Aisha Sohail	Chair of Governors Vice Chair of Governors Headteacher
In Attendance:	Melissa Mulgrew Wendy Newton	Business Manager Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Mary Argent, Sarah Clements, Mark Rowell, Emma Ledwidge	

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mary Argent, Sarah Clements, Mark Rowell and Emma Ledwidge.

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 2020-21, conflicts of interest, or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3. The minutes of the Full GB meeting and the Company AGM both held on 25th March 2021 were agreed as a true record.

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 4, Para 6 – Traffic Concerns. Traffic congestion outside the School had improved since the completion of the roadworks however concerns remained about the positioning of the new bus stops and Essex County Council had been advised.

ITEM 7 – HEADTEACHER’S REPORT TO GOVERNORS (Taken out of agenda order)

5. Governors received the Headteacher’s Report dated 9th July 2021 and the most significant issues were summarised. The new Delta variant of the Coronavirus had affected a significant number of students in three particular year groups, some of whom would now not be in school until the Autumn Term. School staff continued to undertake Covid-19 track and trace action and were commended for their efforts. SLT were currently reviewing DfE Covid-19 Guidance for September and relevant information was to be passed to the School community before the end of term. A more normal school situation was planned for the Autumn Term. Governors were advised that whilst the School had strictly followed all DfE guidance and procedures to date, a new proposal for schools to undertake two Covid-19 lateral flow tests (LFTs) on all students in school at the start of the Autumn Term would cause major staffing and logistical problems and was deemed illogical and impractical. The School’s concerns over the new proposal had been passed to Essex County Council, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the DfE, via Vicky Ford MP (Children’s Minister). Governors discussed the issue and queried the DfE rationale. It was suggested that a better option would be for CCHS students to undertake two LFTs outside the School environment, with their parents, immediately prior to commencing the Autumn Term.

6. The usual Year 6 to Year 7 student transition had not been possible but alternative events had been undertaken including a one-to-one meeting with a staff member alongside a chance to meet some of their future peers. The School had arranged a programme of end-of-year activities including: a reinstated House Drama competition, Sports Day and individual year group celebration

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assemblies to replace the Junior Speech Days. Year 11 and 13 public examination results were to be announced in the week commencing 9th August 2021.

7. Governors questioned the increase in student fixed-term exclusions and the Headteacher advised that some friendship groups had been fractured by the Coronavirus situation and remote schooling and the remedial actions taken to address the issue were summarised. It was stated that there were sometimes also home difficulties behind the exclusions. The students involved had been punished by exclusion but were also being supported by the School's pastoral team. It was reported that there were still some troubling ongoing issues, but that mediation was being undertaken by relevant Year Leaders. It was hoped that a more normal Autumn Term would bring things back into line. The number of disadvantaged students was queried in relation to SSEF financial funding. It was stated that the Covid-19 situation had prevented most of the usual direct and in-person outreach work over the past 18 months, but that numbers were still acceptable and were reported to the DfE. The School's Primary Outreach Taskforce had been providing alternative support to primary colleagues and parents via a new webpage: 'CCHS Inspire'. The meeting discussed the possible ways of getting information about the entrance test out to primary school parents, including contacting primary school Governing Bodies directly.

8. The overall effect of the Coronavirus situation on the current students' education was queried by Governors and the Headteacher advised that most students had done very well educationally despite the disruption and difficulties of remote schooling. A query was also raised on student numbers in Year 12 for September 2021 and it was reported that early indications were good. A lot of work had been done to promote the Sixth Form to both internal and external students. The administration work undertaken by the School in the results week was summarised.

9. At the end of the Item the Chair took the opportunity to thank the Headteacher for his 10-years' service to the School and a small gift was presented. The Chair also advised the meeting that Ros Cornish, Chair of the Staff & Student Matters Committee, had tendered her resignation with effect from the end of the current term, she was thanked for her 35 years' work both as a former employee as the School's Finance Officer and more lately as a Governor.

9.10am – The Headteacher left the meeting to attend the School's Sports Day event.

ITEM 5 – CHAIRS' ACTION & EMAIL ACTION

10. Item 5.1 - Chairs' Action. A summary of Chairs' actions and approvals since the last meeting was received and noted.

11. Item 5.2 - DfE & ESFA Letters. Governors confirmed receipt of the ESFA letter from Baroness Berridge dated 10th June 2021.

12. Item 5.3 – School Management Accounts. Governors confirmed receipt of the School's Management Accounts, Balance Sheets and Cashflow Forecasts for January to April 2021 and no questions were raised on the accounts.

ITEM 6 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

13. Item 6.1 – GB Membership. Details of current GB membership, terms of office and committee membership were received for general information. The Clerk advised that elections for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair of the GB plus the sub-committee chairs would be initiated by email shortly. It was noted that the departure of Ros Cornish would require a new chair for the Staff & Student Matters Committee and a new full Safeguarding Governor. Jenny Fowle, the current Deputy Safeguarding Governor, kindly agreed to take up the role of full Safeguarding Governor.

14. Item 6.2 – GB Structure. The meeting was advised that the Management Committee (Academy Members) had begun the work required to adopt the new DfE-preferred academy structure. It was stressed that the current CCHS academy structure remained legal so there was no immediate need for change. Possible new members had been approached and Mr Jo Wincott had already advised that he would be happy to accept the role. Further administrative action

would continue next term.

15. Item 6.3 – GB Meeting Dates 2021-22 - Decision. The proposed dates for Full GB and GB sub-committee meetings for AY 2021-22 were received and approved as presented.

ITEM 8 – FINANCE MATTERS

18. Item 8.1 – School Finances. The Business Manager advised that the School had a deficit of around £14,000 as at the end of May 2021 but that the figure was expected to improve by the end of the financial year. The financial accounts for March and April 2021 had been received by email recently and no questions were raised about the accounts.

19. Item 8.2 – School Budget 2021-22 & 3-Year Forecast. Governors received the proposed School Budget for 2021-22 and 3-year forecast for approval and the Business Manager advised of two minor expenditure changes since the proposed budget had been reviewed by the Facilities & Finance Committee. The proposed budget for 2021-22 showed an in-year surplus of £33,595, and surpluses of £40,858 and £22,223 were forecast for 2022-23 and 23-24 respectively. It was stated that the School had prepared a safe and prudent budget. The Business Manager explained the assumptions within the proposed budget and the reasoning behind them. It was stated that the budget was aimed at being less reliant on lettings income although lettings income was expected to rise again with the opening of the new Sports Hall. The assumed student numbers on which the budget and 3-year forecast were based were also reviewed and discussed. It was stated that the assumed Sixth Form student numbers were very cautious and would be manageable for the School. The meeting was also advised that extra-curricular Mandarin lessons were at risk due to a lack of student uptake in September.

20. Decision. The School Budget for 2021-22 and 3-year forecast, along with its associated assumptions, were approved as presented.

M Mulgrew

21. Item 8.3 – Internal Controls Evaluation (ICE) Report. The second of the bi-annual Juniper ICE audits had been undertaken in April 2021 and their report was received for information. There had been one finding and one recommendation. The finding related to providing all Governors with information on School contracts and was to be received in Item 12 of this meeting.

22. Item 8.4 – Catering Contract - Decision. The School catering contract had been due for renewal this term and in light of the timescales involved had been reviewed and approved by the Management Committee in June. The size of the contract was such that CCHS Financial Regulations required Full GB approval. The independently produced catering contract tender assessment report was received for information and the meeting ratified the decision of the Management Committee.

ITEM 9 – CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & SSEF PROJECT

23. An SSEF project status report dated 28th May 2021 and Progress Report 15 dated 15th May 2021 were received for information and the Business Manager gave a verbal update on the SSEF building project, summarising recent project activity and the reasons for scope changes. The project status continued to be green with completion of the teaching block fit out on 24th May and the sports hall on 12th July 2021, handover of both buildings would hopefully be by mid-July or early August. The Business Manager explained that the final stage of the SSEF project, the Gym repurposing, had been revised with a capped budget of £300,000 as a result of increased costs for steel due to Covid and material shortages. The mezzanine had been descoped from the new library project and the refurbishment of the old library into a third art room had been postponed with the room now being used temporarily as a Sixth Form study area. It was stated that School finances would be reviewed again at the end of the main project and that it may be possible to up-scope again at that point. A number of the SSEF project variations had resulted in a reduced contingency, details of which were summarised. Governors put forward questions concerning the project and its finances which were answered by the Business Manager. It was confirmed that the teaching block would be ready for use in September except for possibly the completion of some minor items. The Chair of Governors commended the work of the Business Manager in relation to

keeping the SSEF project on time and within budget.

ACTION

ITEM 10 – GDPR

24. The ECC Information Governance Service annual audit of GDPR had taken place on 6th May 2021 and their report was received for information. There had only been one minor finding relating to the non-publishing of a document on the School website which had been an oversight during Covid and had been corrected immediately. The Business Manager advised that there had been several information requests all of which had been addressed in line with DPO guidance. It was noted that requests concerning examination grades would be likely after the publication of results in August.

ITEM 11 – SCHOOL TERM DATES

25. **Decision**. The School term dates for 2022-23 were presented and approved.

ITEM 12 – RISK REGISTER

26. **Decision**. The GB section of the CCHS Risk Register was received for termly review and approved as presented. In line with the finding of the ICE audit (Item 8.2), the meeting received a summary of external School contracts and noted the current contracts. Special attention was brought to the Skippers ground maintenance contract, the only contract to exceed £10,000, as required by the Academies Financial Handbook threshold for governor viewing. The Business Manager confirmed that a full value analysis was undertaken for school contracts and that all terms and conditions were checked.

ITEM 13 – GB SUB-COMMITTEES

27. **Decision**. The minutes of the following GB sub-committee meetings were received and approved. A query was raised on the examination year groups stated in the Curriculum Committee minutes and the Clerk agreed to investigate the matter. (**Clerk's Note**: The information in the minutes were found to be true as at the time of the meeting but that School examination plans had changed after the meeting was held).

Clerk

- a. The Management Committee meeting held on 11 June 2021,
- b. The Facilities & Finance Committee meetings held on 28th April and 23rd June 2021,
- c. The Curriculum Committee meeting held on 12th May 2021, and
- d. The Staff & Student Matters Committee meeting held on 16th June 2021.

ITEM 14 – SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – VISITS & TRIPS

28. A summary of proposed residential and overseas trips for 2021-22 was received and approved as presented. The meeting was advised that only one Geography trip had been booked to date because of Covid-19 restrictions. Governors noted that the younger year groups had lost their overseas trips which had been cancelled due to Covid-19 and asked if they were to occur in the future, the School advised that it was looking into the possible options.

ITEM 15 – GOVERNOR REPORTS

29. **Item 15.1 – Governor Visits**. There had been no formal Governor visits this school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, although Sarah de Sousa-Ingle had recently visited to see the new SSEF buildings and Andrew Bonwick had been into the School this term to assist with a Careers event.

30. **Item 15.2 – Governor Training**. Lauren Smith, Training Link Governor, advised that she was currently undertaking a cost benefit analysis of governor training options available to the School and intended to collate a new training guide for Governors. The responses from the recent Governor skills audit were still under review. All three new Parent Governors had now undertaken their Governor Induction training. The Clerk reminded Governors that the Juniper training was currently undertaken by Zoom and that most courses were free.

31. Item 15.3 – Safeguarding. Ros Cornish, Safeguarding Governor, advised that she had been in contact with the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) throughout the pandemic and that the School's pastoral team continued to be very busy with a range of pastoral issues. The MyConcern system was very busy, and all reported items were addressed. It was stated that anxiety problems had increased amongst students during the past year because of the Covid-19 and the lockdown and that a new Year 8 anxiety group had been set up to address the issue. The meeting was reminded that the School now had mental health first aiders available for both students and staff. Confirmation had also been received that the School's Single Central Record was up-to-date.

32. Item 15.4 – Parents' Association Matters. Ros Cornish, PA Link Governor, advised that most PA activities had ceased during the Covid-19 pandemic but that new projects were being planned including the Christmas Fair and a CCHS cookery book. Despite reduced fundraising income the PA had recently donated £10,000 for the purchase of specialised carpeting for the new Sports Hall. A suggestion made at the last Full GB meeting that the PA could sell second-hand uniform for parents on a split-profit basis had been passed to the PA but the suggestion had been deemed as being not viable.

33. Item 15.5 – Better Buildings Committee. Jason Oster, Link Governor to the Better Building Committee, reminded the meeting that the activities of the Better Building Committee had ceased for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic and there had been limited success with donations towards the SSEF project. There was to be a new fundraising push in the Autumn Term as the DfE SSEF money would not cover all the needs of the School.

ITEM 16 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

34. Item 16.1 – School Development Plan (SDP) 2020-21. The Final Review of the SDP 2020-21 was received for information, no questions were raised on the document.

35. Item 16.2 – School Development Plan 2021-22. An overview of the SDP 2021-22 was received for information, the document would form the basis of the SDP 2021-22 which would be presented at the next meeting. A query was raised about how the SDP was derived and that the document needed to be prioritised within Governor discussion. It was suggested that the topic could be part of the next Governor Development session next term, currently due to cover Ofsted. Governors noted they had been requested to put forward their own views on future School priorities and that this data could be useful towards the future SDPs and Strategic Plans.

ITEM 17 – ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

36. Governor Portal. The Clerk advised that following a re-design of the School website, the Governor Portal link had disappeared from the home page. The problem was now being investigated as a matter of urgency and would hopefully be resolved in the near future.

ITEM 16 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

37. Decisions. It was agreed that the next Full Governing Body meeting would be held at 8.00am on Friday 15th October 2021. The Clerk agreed to survey Governors for their preferred times for GB and sub-committee meetings.

**All
Clerk**

38. The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the School staff for their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic and thanking the Governors for their continuing support.

The meeting closed at 10.20am.

Agreed as a true record at the Management Committee meeting held remotely on 15th October 2021 and signed electronically due to the Coronavirus situation.

S Miles

S Miles, Chair of Governors

15th October 2021