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## CO-OPERATIVE FORUM MEETING

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 7pm

### **Attendees:**

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

**Parent Reps:** Becky Chapman (BC), Dick Willis (DW), Julie Nottage (JN), Adam Rehin(AH),

**Seconded parents:** Simon Wilks (SW), Marie-Annick Gournet (M-AG).

**Student Reps:** Gabriel Osborne (GO,Yr 8), Izzi Triggs (IzT, yr 9), Louis Egerton (LE, yr9), Tom Holmes(TH, Yr10)

**Governors:** Helen Gordon (HG), Dave Brockington (DB),

Malcolm Willis (MW), Geraldine Hill-Male (GHM)

### **1. Introductions and Apologies**

- 1.1 DB explained that there is a Ten Minute rule bill going through parliament to allow more Cooperative schools to come into existence (eg allowing Nurseries to become Coops) and it is likely to become law.
- 1.2 Cooperative Colleges document was presented covering various practise and experiences in Coop schools, as a training resource for Coops. MW agreed that several copies would be ordered.
- 1.3 Evidence is being presented to the Education Select Committee regarding what is happening in Co Op schools in policy terms.

### **2. Minutes from last meeting were agreed.**

### **3. Matters Arising:**

- 3.1 *MW and the student reps are to arrange a time and date to meet Paul Baker, the chef, to discuss provision of Fairtrade food and other food related issues raised by the students.*
- 3.2 Visits to other Co Op schools have been researched and we are awaiting further recommendations from the cooperative college.

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#### **4. Future chair**

- 4.1 It was agreed that the Chair would rotate with each rep group taking a turn.
- 4.2 For the next meeting, the chair will be from the Parent rep group, – name of the nominee to be sent to GHM by 7<sup>th</sup> June

#### **5. Terms of Reference**

- 5.1 These need to be adopted at some point.
- 5.2 Each constituency to review Terms of Reference before the next meeting
- 5.3 They have to be ratified by the Governors and so any changes would have to go back to the Governors to be re-ratified!
- 5.4 GHM confirmed that to make a forum quorate a third of the representatives must be present.

#### **6. Protocol**

- 6.1 Differences between the roles of the Governors and the Forum need to be laid out in the Code of Practice. This is being worked on by David Yorath, Chair of Governors and needs to be completed by the next meeting. GHM to advise him of this.

#### **7. Membership**

- 7.1 KC raised the issue of the future size of the forum, which could reach 50 members, and whether all members should attend all meetings, or just a rep from each group.
- 7.2 It was suggested that with a large number attending it could be cumbersome, but the majority view was that as a Co-op the Forum should be large and as fully representative of all groups as possible. Therefore it was agreed that all Elected and seconded representatives should be invited to attend all Forum meetings.
- 7.3 GHM expressed concern about the need to increase parent membership. The aim is to increase numbers by September 2013 (see later item under updates from each Group).

#### **8. Communications**

- 8.1 It was agreed that Forum Minutes will be open and available to all.
- 8.2 KC proposed a Working Party to ensure that communications are effective.

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- 8.3 BC raised the issue of not using personal emails but having a designated email format that would not need so much managing and updating.
- 8.4 Mark Shutter (VLE technician) to be invited to advise the group and to add his technical expertise.
- 8.5 Students were asked how they gain information from other students and interestingly it is mainly by word of mouth, at the moment.
- 8.6 Please submit names of reps from each Group who will form the Working Party to KH by 7<sup>th</sup> June
- 8.9 Discussion around the use of Frog took place, the time line and the management of parents' expectations. Also BC raised the issue of the need to improve the website and MW confirmed he was looking at quotes from companies to help with that project.

## 9. Vision

- 9.1 It was agreed the Forum needs a clear vision.
- 9.2 It was agreed that another working party is formed to work on this.
- 9.3 JN added her expertise to clarify that vision = what the Forum stands for and Objectives = what the Forum is going to do. She explained how you put a framework together filtering the Vision into actions and outcomes. Iz T suggested the Co Op champions should be invited to help because of their excellent involvement at the beginning of the Co Op process. This links into clear communication too.
- 9.4 Some concern was raised about how realistic it was to have a separate vision for the Co Op forum in view of the fact that we already have a vision for the Governors. How will one for the Forum differ? Will there be too many? Referred to 56.1 – 56.3 of the paper circulated which collated the ethos of the school, the cooperative values and the guiding principles from the terms of reference to help development of ethos.
- 9.5 Co Op values to be clear – need to ascertain what the Coop means for this school.
- 9.6 It was felt the best way of showing the students this is for them to see some tangible outcomes and it was agreed that this needs to happen quickly for all rep groups but particularly the students, so that the positive effects of a Coop forum can be seen by all.
- 9.7 It was agreed we need some quick fixes such as picnic benches, lockers and the Fair trade initiatives in place soon. These are all actions from the meeting held between MW and Year reps and minutes have been circulated around all tutor groups.
- 9.8 Those prepared to be on the working party to email KH by 7<sup>th</sup> June Vision to be presented at the next Forum

## **10. Update from each group**

### **10.1 Students Reps:**

10.1.1 Year reps are meeting regularly with MW

10.1.2 Charity Events – one per term? Need to be clear about how it's publicised. It has been raised by both students and parents that the charity work done by the school needs to be more focussed and transparent

10.1.3 Homophobia – not taken seriously, lots of students feel strongly about it. Students don't feel it's appropriately tackled in PHSE lessons. One idea about how to improve this could be by separating the girls from the boys when discussing this issue. (MW said he had experience of doing this sort of separation in other schools for part of the curriculum such as sex education). A discussion took place around what could be done: e.g. assemblies, visiting famous speakers (such as Ian McKellen), ex-students, making it a focus of an inset day for whole staff training etc.

10.1.4 MW confirmed that the policies around this are robust but the practise does not always reflect this.

10.1.5 GHM referred to the need to moderate/change language and it was generally agreed that the approach to quashing homophobic behaviour needed to be integrated into normal every day behaviours amongst students and staff, and it forming part of the approach to inclusivity covering race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability etc – an holistic approach is required. While students thought that racism was not often found, M-AG asked whether a black student would have the same response.

10.1.6 Action points:

(a) Ben Saunders (Head of PSHE) to be asked by MW to investigate how other schools tackle this subject

(b) AA to investigate how assemblies can be used, including inviting high profile speakers,

(c) red card system to be used for homophobic comments or behaviours

(d) inset day to be used for highlighting the issue and incorporating it into the general behaviours of all staff and students.

### **10.2 Staff Reps:**

10.2.1 Membership: - Members numbers have increased by 27 – only 20 non-members now, 2 are politically against it and will not join. All kitchen staff have joined since Rick went to meet with them.

10.2.2 Other actions since the last meeting:

Set up an email address for staff to submit comments and suggestions

Noticeboard in staff room

Flyers in staff trays

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10.2.3 The Vote regarding whether staff children should be given priority for places at school. Some time ago MW canvassed staff and the result was 97% in favour. Governors felt they couldn't take forward at the time as it clashed with the formation of the Coop. Also they felt it was something that would be better dealt with by the Forum. It can't be taken forward yet as there are not enough parent members.

DW raised the need to have some way of forecasting the impact as this would inform the decision, ultimately.

MW felt there was a need to research the legal implications – Admissions Law and Employment Law. JN suggested you could put a cap on numbers accepted.

#### 10.2.4 **The Pensions**

Issue of phased retirement and flexible hours.

Forum to decide at next meeting when to progress this issue

MW confirmed the relevant policies were similar to the LEA ones but was happy for them to be reviewed and updated. However, all requests could not always be granted due to operational requirements and to ensure the standard of teaching and learning was at an optimum level.

### **10.3 Parent Reps:**

10.3.1 Membership: Recruited 28 new members by attending two parents' evenings. Only two year groups covered so there's more opportunities in the other years' parents' evening.

10.3.2 The need for publicity and encouragement for parents to join needs to be an ongoing activity and lots of ideas suggested as to how to do this:

letter in tutor reports which will be issued later in the year.

Use of JN's flyer – JN please send a copy to KC, to share amongst the Forum members

The need to be clear about what joining means and how it's not a big time commitment

Target P16 parents – presentation at PSIG meetings.

Target incoming Y7 parents at the information meeting on June 27th

Prize incentive – monthly draw

Website/newsletter/testimonials

10.3.5 Feedback: the pack that went out [to parents] was too big and confusing. Some parents assumed membership as their child / partner is a member.

10.3.6 KH to give and update on membership numbers at each Forum meeting.

### **11. Developing Parent Constituency**

11.1 It was reported that many parents are angry about the PSGs being abolished – suggestion to re-introduce a year group Co Op forum. There is a need to develop and communicate the routes of communication to Parent year representatives.

11.2 Yr Group Surgeries were suggested as an option to PSGs.

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11.3 Host it in the Community rather than the school – MW confirmed there was a budget that could be used for any costs incurred – e.g. to pay for halls.

11.4 M-AG raised the importance of making sure parents feel confident in the school particularly minority groups.

## **12. Future Agenda**

Code of Practice to be supplied by David Yorath for discussion

Focus

Development

Report by Vision working party

Report by Communication working party

Any others email KH

## **13. AOB**

13.1 Developing Community Membership:

GHM – the public meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm

All need to encourage wider community to come by publicising it and inviting people with a link to the school already. Email suggestions to GHM asap of who to invite.

13.2 Nancy Copplestone has offered to develop the community constituency and come to the next meeting as Community reps –this was agreed by the Forum as an excellent start.

13.3 Need to include the cleaners, contractors, private lets, doctors, dentists, local health workers, Young Brunels, trip hosts, University and as wide a range of potential members and partners as possible.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm