

CO-OPERATIVE FORUM MEETING MINUTES

7pm Wednesday 2nd October 2013

Attendees

Staff Reps: Abi Allender (AA), Katherine Clune (KC), Ross Geoghegan (RG), Kate Armstrong (KA), Rick Standing (RS), Kate Hughes (KH)

Parent Reps: Adam Rehin (AR, Chair) Becky Chapman (BC), Julie Nottage (JN)

Student Reps: Gabriel Osborne (GO, Y9), Izzi Triggs (IT, Y10) Louis Egerton (LE, Y10), Nell Gear (Y9)

Community Reps: Nancy Copplestone (NC) Seconded

Governors: Jim Bowyer (JB), David Winter (DW)

Malcolm Willis (MW), Geraldine Hill-Male (GH-M)

Apologies: Dick Willis (DW), David Yorath (DY), Simon Wilks

1. Minutes from the last meeting were agreed subject to comments

2. Terms of reference to be signed off

It was noted that the ToR on the website is not the full version and AR commented that the acronym 'FGB' was introduced without explanation – GH-M to rectify. The vote was carried unanimously to accept the ToR, pending these changes.

ACTION

GH-M to check ToR on website and insert explanation for 'FGB' into document.

3. Code of Conduct for the Forum

AR noted that the CoC is called 'Code of Practice' on the document. NC talked through the document: it was developed from the document used by our governing body and covered the suggested standards needed for the members of the Forum to contribute effectively to their work in the school and the community. The idea is to sign it annually. The CoC should be reviewed in six months and so on.

AR suggested to get the CoC into its final form and for all members sign it off. He brought up the third page, where there are blank slots of names of positions (coordinator, chairs, etc.), and decided to defer it until the next meeting. GH-M thanked NC for producing it.

ACTION

Final review and sign-off of Code of Practice to be placed on agenda for next meeting.

4. Dates and update from Appointments Committee, including question of shape of community representation

A cycle of Mondays and Thursdays on alternate weeks had been agreed for Forum meetings, all about two weeks prior to FGB meetings in order to pass on points for discussion. Mervyn Wilson, principal of the Cooperative College is coming to the AGM on December 3rd and GH-M suggested it would be good for the reps to have a Q&A with him before that. GH-M said that the next step was to consider election dates to get Forum capacity up to 54 and circulated a sheet with the proposed dates. She had been to Post-16 to do an assembly to encourage participation, but acknowledged that it was a more remote and difficult possibility. The situation should be more up to date by the AGM and next Forum.

The Community Meeting in June was very successful, and was followed by a smaller one in September. NC concluded the Community Constituency needs time to grow.

Re. Parent Constituency, GH-M brought up Dick Willis's idea of outreach in the community. GH-M confirmed that the school can arrange/book venues and will talk to Marlene Kelly to help with this.

There was some confusion over the organisation of the elections due to the three-year tenure of members once at capacity, but KC clarified that a third of members must retire each year, as in section 1.3 of the Terms of Office. GH-M will discuss the wording of this with Jeremy Krause and bring back to next meeting if necessary.

AR confirmed that the proposed dates for meetings were unanimously agreed.

ACTION

GH-M to talk to Marlene Kelly about Dick's proposal to go out into the community

GH-M to talk to Jeremy Krause regarding Terms of Office wording.

5. Vision Working Group

JN, GH-M and RS met to discuss what the Forum is and came up with a paragraph of text to succinctly describe it. JN said the next step was to publish it on the website and let people know. It was agreed that it only needed to be circulated amongst Forum members for discussion, and that Co-Op members would only see the finished paragraph. Some changes (three sentences, present tense) were agreed in the meeting – which JN agreed to retype and send out to Forum members – and it was decided that it would be reviewed in one year. MW agreed to AR's suggestion that the paragraph could be translated into different languages.

ACTION

JN to retype and send paragraph out to Forum members.

MW to organise translations of the paragraph.

GH-M to publish description on Forum website

6. Communication Working Group

BC, KC, RG and GH-M met in September to come up with actions for the group, discussing key systems mechanisms and how to facilitate communication concerning the Forum. They talked about

how to communicate with people who are currently hard to reach and what how they could be best contacted, such as parent consultation day. GH-M confirmed that there is already a question regarding preferred method of communication for parents when they register with the school; this needs to be accessible and cross-referenced with the Forum member database.

BC talked about the need for a parent tab on the website, which she agreed to action. She thought year heads might be best placed to recommend potential new parent reps and brought up the need for a rota as to who covers which event. KC highlighted the need for a database of communication preferences and stated that all minutes from all meetings, etc. would go to KH for transparency.

The issue of which questions go to MW and which to the Forum was discussed and the need for clarification and a filter of some sort was agreed. GH-M said this would become clearer as people grow more confident. GH-M said she would fix dates for the next group meetings.

ACTION

BC to organise parent tab on website.

Communication Working Group to provide summary of recommendations and dates to implement them by.

GH-M to fix dates for next meetings of Vision and Communication groups.

7. Homophobia

AA provided an overview of what is already being covered in PSCE by Ben Saunders. They have decided on some actions to take, such as assemblies, to raise awareness. She researched the Stonewall charity and some resources from this are now online for staff to access. She wants to go further with posters around school, information on local support groups and a peer listening service, and is looking at how to deal with bullying, particularly thoughtless use of language. BC suggested completing a baseline evaluation to track results and AA agreed to do a questionnaire with her year group and put it on Frog. IT said this would need to be well publicised, so KC said students could complete the questionnaire in IT lessons.

GO asked if the school were still trying to get someone famous in to talk about homosexuality and AA said it was still being thought about. BC suggested that this would open the subject to students in a more positive light, such as a talk by Ian McKellan.

7.5 Reports from Student Meetings (not on agenda)

IT reported the minutes from a meeting on catering and food issues, some of which had already been positively resolved. LE reported on on-going outside space issues and ideas for improvement. GH-M said she would organise working groups to help the students pursue further results. IT reported that Frog had been crashing, but KC said this had been sorted and required reinstallation. IT then raised the issue of students not being allowed to use mobile phones, despite a Frog app being available.

IT highlighted some further student issues under consideration and also raised the subject of the library not always being a useful space for learners. MW explained the issues facing librarians today, but said he would facilitate making some discussion. KC said that the library was old fashioned and need to be updated with iPads, etc. such as other schools are now doing. KA highlighted the potential tension between school learners and Post-16s, who also use the space to study. MW said

the Post-16s are quiet and use the upper level. AR said the example set by tertiary education needed to be looked at, to move away from tradition library usage. MW said a small, representative group was required to start this piece of work.

GO stated the need for more classical music and art in the curriculum for more variety.

ACTION

GH-M to organise working groups to help with student issues.

MW to facilitate library working group

8. Discussion groups

AR asked JN if there were any subjects she wanted to add to the discussion points as a result of the survey of parents. JN said the results of the survey would help the various working groups, but that the information needed to be properly sorted out first. KC commented that interestingly the top three concerns for parents and staff were found to be the same: behaviour/relationships, communication and curriculum.

NG asked for a Food Group, along with a Library Group, which MW thought a good idea.

The Forum split into two groups to discuss the issues and establish priorities, and then reconvened to present the results.

8.1 AGM

The AGM was a major point of discussion and it was agreed that it should be fun, informal and celebratory, and would look at what's been achieved and what's ahead. GH-M said that elections would be done by then so it would be a big event with lots of members. The showing of student films was generally thought to be a good idea, also performance (music/dance), refreshments, round-tables, and the Sports Hall was agreed as the better venue over the Dance Studio due to space considerations. GH-M asked the Vision Group to be involved with publicity. GH-M and RG agreed to lead the planning and MW said he would like students to be involved.

8.2 Prioritise Forum Topics

The following priorities were agreed and ranked:

1. Communication
2. Curriculum / teaching
3. Behaviour / relationships
4. Library
5. Fiesta
6. Post 16

The following topics were decided to be least important and were not ranked

- Academy Development Plan
- Admission Policy for Children of Staff
- Structure of School Year (MW thought the structure of the school year old fashioned, however, and wants an overhaul – he appreciates this will be controversial and difficult, but feels it is important in terms of the structure of examinations and coursework in the present day)

It was decided that two topics do not warrant consideration or input from Forum at this time:

- Home/school agreement
- School Food Policy (MW noted that the school is adopting a Food Plan based on guidelines which may be viewed at <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/>)

It was agreed that working groups would need to be established for the priority forum topics also including School Year.

JN and AA agreed to prepare reports of Parent and Teacher feedback on issues, which would better inform key priorities and the approach to structuring working groups. These will go to GH-M and KC first.

ACTION

GH-M and RG to work on AGM organisation.

JN to present report on findings from parent survey.

AA to present report on staff priorities.

9. Appoint Consultation Group leaders

To be done in the next meeting.

10. Membership

As KH had already left, GH-M would send the figures round.

ACTION

GH-M to email update on membership to Forum.

11. Election of Chair

KC proposed BC; JN seconded. BC was elected unanimously and said it would be good to have a vice chair, as well as electing the same roles for the students reps in future. KC was elected as Vice Chair (all but two votes); she was proposed by AA and seconded by KA. GH-M thanked AR for taking on the role of chair in the meantime.

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