



THE COUNCIL OF ST. JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Academy Council held at 6.00 pm on Wednesday 22 October 2014.

PRESENT

Rev. Dr. J D Cortis (Chair), Mr P Booth, Mrs B Blackham, Mrs S Collins, Mr K Higgins (Head Teacher), Mr T Hinchcliffe, Mr A Oldroyd, Mr A Quinn, Mrs F Wilson, Mrs H Zaman

In Attendance: Mrs A Hutchinson (Minute Clerk)

1 WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

The Chair welcomed Governors and opened the meeting with a prayer.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Ms C Anchor (with consent).

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2014

14/28 RESOLVED: That minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

4 ELECTION OF CHAIR

14/29 RESOLVED: That Rev. Dr. J D Cortis be elected Chair of the Academy Council until the annual meeting in September 2016.

5 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- School transport
- Placement of a statemented pupil

6 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

14/30 RESOLVED: That Mr P Booth be elected Vice Chair of the Academy Council until the annual meeting of September 2016

7 CONFIRMATION OF MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY COUNCIL

It was noted that members of the Academy Council would retain their current End of Office date. Most current Governors could be accommodated in the new structure but as there was no local authority representation, Tom Hinchcliffe was invited to remain on the Council until the end of his term of office as an observer.

14/31 RESOLVED: That the constitution of the Academy Council be made up of 12 Members as follows:

7 Foundation members:

Can John Aveyard
Mr P Booth
Ms S Collins
Rev Dr J D Cortis
Fr P Mungovin
Mr A Quinn
Mrs F Wilson

1 Head Teacher

Mr K Higgins

2 Staff members

Miss C Anchor
Mrs B Blackham
Mr N Dalzell (only two to have a vote at any one time)

2 Parent members

Mr A Oldroyd
Mrs H Zaman

8 COMMITTEES TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE ACADEMY COUNCIL

14/32 RESOLVED: That the Academy Council has three main committees as follows:

Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee
Standards in Learning and Teaching Committee
Mission Committee

9 TO APPOINT ACADEMY MEMBERS WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

14/33 RESOLVED: That the Academy Members with Specific Responsibilities be:

- Governor Training Contact: Mr Booth
- Governor for Looked After Children: Mr Hinchliffe and Mr Oldroyd
- Child Protection Governor: Mr Hinchliffe and Mr Oldroyd
- Special Educational Needs Governor: Mrs Wilson
- Health and Safety: Mr Quinn
- Equality Governor (Optional): Rev Dr Cortis
- RE Governor: Canon Aveyard (tbc)
- Literacy Governor: Mr Booth
- Numeracy Governor: Mrs Collins
- E-safety Governor: Ms Anchor
- Kirklees Employment and Skills Board: Mr Quinn– (tbc)
- PHSCE Mrs Collins

10 APPROVE DELEGATED AUTHORITY LEVELS FOR CHEQUES

It was confirmed that the Finance Committee had authority to vire up to £30,000 between budget headings and the Head Teacher had authority to move up to £20,000.

There was a need for clarity regarding the authorisation of cheques, sometimes for substantial amounts. As an Academy, there would also be the need to make bank transfers including one for the total salary bill of up to £300,000 per month.

The Head Teacher confirmed that he and another member of the SLT were required to sign all cheques but those cheques should be authorised by someone else. Transfer of money by BACS (Bankers Automated Clearing Services) should also be authorised. Payment of salaries and examination fees were given as examples of large transfers. This was discussed and would be fully clarified when the new accounting software system had been embedded. There was an immediate need to pay for insurance and this was approved.

- 14/34 RESOLVED: i. That payment of an invoice from Zurich Insurance for £24,680.13 be authorised.
- ii. That the normal level of authorisation for payments would be £20,000 for the headteacher and £30,000 for the Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee.
- iii. That the headteacher could for the time being authorise greater payments in respect of salaries payments to the payroll provider, service level agreements and for examination fees. This to be reviewed once the new financial systems are fully up and running.

11 APPROVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR RECORDING ASSETS

The School Business Manager advised that the Auditors would recommend a Valuer who could compile as Asset Register. A register existed in the SIMS software previously used and it was hoped that this could be transferred at a later date. It was agreed that £2,000 would be a suitable value for a fixed asset to be included on the register. However, it was felt that an inventory of valuable items of lower value such as computers worth over £250 should also be kept if possible.

- 14/35 RESOLVED: That this item be discussed again at the next meeting after discussions with auditors and a company that may be supporting the school in compiling the fixed asset register.

12 REGISTER OF MEMBERS' BUSINESS INTERESTS

Council members in attendance who had not already completed Business Interest forms handed them to the Chair. It was also confirmed that staff have filled in a similar declaration.

13 APPROVAL OF INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The School Business Manager tabled a paper detailing insurance premiums required for Property and Other Liabilities, together with the relevant indemnity figures. The Property premium was £12,157.98 (it had been £21,000 using the LA insurance scheme). Other insurances from Zurich Insurance amounted to £24,680.13, which had already been approved for immediate payment. This figure was considerably higher than the previous LA figure due to additional liabilities as an Academy.

Q Could we get better value by pooling with other Academies?

A It is possible at a later date.

Q Is the medical cover sufficient for school trips abroad?

A It will be amended to include Winter Sports and we can also confirm that worldwide travel is included.

The total cost of £36,838.11 was approved.

14/36 RESOLVED: That the insurance arrangements with CCIA and Zurich be approved.

14 CHAIR'S DELEGATED POWERS.

- The Governing Body had reviewed the Chair's delegated powers at their last meeting and the Academy Council confirmed that they should remain unchanged.

14/37 RESOLVED: That the Chair has the following delegated powers:

- (i) Change of date of a scheduled meeting, for good reason.
- (ii) Chair's powers to grant retrospective consent to absence in the event that a Council Member would have become disqualified if the matter had to wait for the next Council Members' meeting.
- (iii) To determine in advance of a meeting whether any items of the agenda should be deleted from the copy to be made available at the School.

15 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Representation (Minute 14/05 refers)

The Chair advised that Sephie Collins had been appointed as a Foundation Member of the Academy Council from 1 October 2014 for a period of 3 years.

14/38 RESOLVED: That Sephie Collins be confirmed as a Foundation Member with effect from 1 October 2014 for a period of 3 years.

16 ACADEMY BUDGET FOR 2014-2015

The School Business Manager clarified that the Academy Trust had to present a budget to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) not more than 6 weeks after receiving a 3rd and final Funding Letter. The first 2 had already been received and the third was expected by the end of October. Baker Tilly Accountants had been engaged. The School Business Manager outlined some of the requirements of the EFA and the need to re-categorise what was already done.

Issues with the new financial software were discussed and the need for co-ordination between the 3 Academies was stated. It was hoped that the problems encountered would be resolved soon and that progress could be made. It had been agreed that all issues with the software provider would go via the School Business Manager at Sacred Heart. A log would be kept of all issues.

It was not possible to produce a budget at present and approval before the deadline was discussed.

14/39 RESOLVED: That, as the budget had been approved in principle in June 2014 and in its updated form will be considered by Trust Board, retrospective approval would be given to the final budget by the Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee or the Academy Council.

17 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD SINCE THE AGM 2014

(a) Standards in Learning and Teaching Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2014 had been circulated with agendas. The Chair highlighted the following matters:

- Implementation of Enhancement Project
- Committee's Action Plan
- Discussion with Head of PE Faculty following a recent review

14/40 RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Standards in Learning & Teacher Committee be received.

(b) Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 9 October 2014 were tabled. Items highlighted were:

- The agreed programme of purchases from the ICT Development Plan had been completed within budget.
- An update on efforts to recruit a Network Manager
- A positive report from Investors in People review of the action plan.
- Committee's Action Plan
- The Chaplain's post interviews would be held on 7 November 2014.
- Reported /recorded incidents to staff and pupils
- Auditors' terms of engagement
- Requests for part-time working

The Head Teacher gave an update on vacancies and advised that there had been an increase in staff turnover in the current term. He gave details of leavers and emphasised the difficulties in recruiting good quality staff for English, Maths and Science.

An appeal had been received from a member of staff against a decision of the Committee. The Chair asked for Council members to form an Appeal Panel. Paul Booth, Felicity Wilson and Sephie Collins agreed to do this and would set a date outside this meeting.

A draft Pay Policy for Teachers and a draft Pay Policy for Support Staff had been discussed by the committee. Final drafts were circulated to all Council members with amendments from the previous policies shown in red. For teachers, these were based on the LA model which had full Trade Union agreement. The Head Teacher explained the changes.

Chair reported that a meeting of the Staff Pay Review Committee had been held on 21 October 2014. Salary rates had been agreed and letters had been delivered to the Senior Leadership Team. The process had started to inform all other members of staff.

14/41 RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee be received.

14/42 RESOLVED: That the revised Pay Policy for Teachers and the revised Pay Policy for Support Staff be approved and placed on the School's website.

18 RESIGNATION OF MEMBER OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Council members were aware from the minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 1 October 2014 that Fr. Michael Hall, Deputy Head Teacher, intended to resign from his post at the end of the academic year. His letter of resignation was read out by the Chair.

This matter would require discussion at Trust Board level, at Academy Council level and advice would be sought from the Diocese. It was confirmed that two of Fr Hall's main areas of responsibility were as Curriculum Manager and also being in charge of data. Other areas could, perhaps, be moved amongst the Senior Team to fully utilise their skills. It was also noted that the Deputy Headship was a reserved occupation for a practising Catholic.

There was discussion around when the recruitment process should begin and it was agreed that this was a difficult post to fill and there should be no undue delay. The following matters were agreed:

- That experience in Curriculum Management and Data Management be included in the job description.
- That the Individual School Range (ISR) remain unchanged at L19 – L23
- That the Selection Panel be made up of the Chair of Academy Council, Head Teacher and 1 Trust Board member with a Diocese representative as advisor.
- As the interview process consists of exploration in small groups of issues such as Leadership, Curriculum and Ethos the following have agreed to join the panel: Paul Booth, Felicity Wilson and Habiban Zaman.

14/43 RESOLVED: That Fr M Hall's resignation from the post of Deputy Head Teacher with effect from 31 August 2015 be noted and accepted.

19 MINUTES FROM THE TRUST BOARD MEETING OF 1 OCTOBER 2014

The Chair highlighted several matters from the Trust Board meeting held on 1 October 2014:

- Mrs Victoria Skwarek of Sacred Heart had been appointed Staff Director
- 4 applications had been received to be the Academy Trust's accountant. His/her services would be split between the Trust (3 days) and this Academy (2 days)
- The Trust Mission Statement should be included in new and revised academy documents
- Committee Terms of Reference and proposed Action Plans had been emailed to academy members.
- An official launch of the Blessed Peter Snow Academy Trust was developing.

14/44 RESOLVED: That minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 1 October 2014 be noted.

20 ACADEMY COUNCIL MEMBERS SKILLS AUDIT

Council Members were asked to ensure that they completed the CES Governor Skills Audit and return to the Chair. Some forms had been completed and were passed to the Chair.

14/45 RESOLVED: That Skills Audit forms be collated by the Chair and a composite response be submitted to the Diocesan Council for Education by 19 December 2014 with copies to Council Members.

21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) School Transport

The Head Teacher had discussed changes to school transport arrangements with All Saints Catholic College-Huddersfield and local pyramid Head Teachers. A co-ordinated approach for lobbying the Council was agreed.

Consultation on the changes would close on the 4th. December and the plan of action had been drawn up. Details were given of letters to be sent and a petition which had been prepared.

Of 980 pupils aged 11–16, 206 had free bus passes. The consequences of removing those passes was considered. There were 10 school buses coming to the school twice daily and some may be curtailed if they become unprofitable.

There was a similar plan 2 years ago, which was defeated, but this time SEN transport was also under threat, as part of a package of £60 million of cuts. It was noted that similar cuts in Leeds and Wakefield had been introduced gradually for all new pupils. There was further discussion around how the changes would affect school and what could be done to campaign against the cuts.

14/46 RESOLVED: to support a strategy to seek support from parishes, parents, other stakeholders (e.g. leaders of local political parties), local press and Members of Parliament through a co-ordinated approach by the Academy Council and the St John Fisher Association.

14/47 RESOLVED: to also work collaboratively with the South Kirklees Catholic Schools

(b) Placement of Statemented Pupil

The Head Teacher outlined the process whereby the LA placed students with Statements outside the normal admission process. A statemented child who was due to come to the Academy in September 2014 was involved in allegations which were outlined by the Head Teacher and involved multiple agencies. The student remained in his primary school at the start of term as an over-age pupil.

The Head Teacher had written to the LA on 15 July 2014 seeking clarification of a number of issues. Their response was written on 10 October 2014, requesting early admission for the child. There was a need for considerable work and multi-agency collaboration before the child could be considered for admission and this was not possible within the timeframe set by the LA.

Council Members discussed this matter in detail and considered several options. The Academy had an excellent record of working with Statemented children but in this case, the safety of other pupils was a major concern.

14/48 RESOLVED: That Council Members support the Head Teacher in his efforts to ensure the best outcome for a Statemented child whilst confirming, with

regret, that the Academy may not be able to accommodate his needs whilst ensuring the safety of other pupils.

(c) Fire in Art Room

An update regarding the recent fire in the art room was requested. It was noted that the matter was still under scrutiny by loss adjusters. It was confirmed that staff had been given new guidelines on the use of extension leads.

22 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

14/49 RESOLVED: That future Academy Council meetings be held at 6.00 pm as follows:

Monday, 12 January 2015

Monday 30 March 2015

23 AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

14/50 RESOLVED: That no part of the agenda, minutes or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the academy, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act **with the exception** of the restricted business in the minutes of the Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee meeting held on the 9th. October 2014.