

**CHESTNUT GROVE ACADEMY  
MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE FULL LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE  
SPRING TERM. MONDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021, 6:30PM**

Name	Governor	Advisor	In Attendance	Role
Elsbeth Bracken	√			Staff Governor
Jehangir Byramji	√			Community Governor. Chair of Resources
Sarah Coyte	√			Community Governor. Chair of CFC
Judi Dumont-Barter	√			Community Governor. Chair of Governors
Sarah Guerra	√			Parent Governor
Clare Holley	√			Community Governor
Christian Kingsley	√			Head Teacher
Sarah Marshall	√			Community Governor. Co-Vice Chair of Governors
Lucinda Merritt	√			Staff Governor
Leah Milton		√		School Business Partner
Jo Saich			√	Clerk to Governors
Deborah Sturrock	√			Support Staff Governor
Ryan Summers	√			Community Governor. Chair of TLA. Vice Chair of Governors
Conrad Withey	√			Parent Governor

## BUSINESS

### 1. WELCOME & ATTENDANCE

The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. Attendance is shown above. There were no apologies or absence. The meeting was quorate.

### 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Judi Dumont-Barter, Christian Kingsley and Sarah Marshall are Trustees of the WLT.  
Ryan Summers is employed by the DfE  
The Clerk uses a Livescribe for the purposes of the minutes.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS FLAC MEETING 9<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020

**ACTION: Clerk and Chair** Review the layout/spellcheck of the minutes.

#### a. Actions

The Action Log was updated.

#### b. Matters Arising

- Virtual Tours have taken place for Y6 and Y11. Applications have increased.
- The Governors Code of Conduct is held at Trust level and being reviewed currently.
- All other Matters Arising were dealt with as agenda items or under Chairs Report.

**AGREED:** The minutes of the FLAC meeting 9<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020 were agreed as an accurate account and will be signed as such.

**ACTION: Clerk** to liaise with AM for copies to be signed.

#### **4. CHAIRS UPDATE**

The Chair and Vice Chair met to review membership of the LAC.

##### **a. Succession Planning**

Lucinda Merritt introduced herself and was welcomed to the LAC as a staff governor.

At the end of this academic year the following governors' term of office will conclude:

Clare Holley, Conrad Withey, Sarah Coyte (Chair of CFC), Sarah Guerra, Sarah Marshall, and Ryan Summers (Chair of TLA) who will step down (relocating).

The Chair noted that the WLT has confirmed that LAC members are no longer bound by the constitution of a stand-alone academy, and that it is the Trust who make LAC appointments in agreement with the LAC. The WLT has informed that the two current parent governors can continue to stand as Trust appointed governors (not parent governors) if they wish, in agreement with the LAC. Conrad Withey and Sarah Guerra have agreed to stand for a second term of office.

Sarah Marshall is Chair of the Resources Committee at WLT and will not continue with the LAC.

The LAC are liaising with the Trust to reach an arrangement whereby Trustees will be connected in some way and can make visits to the school.

Sarah Coyte was speaking, and the signal was lost. Ryan Summers noted he is relocating out of London. The Chair of CFC and Chair of TLA will become vacant.

**ACTION: Chair and Head** to arrange timings for incoming parent governor recruitment.

##### **b. LAC committee structure**

The Chairs' Group for WLT (which incorporates the 4 school chairs and lead for the Teaching School) is to discuss partnership and if/how practices across the schools can be aligned. It has been agreed that committee structure, and the number of sub-committees could be aligned across all schools.

A new Finance Director has been appointed at the WLT (Tom Brighton). Some areas which may have sat with the LAC historically will now be managed differently. Much of the LAC Resources committee agenda now sits at Trust level.

**PROPOSAL:** The LAC Policy & Partnership committee take on financial matters and disband the Resources committee.

**ACTION: Jehangir Byramji and Sarah Marshall** to review the Resources committee Terms of Reference. Confirm which responsibilities sit with the LAC and which sit with the Trust. Which aspects need to be at policy level and which aspects need to be a standing item at FLAC meetings. The reviewed TOR will go to the WLT Chairs Group (22<sup>nd</sup> April).

The Chair started a discussion and asked for governor's views on the proposal along with the view of the School Business Partner. Governors were asked to bear in mind that the Chair of CFC and Chair of TLA will become vacant at the end of this academic year, and that new Chairs will need to be elected.

**Discussion:**

The Chair of the Resources committee summed up how Covid times has impacted on the CGA community and impacted on finances over the past year, and explained the projection going forward. A concern was raised that if the Resources committee were disbanded that the LAC would lose local oversight and influence of finances, there followed a discussion around what longer term plans may look like. There was a suggestion that it makes sense to have key financial decisions sit at Trust Level, and to amalgamate the Resources committee into another committee.

A governor commented that to amalgamate the Resources committee seems the right approach, along with a suggestion that governors retain the ability to influence at LAC level by having finance as a standing item on FLAC agendas.

It was noted that when CG were a stand-alone academy a lot of resources went into the finances as it was such a massive responsibility. As the Trust has grown over the past few years, finances have been further looked after at Trust level. Financial implications (staffing, curriculum) are covered in CFC and TLA committees, and by the Trust having responsibility for finances, the sub-committees can make their decisions based on budget allocation.

**Q: Where would SLT performance management/pay sit under the proposal?**

**A:** The Head replied that it would remain the responsibility of the LAC to ratify PM decisions, and would likely sit with the Policy committee.

A governor noted that items such as performance management require a lot of preparation and scrutiny and could not just be covered at a FLAC meeting without governors carrying out prior work, which typically happens at Resources committee.

**Q: A second governor asked if a decision to disband the Resources committee could be reversed should the LAC decide the arrangement is not suitable, could a LAC Resources committee be reconvened ?**

**A:** It was suggested that the wider conversation here is about a change of philosophy, about what Headteachers will be accountable for and what role the LAC has in holding the Head to account. If the operating budget is held at Trust level, then there is less of a role for the LAC to hold the Head to account. For example, typically the Resources committee questions how the school is performing against its yearly operating budget, and in the future items such as this may not come to the LAC, because of changes at Trust level.

Historically, the governing board used to have responsibility for financial probity, however, the LAC no longer follows that constitution, and now only has aspects of the delegated responsibilities. As the accountability aspect has changed, the LAC would not need to reform a Resources committee as certain responsibilities no longer sit with the LAC. The LAC Resources Terms of Reference will be reviewed to determine which responsibilities sit, with the LAC and which sit with the Trust.

A third governor commented that historically when the MAT was created, it was made clear that future responsibilities would be managed by the Trust and it has taken time to separate the responsibilities. The proposal is about efficiency which is the whole purpose of the MAT. The Chair summed up by saying that slowly the remit of the LAC and control of responsibilities is reducing, and this was known when the MAT was set up. The LAC are to be efficient about their responsibilities and continue to ask (strategic) questions.

**c. Reconvening governor monitoring visits – face to face.**

Governors have carried out some monitoring visits remotely (during Covid times) and it was felt that the Teams platform does not allow for creating rapport and relationships with staff members in the same way as face to face visits do.

It is hoped that face to face monitoring visits will reconvene in the summer term.

#### **d. Diversity & BLM**

SG and the Chair have been working on this item and there will be a verbal update under item 6a.

## REPORTS & MONITORING

### **5. HEADTEACHERS UPDATE - verbal**

The Headteacher's Report, spring term, was published Jan 2021. Questions were welcomed via email and in the meeting.

#### **a. School return**

Covid Lateral Flow Testing (85% uptake) - The Head reported that the past few weeks have been dominated with necessary preparations to enable students to return to school after the most recent period of lockdown. Priority was given to Covid testing in line with the schools' curriculum intent and to prioritise exam students (Y11, Y12 & Y13).

Attendance - By the end of the first week back in school, attendance for all year groups was at 93% (13% above national average). The Head thanked the staff teams, who have successfully welcomed students back into school, having been planning the return since Christmas time.

Risk Assessment – CFC committee reviewed the Risk Assessment and main changes were amended.

Safeguarding – The protocol continued throughout lockdown. A small spike has been seen on return. Contact with students on this lockdown was considered better than the previous lockdown due to the number of live lessons which were delivered. Attendance was monitored closely and followed up where necessary. Next week the school will address a safeguarding focus with students around a recent local tragedy.

**Q: Emerging safeguarding issues, mental health issues and ongoing MH issues are expected. What resources, provision and capacity has school put in place in anticipation of current and emerging issues?**

**A:** The Head informed that there is a focus on mental health during PSHE lessons although this cannot deal with more serious issues. Student Counselling has been given more funding and intense counselling has continued for some students during lockdown which has been successful. More students than usual will have the opportunity to access these (limited) services.

A governor commented that the LAC need to consider the various impacts to staff and students of Covid over the past year, with students having a lot of time out of school. The Head summarised the impact of staff and students returning to school. A second point was made around how the school are positively supporting staff and students to return (Covid related) and also about the opportunities to speak with students about safeguarding issues which are prominent on social media.

**Q: Are there any options for 6<sup>th</sup> Formers to remain on site as opposed to leave and return a few times per day as per their timetable?**

**A:** The Head replied that this aspect has been thought about thoroughly as 6<sup>th</sup> Formers have lost a lot of study time over the past year due to self-isolation. The best option is to keep 6<sup>th</sup> Formers on site to

study as their work will be assessed towards central assessment grades. As an interim measure until the end of term students who have large gaps in their timetable plus SEND/vulnerable students can speak with staff to review how best to make their study work for them. All SEND students have been contacted specifically in relation to this and CGA are accommodating where possible.

**Q: The staff/teacher wellbeing report (Jan 2021) reports on activity during lockdown. Has there been any issues in general with returning to school?**

**A:** The Head replied that teachers had more autonomy where and how they worked whereas LSA's worked on-site. Staff have only been back one week and are adjusting so any issues may be seen in due course.

**Q: The CFC committee talked extensively about increasing mental health provisions/counselling/therapy etc and an action was to speak with Resources committee to propose an increase in provision and to enquire if catch up funding/fundraising monies could be utilised for mental health**

**A:** The Head replied that this proposal would come directly to him. Catch up funding is limited and has been allocated already. There may be other avenues which can be explored for counselling.

**Q: Mental health was discussed at both CFC and TLA, and both committees could see the correlation between catch up funding potentially being spent on mental health provision which would impact learning. There is a strong feeling to pursue further provision as a well worth investment; how can this be moved forward?**

**A:** The Head informed that provision has been increased and this area could be looked at again and monitored closely for a fixed period of time in response to this proposal.

**ACTION: Head and Chair** will continue the conversation on mental health provision.

Curriculum & Remote Learning – The Head reported much higher levels of student engagement during this lockdown than previously. Lessons from lockdown 1 were used to strengthen delivery and engagement. Over 50% of lessons were live in Y10, Y11, and in 6<sup>th</sup> Form, approx. 90% of lessons were live which had a positive effect on student engagement.

Exams – Have been cancelled again this year and CGA are currently putting together a strategy to deal with this (quality assured teacher assessments/grades).

**Q: Could the Head speak to the impact of U grades noted in the Heads Report?**

**A:** The Head replied that most U grades are in Y12 which is not unusual, with only four U grades in Y13. Y12 missed a lot of their Y11 and did not sit any exams at the end of Y11. The U grades are a combination of students who have missed a lot of their learning due to self-isolation, who have not sat exams since their mock exams and are studying demanding courses.

- b. Parental engagement – was noted under item 7.
- c. Staff well-being – was discussed thoroughly at spring term committees.

6. **COMMITTEE REPORTS** (incl. any policies for LAC to ratify)

- a. Children, Families & Community

Diversity, inclusion, and racism - SG fed back on this item.

There were discussions at CFC committee around diversity, inclusion, and racism and SG has been asked to support CGA to develop an anti-racist approach. A written report will be circulated in due course.

SG explained that as a group, the LAC need to define how they see an anti-racist approach and what this means in measurable terms, how this will be measured, and which actions the LAC will identify to take forward. SG has reviewed associated policies/papers/dashboards and has a draft definition of an anti-racist approach.

SG talked in detail and offered suggestions of how the LAC could build on and move forward with an anti-racist approach, for example by using data quite specifically, asking the school for survey data to be broken down into different demographics.

The suggestion was that the LAC build a plan to gather data and proposed that next steps would be a discussion at CFC and to get agreement around what is meant by anti-racism and agree some areas to measure to see if there is success.

A governor suggested that the CFC/LAC work out roles and responsibilities and consider what is strategic and what is operational, and would the LAC then pass something on as a recommendation/monitoring point.

A further suggestion was that at least one priority of each committee (next year) views one of the areas spoken about, so the LAC can hold themselves to account.

It was noted that the Trust are currently doing a piece of work on diverse and inclusive recruitment and details of this have been shared. The report mentions a BAME agenda, which in itself needs to be understood in context.

The Chair thanked SG for presenting and put a broader point to the LAC of what the LAC sees as its responsibility to ask the school about, which cannot decide what the school should be doing, and what the LAC need to ask strategically in order to hold the school to account, who work from a position of operational. The Chair is keen that the LAC focus on and identify a definition/clarity as to what is governor's responsibility. Once this has been worked out the LAC will then be able to see what belongs to the LAC.

**ACTION: SG** will email the document to JDB. Going forward this area of work sits with CFC. A working group will convene in school in the summer/autumn term.

The Chair of the CFC noted the meetings headlines:

- Welcomed a new staff governor to the CFC committee.
- Pastoral Assistant Heads joined the meeting with valuable contribution (succession planning)
- Safeguarding - amendments to policy around mass testing and volunteering. Sexist incidents (national agenda).
- Staff and student's perspective of virtual learning.
- Behaviour – students bubbled in year groups is showing less behaviour issues but also recognising that students have not been able to socialise/learn in their typical groups. This is being addressed.
- Mental Health and Peer Mentors.
- Student Voice – all year groups have elected student councils. CFC will continue the conversation.
- Staff wellbeing and staff development.
- Parents evenings – successful event held virtually on Teams. Positive parent feedback.

**Q: Governors always look for ways to meaningfully engage with students and wonder if there is a possibility that governors could hear more about, and engage with, the Student Council who are deciding which human rights and equalities projects they will run?**

**A:** The Head replied that governors engaging with the Student Council in these areas would be a good way to connect with students, after lockdown.

b. Teaching, Learning & Assessment

The committee met the day after it was announced that schools would return on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

The Chair of the TLA noted the meetings headlines:

- Staff wellbeing & workload.
- Two TLA priorities discussed. (1) implementation of Remote Learning Policy (2) discussion with a middle leader re the quality of teaching in KS3.
- Priorities going forward for summer term meeting (1) assessment criteria at CGA (2) lack of data due to lockdowns.

c. Policy Committee – will meet 26.04.2021

d. Resources - This was not recorded.

e. Link Governor Reports

SG – BLM/diversity/inclusion/racism.

JDB – Single Central Register (date tba)

Governors to engage with Student Council – summer/autumn term (dates tba)

f. Review and publish gender pay gap info (if over 250 staff)

The Head informed that the WLT will be reporting on this in due course.

**Q: Will staff be asked to self-identify so accurate HR data can be compiled, or, is this data already in the systems?**

**A:** The School Business Partner replied that the Trust is currently advertising for a Head of HR. Projects such as this will be addressed when the post holder arrives.

## LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION

### 7. ADMINISTRATION

- a. Disclosure & Barring Checks (DBS) – this is up to date.
- b. Get Information about Schools – this is up to date.
- c. Annual Governance statement – has been circulated in newsletter format.

**ACTION: Chair** to follow up to get the most recent governance statement on the website.

- d. LA Communication – governors can check <http://s4s.wandsworth.gov.uk/> for e-bulletin

### 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a. WLT update
  - Head of Finance & Resources has been appointed.
  - Head of HR, Head of Facilities and Head of Operations are being advertised.
  - Chesterton School has been awarded the Teaching School Hub (only 87 Hubs nationally).

- b. CGA Building update
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Form Block – building is on track and is due for completion in August 2021.

**9. MEETING CLOSE**

The Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting.

**10. Date of summer term FLAC meeting** Mon. 28<sup>th</sup> June 2020, 6:30pm (physical meeting at the school, NOT virtual).

**SIGNED.....DATE.....**  
**CHAIR OF GOVERNORS**

**SIGNED.....DATE.....**  
**HEAD TEACHER**