

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE **held at the School and via Teams at 8.00am on Friday 10th March 2023**

Present:	Steve Miles Stephen Lawlor Andrew Bonwick Sarah de Souza-Ingle Richard Vass	Chair of Governors Headteacher Chair of Curriculum Committee (via Teams from 8.20am) Chair of Staff & Student Matters Committee Vice Chair of Governors & Chair of Facilities & Finance Committee
In Attendance:	Jo Cross Fiona Harrison Melissa Mulgrew Wendy Newton	Deputy Headteacher (Academic) Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) Business Manager Clerk to Governors

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for expected late arrival (via Teams) was received from Andrew Bonwick.

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 2022-23, or conflicts of interest, or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2022 were agreed as a true record.

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 8, Para 14b – Deposit Account. The Business Manager confirmed that the School's Virgin Bank deposit account had been renewed.
5. Item 11, Para 20 – DfE Letters. Two letters drafted by Andrew Bonwick concerning the proposed change to the CCHS Articles of Association had been sent to the DfE. The issue was to be discussed in Item 10.2.
6. Item 12, Para 22 – Admissions Policy. The Admissions Policy for 2024 had gone out for public consultation and then formally determined by the Full GB at the Governors' Conference in January.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION

7. A summary of Chairs' Actions taken by Management Committee members since the last meeting was reviewed and noted. One error of Summer Term end dates was noted.

ITEM 6 – FINANCE & SSEF PROJECT

8. The final accounts for the SSEF Project were received and discussed. It was noted that there was a £67,000 overspend on the full project but that a small amount (c£2000) of this may still be recouped by VAT clawback. The overspend represented only 1% of the total project cost which was considered highly commendable by the Committee in light of the difficulties which had occurred during the project (Covid and the associated rise in material costs). Only the remediation of the long jump pitch remained before the final payment was made to Horizon. The final SSEF Project accounts had now been submitted to the ESFA for their formal closure. The Governors thanked the Business Manager for her hard work and good management throughout the whole project. It was noted that the project could have been a huge risk for the School if anything had gone wrong.

ACTION

ITEM 7 –CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

ACTION

9. The Business Manager presented the CCHS Estate Strategy 2022-27. The document was a recommendation from the Capital Advisors Programme which looked at estate management and capital expenditure. It was stated that much improvement work had been undertaken on the site since the last condition report and that the next conditions schedule was due in July 2024. The Strategy document highlighted the current challenges for the School in relation to the campus, and also listed recommendations for the short, medium and longer term. The biggest current priorities are the condition of the swimming pool, the Dining Hall space and the problematic fabric of the School relating to energy and challenges imposed as a result of 1950-1970's construction methods. The need to build capital expenditure into the School's budgeting was stressed to be able to address future replacement issues. The current CIF bid was for £450,000 to replace the Main School boilers, the outcome of the CIF bid was not likely to be known until June or July 2023. The administrative problems relating to boiler replacement were noted. Other failures within the School included the swimming pool hardware and the Cadbury Building boilers.

10. The swimming pool continued to have major issues including: the need for a boiler replacement (£16,000), rusting of gas pipes (£16,000) and recently a cracked chlorine pipe in the pool plantroom. Keeping the correct water temperature of the swimming pool was also problematic and may indicate a failure of the Calorex unit (£30-£40,000). The Business Manager reported that the major difficulty was finding a swimming pool specialist who could advise the School on a strategic plan to keep the pool working. Various streams of funding were listed but it was noted that the required expenditure costs and overall strategy were needed before any funding requests could be put in. Governors queried whether there was a Health & Safety need to close the pool and were advised that there were daily checks and that the pool was closed immediately if necessary. The Committee discussed the issue in relation to overall costs and the effect on lettings. Whilst currently sustainable there was a need to have a structured plan to maintain the use of the pool. The Business Manager confirmed that she was investigating the amounts that would need to be added into capital funding to address the current issues and build up funds for future replacements. It was noted that the School did have reserves set aside for specific capital development projects which could be diverted in the short-term if required. The Headteacher suggested approaching swimming celebrities who may know contacts who could help the School. The need to raise the issues of the swimming pool with the School and local community was noted but this required having an overall strategy and cost details in place. It was reported that over 800 local children and adults use the School swimming pool within the 25 hours of lettings per week. Other possible areas of help from within the local community were suggested and the need for specific expertise was discussed.

11. Governors asked if there were any other areas which required immediate action. It was reported that boundary fencing was still being addressed following a recent security audit. Low-cost energy efficiencies and the swimming pool were the immediate priorities.

ITEM 8 – GDPR

12. Governors were advised that there was nothing of significance to report in relation to GDPR.

ITEM 9 – EXAMINATIONS

13. The Headteacher advised that Year 11 and 13 mocks had been completed and that the School was now undertaking additional assessments with these year groups. There were no Government or examination board modifications for public examinations being taken in the Summer but these cohorts had been affected by the Covid pandemic. The CCHS Achievement Strategy was tabled, and attention brought to the extra activities being undertaken to assist these particular year groups. It was stated that the School was always mindful of staff wellbeing and a variety of actions had been undertaken to help staff including the modification of staff INSET day content to assist workload management. In addition, the end of the Summer Term had been brought forward by a day. Staff morale remained good and additional support for the examination year groups continued. Governors queried the expectations of the examination year groups and were advised that targets were similar to previous years and that the students should do well. It was highlighted that there were always individual pastoral issues in the year groups which may affect results.

8.25am – Andrew Bonwick joined the meeting after technical issues.

14. The Headteacher advised that the aim of the School was for 90% A*-B at A level but that there were curriculum structural matters which must continue to be attended to, to completely address the changes that were made to accommodate the IB programme previously. It was reported that the Headteacher had suggested to the CEO of GSHA that a curriculum survey was undertaken, to build on the one that was completed in 2016, providing grammar schools with invaluable comparative data to benchmark both practice and provision. CCHS offered to lead on this, with the Deputy Headteacher (Academic) having co-ordinated the survey, which was recently concluded. CCHS started, two years ago, to move to 9hrs per fortnight (up from 8hrs) teaching time for A level mathematics and science subjects, which attract large cohorts of students. The School is planning to move this reform to the majority of other A level subjects, with the GSHA curriculum survey indicating that this has become the norm. This will support the strengthening of A level outcomes. Governors queried the effect on staffing levels and were advised that it would be manageable for most subjects from September 2023. Also related to the GSHA survey, the Headteacher advised that SLT were looking at the structure of the School's A level offer. Most Sixth Form students study four A levels in Year 12 but $\frac{2}{3}$ then drop to three A levels in Year 13. Further details on this issue would be presented to Governors in due course. It was stated that there were no issues with the Year 11 GCSE and the KS3 to KS4 structure.

ITEM 10 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

15. Item 10.1 - GB Membership. The terms of office and committee membership of the Full GB were reviewed. It was noted that Jenny Fowle had already advised that she did not intend to continue as a Governor when her current term of office finished at the end of Spring Term 2023. The Clerk advised that a Parent Governor election would need to be held and requested permission to begin the process immediately. Richard Vass also advised that due to relocation, he was unlikely to continue after the end of his current term in October 2023. His departure would increase the number of vacant Nominated Governor positions to three and require succession planning for the Facilities & Finance Committee. The meeting reviewed the vacancy situation on sub-committees and discussed the options for filling the Nominated Governor positions. It was also noted that Lauren Smith had now become a part-time member of CCHS teaching staff and her position as a Governor was under review. In light of the forthcoming changes in the composition of the Governing Body membership, it was suggested that a Governor Skills Audit should be undertaken.

16. Decisions:

- a. It was **agreed** that Aisha Sohail should be offered a Nominated Governor position.
- b. The Clerk **agreed** to initiate an election for two new Parent Governors.
- c. The Clerk **agreed** to review past Parent Governor election applications to investigate if there had been any applicants with financial experience.
- d. Richard Vass **agreed** to approach Richard Brown about taking on the role of Chair of the Facilities & Finance Committee.
- e. The Clerk **agreed** to commence a Governor Skills Audit.

**Chair
Clerk
Clerk**

**R Vass
Clerk**

17. Item 10.2 – Academy Structure. The Clerk confirmed that the two letters written by Andrew Bonwick had been received by DfE and that they had replied saying the proposed new CCHS Articles of Association were not acceptable. They had advised that the DfE model articles had to be accepted unaltered, this was despite the fact that the DfE's own documents referred to the model articles as only being 'preferred'. The DfE were also still unable to clarify the differences between the current CCHS Funding Agreement and the new ESFA funding agreement the School would be obliged to accept if the new articles were adopted. The Committee debated the impasse and the next steps. The new DfE model articles do not include the position of staff governors and Governors debated an alternative method of getting staff input into Governing Body meetings. The Clerk confirmed that the proposed new external Members were still available.

18. Decisions.

- a. The Headteacher **agreed** to approach other SSGS schools to ascertain if any had more information on the new ESFA funding agreement.
- b. The Clerk **agreed** to revise the new CCHS Articles of Association in line with the DfE model.

**S Lawlor
Clerk**

ITEM 11 – GOVERNING BODY MEETING

ACTION

19. **Decision.** The proposed agenda for the Full GB meeting to be held on Thursday 23rd March 2023 was reviewed and **approved** as presented.

ITEM 12 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023 – MID-TERM REVIEW

20. The Mid Term Review of the School Development Plan 2022-23 was received for information. The Headteacher advised that much of the SDP focussed on Years 11 and 13. A query was raised on a comment on digital learning and the Headteacher gave additional explanation.

ITEM 13 – COMPLAINTS POLICY

21. **Decision.** The Complaints Policy was received for approval. The Clerk confirmed that there had been no ESFA amendments. The policy was **approved** as presented with a two-year review.

ITEM 14 – RISK REGISTER

22. **Decision.** The Management Committee section of the CCHS Risk Register was reviewed. It was suggested that a risk relating to governor skills was listed in the full Risk Register and should also be in the Management Committee section of the Register. The Clerk **agreed** to copy the risk relating to governor skills into the Management Committee section of the Risk Register. The current Management Committee section of the CCHS Risk Register was **approved** as presented.

Clerk

ITEM 15 – COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS

23. The Headteacher advised the Committee that any compliments received were now put onto the School website and Parents' Portal in order to share the positive feedback. There had been many compliments concerning the recent School production of 'The Little Shop of Horrors'. There was nothing significant to report in relation to complaints. A few minor administrative issues had arisen since the last meeting, and all had been addressed by the School.

ITEM 16 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

24. **Polling Station – Decision.** The School had been instructed that it was to be used as a polling station for the local government elections in May 2023. The proposal was causing great concern for the School in relation to security, safeguarding and the public examinations. The issue was discussed, and it was **agreed** that the Headteacher should write to the Returning Officer voicing the concerns of the Governors. The Clerk **agreed** to send the official LE(PA) Rules relating to local elections to Andrew Bonwick.

**Head
Clerk**

25. **NEU Industrial Action.** The Headteacher reminded Governors that there were to be two days of NEU industrial action the following week on 15th and 16th March, and explained how the School would manage the days. It was reported that 55% of teachers had been in School for the first day of NEU industrial action on 1st February, and 70% of teachers on the second day, 1st March. Around 60% of teachers were expected in work on 15th & 16th March.

26. **Broomfield Road Traffic Issue.** The Headteacher advised that Vicky Ford MP and potentially Councillor Lee Scott, Portfolio Holder for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport at Essex County Council, were visiting the School at the end of the school day on 28th April to witness the problems caused for pedestrians by the floating bus stops situated outside the School.

ITEM 17 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

27. **Decision.** The Clerk **agreed** to organise an alternative date for the next meeting.

All

The meeting closed at 10.00am.