

BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Friday, 15 June 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors of the City of London School for Girls held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 15 June 2012 at 11.00am

Present

Members:

Deputy John Bennett	Sylvia Moys
Ray Catt	Henrika Priest
Deputy Dennis Cotgrove	Deputy Richard Regan
Deputy Stella Currie	Mary Robey
Revd Dr Martin Dudley	Virginia Rounding
Alderman David Graves	Richard Sermon
Tom Hoffman	Alderman John White
Clare James	

Officers:

Daniel Hooper	- Town Clerk's Department
Chrissie Morgan	- Director of Human Resources
Steven Reynolds	- Chamberlain's Department
Sarah Port	- Chamberlain's Department
Diana Vernon	- Headmistress, City of London School for Girls
Andrew Douglas	- Deputy Head, City of London School for Girls
Ned Yorke	- Bursar, City of London School for Girls

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy Sir Michael Snyder, Bob Duffield, Deputy the Reverend Stephen Haines (ex-officio), Professor John Betteridge (co-opted) and Dr. Stephanie Ellington (co-opted).

2. DECLARATIONS BY GOVERNORS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL

Governors received the Order of the Court of Common Council, 19 April 2012, appointing the Board of Governors of the City of London School for Girls for 2012/13 and setting its Terms of Reference.

RECEIVED.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 29.

The Town Clerk read a list of those Governors eligible to stand and Alderman John White, being the only Governor expressing a willingness to serve as Chairman, was duly elected for the ensuing year and took the Chair.

Alderman White thanked the Board for their support in electing him as Chairman and went on to welcome Alderman Graves to his first meeting of the Board.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30.

The Town Clerk reported that, in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. (2) (a), the immediate past Chairman had chosen to exercise her right to serve as Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year.

Mrs Moys was therefore duly appointed as Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year.

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE PAST CHAIRMAN

Deputy Stella Currie paid tribute to Mrs Moys, the past Chairman.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

THAT at the conclusion of her three year term of office as their Chairman, the Members of this Board wish to extend to

SYLVIA DOREEN MOYS

their sincere thanks and appreciation for the manner in which she has presided over their deliberations and the detailed care and interest that she has shown in all aspects of the life of the City of London School for Girls, which has continued to go from strength to strength during this time.

HER unfailing support of the School at various functions and events, including musical productions, debates and sporting activities have been very much appreciated by the Headmistress, staff and pupils alike. The frequency with which she has visited the School and represented its interests and achievements within other contexts has been second to none. The Chairman's frequent one day visits to the school to attend lessons and shadow groups of pupils has meant that she has had very detailed insight into the day to day running of the school and pupils' experience of teaching and learning. She has become a very well known figure, especially in the Prep Department. Equally significant has been her very proactive approach to getting to know parents, talking to them at school events and getting a real understanding of their perspective.

ACADEMICALLY, the School has achieved some of its best ever results under her Chairmanship and has continued to top league tables. The School has also seen its highest ever number of applications for entry and the greater links established with the City of London School have also become a very important part of School life.

FOLLOWING a successful Independent Schools Inspectorate Inspection in January 2009, the Chairman was keen to ensure that the School took all possible steps to remain fully compliant ahead of any future Inspections and was instrumental in the establishment of the 'Access Group' tasked with regularly reviewing and updating all necessary supporting work. She also successfully re-introduced the Governor and Staff 'Strategy Planning Day' in July 2010 which had not met for some five years prior to this. The Strategy Day is now an invaluable opportunity for staff and Governors to meet and discuss issues of key importance to the future of the School and its pupils and is a well-attended and much anticipated annual event.

HER persistence and dedication has ensured that some vital improvements have been made to the School building itself in the past three years. Welcome improvements have been made to the School heating system – a project which had been of concern for some time, the School reception area has undergone a dramatic and futuristic transformation with the introduction of biometric technology and work is now very much underway to expand the School building on its current site.

DURING her time as Chairman, she has presided over some rather difficult and emotive issues such as teachers pay negotiations and the Reduction in School Fees for teaching staff. She has worked closely alongside her counterparts at both the City of London School and the City of London Freemen's School to achieve outcomes that were acceptable to all in both cases and has demonstrated her fairness, empathy and balance in her approach.

SHE has performed her role as Chairman with great enthusiasm and confidence, and has demonstrated a profound understanding and dedication towards her duties throughout. The Board wish to thank her for the generous hospitality she has provided during her years in office and convey their good wishes for her future health and happiness.

RESOLVED – That it be referred to the Mover, Deputy Stella Currie, and the Seconder, Alderman John White to arrange for the Vote of Thanks to be presented in a manner acceptable to the recipient.

6. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 24 February 2012 were approved and agreed as a correct record.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF BURSARY COMMITTEE**

The Town Clerk reminded the Board that the Bursary Committee could comprise the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Board and up to five other Governors.

The Board proceeded to appoint their Bursary Committee for 2012/13.

RESOLVED - that the following Governors be appointed to the Bursary Committee for the ensuing year:

Alderman John White (as Chairman)
Sylvia Moys (as Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Dennis Cotgrove
Revd. Dr. Martin Dudley
Clare James
Deputy Richard Regan

8. **APPOINTMENT OF REFERENCE SUB COMMITTEE**

The Town Clerk reminded Governors that the Reference Sub Committee could consist of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Board and up to five other Governors.

The Board proceeded to appoint their Reference Sub Committee for 2012/13.

RESOLVED - that the following Governors be appointed to the Reference Sub Committee for the ensuing year:

Alderman John White (as Chairman)
Sylvia Moys (as Deputy Chairman)
Dennis Cotgrove
Revd. Dr. Martin Dudley
Tom Hoffman
Clare James
Deputy Richard Regan

9. **APPOINTMENT OF AGBIS REPRESENTATIVE**

The Board proceeded to appoint their AGBIS representative for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED – That, as the only Governor expressing an interest in serving in this capacity, Dennis Cotgrove be re-appointed as the Board's AGBIS representative for the ensuing year.

10. **RE-APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED GOVERNOR**

The Board considered a report of the Town Clerk relative to the re-appointment of Mary Robey as a co-opted Governor of the Board for a further three year term.

The Town Clerk highlighted that details of co-opted Governors attendance at Board meetings had now been included within this report at the request of Governors.

A Governor questioned when the Board's co-opted Governors would be reviewed as a whole given that a vacancy still remained in the room of Professor Heffernan. The Chairman stated that he, the Deputy Chairman and the Headmistress had recently had discussions around this and, ideally, would like to target someone from within secondary education to fill the vacancy. He also asked that if Governors had any personal suggestions they alert him to these.

A Governor suggested that suitable candidates could be identified from the Headmistress' contacts or from AGBIS and other such associations.

The Town Clerk reminded the Board that, whilst it was permitted to appoint up to six co-opted Governors it was not a requirement to have this many serving at any given time.

Given the personal information contained within these reports it was suggested that, in future, the appointment of a Co-opted Governor be a public item with a non-public or tabled appendix featuring the applicants CV and any other relevant personal information.

RESOLVED – That, Governors approve the re-appointment of Mary Robey for a further three year term as a co-opted Governor on the Board.

11. **REPORT OF THE HEADMISTRESS**

The Board considered a report of the Headmistress relative to various issues including Forthcoming Events, Governors' Visiting Days, Health & Safety and Staff Training.

Forthcoming Events

In response to a question, the Headmistress reported that the Year Group Breakfasts had been introduced when she had first joined the School and were intended as an opportunity for parents to meet one another and their daughters' tutors informally and to strengthen their relationship with the School.

Meeting with Barbican Residents

The Headmistress reported that residents had raised an issue with the blue netting currently surrounding the All Weather Playing Surface and that the School were now looking to change the colour of this and to make it more subtle whilst still blocking the view of the area as intended.

In response to a question regarding the plastic bins containing PE equipment in the area adjacent to the All Weather Playing Surface, the Headmistress stressed that the equipment needed to be readily available and easily accessible during term time but was moved from this area at all other times. The Deputy Head added that the bins had now, in fact, been relocated and moved out of the sight of Mountjoy House residents as requested.

RESOLVED – That the Board approve the ‘School Staff Development and Induction Policy’.

12. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD

There were no questions.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT REVIEW OF THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IMPLEMENTED IN 2011

The Board considered a late, separately circulated report of the Town Clerk (on behalf of the Post Implementation Governance Review Working Party) relative to the Board’s comments on the governance arrangements introduced last year and the impact that they may have had on the operation of the Board.

The Town Clerk highlighted that Governors were only requested to comment on those changes that had affected this Board and that Court of Common Council Governors would be written to individually and given a separate opportunity to comment on the governance review as a whole.

The Town Clerk went on to report that, as recommended under the governance review, the three City School Boards had now established a Working Party comprising key members from each Board (the Chairman and Deputy Chairman) to discuss important issues of common interest. He stated that this appeared to have been a success with a recent example of this being the meeting between all three Heads and three Chairmen to discuss the Teaching Staff Pay Claim.

A Governor commented on the newly introduced rule whereby the restriction on Members serving on more than one Board of Governors had been lifted. The Governor commented that he was disappointed that this had not been presented to this Board as a whole to agree before being introduced. He went on to state that he had previously written to the then Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee to express his concern at the introduction of this rule which he felt would pose a clear conflict of interest for Members. He therefore proposed that paragraph ‘J8’ of the governance review paper be deleted.

Another Member stated that she had some sympathy with this view and that, to date, no Member had put this into practice and so no comment on how to manage any potential conflict of interests, particularly when discussing issue of common interest to all three City Schools could be made.

A Governor, who was also Chairman of another City School Board, commented that he felt that this rule was reasonable. He went on to report that all three Chairmen of the School Boards sat on the other two Boards as ex-officio Governors and that he had found this to be very beneficial and had found very little in terms of conflict of interests. He stated that he felt that the rule should therefore remain. The Deputy Chairman supported this view stating that she had served on all three City School Boards for the past three years and was perfectly able to separate the business of the three and to remain professional.

In response to questions, the Headmistress stated that, whilst she understood the concerns raised regarding potential conflicts of interest, the three City Schools were governed by one employer and that, if a compromise was not reached on areas of common interest such as pay, this would become a City of London decision taken elsewhere. She went on to state that the three City Schools were not in competition at all and that she felt it valuable to have some sort of 'cross over' between the boards in order to share best practice.

Governors recognised that some Boards had experienced difficulties in filling vacancies in the past and that it was hoped that this rule would help to improve this.

The majority of Governors felt that some form of cross representation was beneficial to the City Schools but warned against too much of this as it could then be argued that just one Board was needed to oversee all three of the City's Independent Schools. It was therefore suggested that a sensible limit be placed on the number of Governors who were permitted to serve on more than one Board at any one time.

RESOLVED – That representations be made to the Governance Review Working Party on this Board's behalf and that the minutes of this meeting be submitted to the next meeting of the Governance Review Working Party for consideration.

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Exemption Paragraph(s)</u>
15	1, 2, 3 & 4
16	2
17	1 & 3
18	-
19	-

**SUMMARY OF MATTERS CONSIDERED
WHILST THE PUBLIC WERE EXCLUDED**

15. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2012 were approved and agreed as a correct record.

16. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Board considered and approved a report of the Headmistress of the City of London School for Girls relative to the updated Child Protection Policy which incorporates guidance from the Pan London Child Protection Procedures and further guidance from the Department for Education released since the previous policy was last updated.

17. REPORT OF THE HEADMISTRESS

The Board received a non-public report of the Headmistress relative to various School issues such as Staffing, Newly Qualified Teachers, Continual Professional Development and Pupil Numbers.

18. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD

There were no questions raised in the non-public session.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Board considered two late, separately circulated reports in the non-public session as follows:

A) Pay Claim – Teaching Staff

The Board considered and approved a report of the Director of Human Resources relative to the teaching staff pay claim for 2012/13.

B) Review of Bursary Guidelines

The Board considered and approved a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Headmistress of the City of London School for Girls informing Members that a review of the current guidelines for assessing bursary applications had been completed and suggesting appropriate revisions to take effect from the 2012/13 academic year.

Finally, the Board agreed the appointment of its new 'Health and Safety' Governor.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Gemma Goulding
tel. no.: 020 7332 1427
gemma.goulding@cityoflondon.gov.uk