



Cotham Co-operative Academy Forum  
 Tuesday 17 March 7-8:30pm  
 Library

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

**Parent/Carer Reps:** Becky Chapman (BC, Chair), Gabby Chelmicka, Grace Emmerson, Simon Wilks, Emma Wheeler, Valerie Aspin, Gareth Edmunds

**Staff Reps:** Abbie Allender, Francis Blagburn, Dave Martin, Kate Armstrong, Louise Arnold, Katie Hughes, Mark Shutter

**Community Reps:** Nancy Coplestone

**Student Reps:** Daisy Dyson, Gabriel Osborne

**School Governors:** Jim Bowyer, David Winter

**Also present:** Geraldine Hill-Male (GHM), Leanne Sowersby (LS – Clerk), Malcolm Willis, Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, Christine Ansell, Caroline Francis, John Heayberd, Aimi Bisco

**Apologies:** Dick Willis, Penny Beeston, Alan Roffey, Gary Hardwick, Ken Smith, Kim Davidson

	Actions
1 <b>Welcome to all and apologies</b> Welcome to new people.	
2 <b>Any Other Business:</b> None	
3 <b>Agree Minutes of last meeting:</b> Agreed by show of hands.	
<b>4 Senior Leadership Team – Q&amp;A</b> BC Welcomed the Senior Leadership Team. SLT members introduced themselves and summarised their roles: Christine Ansell – Deputy Head for Key Stage 3 Caroline Francis – Assistant Head KS3 – supports Christine Svetlana Bajic-Raymond - Deputy Head for KS4 John Heayberd – Assistant Head KS4 & Safeguarding Lead Aimi Bisco – Assistant Head for Post-16  Apologies: Mel Sperring – Finance & Business Manager Marian Curran – Deputy Head for Post-16 – works half-time for each site, Cotham & Redland Green.  MW: we have kept the management team quite small, we are very values driven and care a great deal about the welfare and progression of the	

students. Leadership team meetings are very strong, honest and transparent, and there is always a good level of debate.

**Q: How does SLT currently engage with the wider school community including parents and alumni?** There is regular communication with parents, letters, e-mails, texts and phone calls and the website (although this needs updating) from all of the leadership team.

**Q: What are the most effective ways?** This is difficult to answer as it varies from one parent to another. Text can work well for a quick message, but some more personal things need to be done by phone

**Q: What about the community?** Again this depends on the community or group. MW has attended a Somali Women's' Group, which has improved the school's relationship with that group. Key communications are translated into appropriate languages. E-mail is used frequently. Also hold surgeries for those who want to come in and talk something through.

CF holds parent tours for prospective parents. Also has links with local community police officer.

**Q: Is that information logged?** Yes, all is recorded.

**Q: What about Alumni?** Prior to Francis, there was not a formal mechanism for communicating with alumni, which is why he was recruited. Alumni sometimes come in to visit.

**Q: Is communication reactive or proactive?** With Police officer is proactive. Links with University etc. are also very proactive. Much of the engagement with the community is spread across the school.

**Communication is a recurring theme.**

**Q: What do the SLT see as threats and opportunities of the Forum?** MW does not perceive any threat in the Forum. There were early discussions about giving the Forum permission to ask challenging questions. There are huge opportunities – it would be really good to have wider representation. As the school faces the challenges of the next few years, having a multi-constituency group like this can only be helpful and promote everyone working together.

Clarified – threat is meant in terms of potential challenges within the group, such as the fact that all are volunteers and not educational professional

SLT like to hear from parents, positive and negative as this helps to identify issues and ensure that communication is adapted to be effective.

One of the core challenges in Post-16 is that systems and structures change and there is a lot of new information for students and parents to take on about how things work. A large amount of work is done in Year 11 and visits are done in all of the partner schools (five in addition to Cotham and Redland Green). Work is being done with the Student Council to improve this and link better with the Forum.

**Q: How can the Forum better engage and communicate with SLT?** This is one of the reasons that MW always attends the Forum. Issues and feedback could be e-mailed directly to MW or other members of SLT.

A report structure has been recommended where information are pulled together and will make communication easier and facilitate more effective responses.

<p>One of the challenges is to get more BME parents to engage with the school and the Forum – there is usually a very small response from the BME community.</p> <p>Q: National change – worth noting that one of the challenges for education is around the privatisation of education – as a combined force, can we consider how we might respond to some of these challenges. The Forum need to know that they have a role and responsibility in this and that it is being dealt with transparently.</p> <p>BC thanked SLT for their time and responses.</p>	
<p><b>5 Updates from Constituency Action Groups</b></p>	
<p><b>Alumni</b></p>	
<p>FB gave an update. There has been a meeting where alumni were invited to the school to introduce the alumni to what we are doing and what an alumni constituency might look like. Two members are in attendance.</p> <p>Two evenings have been booked for tours – April 24<sup>th</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup> – for alumni to come and have a tour and a chat. The fiesta is on June 20<sup>th</sup> and will be a focus for alumni to visit the school</p>	
<p><b>Staff</b></p>	
<p><b>School Counsellor - asked for update from Governors.</b> JB explained that staff appointments are the role of the staff of the school. If the head recommends employing a new member of staff, the GB will ask if we can afford it and what value it will add. Are currently looking at the budget restraints and cannot at this point decide whether there is the resource to employ additional staff. Are aware that the staff and the Forum feel that a school counsellor is important.</p> <p><b>Q: was the process followed correct? Should it have gone via MW?</b> MW commented that it is important to keep things on the agenda with MW and Governors.</p> <p><b>Q: request for a response by the next Forum?</b> Should, by then, have a clear idea whether there is capacity in the budget.</p> <p><b>Q: How much of the budget consideration is in the public domain?</b> The school finances are published.</p> <p>There is frustration from staff on this issue that significant work has been done to be told at this stage that we may not be able to afford it. JB commented that it is very useful as it gives Governors an idea of what the staff views are about what support staff are required and enables them to consider issues like this.</p> <p><b>Q: Staff do not feel like there has been a direct response from Governors. Is the Forum the vehicle for that communication?</b> There are staff Governors and part of their role is to liaise with the staff constituency. There is an item at FGB next week about how Governors could communicate and work better with the Forum, including being able to communicate directly back to the Forum.</p> <p><b>Q: Are meetings timed so that Forum issues can be fed back?</b> Yes</p> <p>There is also a co-op group who meet termly made up of governors and ex governors who should be involved in this.</p>	

<p><b>Admissions</b></p> <p>Has been discussed at FGB and a working party of Governors is in place who will come up with a timescale and strategy.</p> <p>The consultation period is Nov 2015 to Mar 2016 for entry in September 2017</p>	
<p><b>Parents</b></p>	
<p><b>Communications, website and branding</b></p> <p>All the standard letters are being pulled together and will be discussed with a group of parents. This will happen in the first two weeks of next term.</p> <p><b>Website Briefing</b></p> <p>Ed Carpenter has started a website brief which has been circulated.</p> <p>The key people to communicate with are MW &amp; Mel Sperring. The brief for a new website will need to be taken on by the new Headteacher. There is a need for a short term update.</p> <p><b>Q: Is it worth doing further work on the brief?</b> It will be useful to have a clear idea of what is needed from a new website and make it easier to get started on this next year.</p> <p><b>Q: Would it be possible for the school to put together a question to ask all the constituencies?</b> Yes. A clear simple question about the website would be very useful.</p> <p>The website issue has become quite tangled. The branding group were looking at this but it has stalled because of money and the change in Headteacher.</p> <p>There was a parent rep who offered help but this has also stalled due to lack of clarity.</p> <p>Governing Body will need to ask why a new website is needed. This needs to be considered in the budget discussions now.</p> <p>Agreed that the school will update and improve the current site until it is appropriate to have a new website.</p> <p>Need to be really clear about what the site doesn't do that it needs to do, what it does, but does badly and what it does well and needs to be kept. Need to separate functionality and branding issues and be clear about what is needed in each area.</p> <p><b>What is the best way to do this?</b> Suggestions for changes can be made and implemented by Mark Shutter.</p> <p>MW requested that someone do some searches for obvious and frequently used things and feedback how easy they were to find.</p> <p><b>Site developments – memorial to WW1</b></p> <p>Some ideas for a memorial have been produced and were handed out. This will be taken on by Richard Williams once Kate Armstrong leaves.</p>	<p><b>SLT to make a formal request to constituencies to help update the current site and also for a formal brief for a new website.</b></p> <p><b>Anyone who can help to e-mail Grace or Katie</b></p>

<b>Students</b>	
<p><b>Recommendations from toilet survey (Students)</b></p> <p>There were 454 staff and student responses to the survey.</p> <p>Recommendations have been circulated to MW and Facilities Manager.</p> <p>The proposal is for the toilets to be cleaned during the day and a sign on the door to say when they were last cleaned. MW is employing another daytime cleaner.</p> <p>Students have put together a toilet team to check things like smell, toilets flushing etc.</p> <p>MW has agreed to talk to students about use of the toilets.</p> <p>There also an issue that many of the toilets are inaccessible at various key points during the day, especially lunchtime.</p> <p>We have a better ratio of toilets to students than is required by the DfE</p> <p>There are also issues with a lack of a basin behind a locked door, especially for women. This needs to be communicated directly into the school – to the pastoral coordinator.</p>	
<p><b>6 Enrichment Fund Money</b></p> <p>Agreed to hold over to the next meeting. Suggestions should be discussed in constituency groups and brought to next Forum in writing to be circulated before the next meeting.</p> <p>JB requested that a check be made on what the original requirements were for spending the money to make sure these are complied with.</p>	<b>Constituencies to put suggestions in writing</b>
<p><b>7 Information from Governors including map of the year</b></p> <p>Map of the year - Leanne has started this and the draft so far was available. There is further work to be done on this</p>	
<p><b>8 Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redland Fair – Monday 4 May. Looking for volunteers to help out.</li> <li>• Fiesta – 20 June. Also looking for people to help organise this. There is a meeting at 4pm on Wednesday 25 March.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>9 Update from Constituency Groups</b></p> <p>To be further discussed at the next meeting</p>	
<p><b>10 AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felt arrangement of the room was better, but more lighting needed.</li> </ul>	

## FORUM MEETINGS

These are the forum dates for the next Academic year. All at 7pm in the library.

- Wednesday May 6<sup>th</sup>
- Wednesday July 1<sup>st</sup>