



Cotham Co-operative Academy Forum
 Tuesday 8 March 2016, 7-8.30pm
 Library

Minutes

Attendees:

Parent/Carer Reps: Becky Chapman (BC), Emma Gibbins, Emma Wheeler, Gareth Edmunds, Jo Eades (JE)

Staff Reps: Abbie Allender, Beth Aiken, Louise Arnold

Community Reps: Ken Smith (KS), Nancy Copplestone

Student Reps: Izzy Triggs (IT), Oli Wheeler, Theo Davies (TD), Rose Dayan

Alumni Reps: Jeremy Birch (JBi)

School Governors: Jim Bowyer (JB), Claire Grocott, David Winter

Also present: Jo Butler (Headteacher - JBu), Nicki Warne (NW), Leanne Sowersby (Clerk),

Apologies: Andrew Wood, Mukhtar Ali, Sharon Spink, Simon Wilks, Valerie Aspin, Bev Meredith, Lynda Rooke, Helen Ashcroft.

| | | Action |
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| 1 | Welcome to all and apologies - BC welcomed everyone. Gary Harwick, Ross Geoghegan (staff reps), and Dave Martin (alumni rep) have resigned. BC congratulated TD on becoming the Youth Mayor. | |
| 2 | Any Other Business: Dance Competition | |
| 3 | Agree Minutes of last meeting: Agreed by show of hands. | |
| 4 | Protocol for visitors The final draft of this was circulated before the meeting. The protocol was approved | |
| 5 | Key updates on issues from constituency groups | |
| | Student Voice / Post 16 | |
| | Post 16 - There has been an issue with litter around Charnwood – hoping to work with the local community to improve relations. Link made with KS. There have been two talks recently, one on domestic violence which was excellent and was repeated in the lower school, and one about FGM which could also be repeated. There was also an assembly where student leaders talked through their plans and gave students the opportunity to vote. Student Voice are organising the next charity week and tutor group reps are going to all tutor groups to talk about manners and litter. Parent rep comment - very impressed with the work the student reps are doing. | |

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| | Community | |
| | <p>A report was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Have been trying to develop a positive atmosphere in the local area, although there have been some issues with behaviour in the area. The more links the community can build with the school, the better.</p> <p>JBu commented that there have been issues with a minority of students who have been difficult to identify. Many Cotham students do not live in the immediate area and also have to walk some distance to public transport. Senior leaders are now out in the community and on trains etc. to help manage the behaviour. KS will pass this back to the local community.</p> | |
| | Parents | |
| | <p>Full minutes from the parents meeting will be on the website soon.</p> <p>Discussed the development of the school website. Keen that parents should have an input into usability testing early enough in the process to allow for meaningful feedback.</p> <p>Stoke Lodge is going to a full public enquiry in June. JBu explained what is being done on this. Have had to employ a barrister to support the school's case.</p> <p>Q – Does the public enquiry give any opportunity for representation – e.g. a petition? The barrister feels that this would make very little difference. The information being considered goes back over 20 years.</p> <p>Discussed the conversion to a Multi Academy Trust and thanked JB for feedback on the consultation. Have raised two points around what it would mean for resources and the potential for SLT focus to be moved away from Cotham.</p> <p>There has been a safeguarding issue raised around after-school sports fixtures – parents have not always known where children are, there has been a lack of communication and parents have not always been asked for permission for children to go on coaches etc. JBu asked for a summary by e-mail and will look into this.</p> | JE / JBu |
| | Staff | |
| | <p>There are some changes planned for the staff room to improve staff wellbeing, as well as money being made available for lunches for staff on duty.</p> <p>JBu mentioned that the cleaning contract is being changed.</p> <p>Q – How much staff involvement will there be in the SLT recruitment? There will be an informal meet and greet after school.</p> <p>Have requested some time on the agendas for inset days for staff reps to communicate with staff.</p> <p>Are looking at reps taking on specific roles to give the process more structure. Need to recruit more staff reps.</p> <p>Have re-raised the issue of a school counsellor. IT commented that Post-16 have a trainee counsellor which has been really positive so far (and cheaper). Suggestion that sixth formers could mentor lower school students, with training. Post 16 have had a talk from Off The Record about mental health and the stigma surrounding it. Maybe they could run training?</p> <p>JBu added that there will be a £400,000 budget cut from September and difficult decisions need to be made around priorities. JBu accepts a need for a counsellor but there are more students who need help with English as an additional language and we currently have no EAL specialists.</p> | |

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| | Alumni | |
| | Need to recruit more alumni reps. Future First do hold quite a lot of information about Alumni which will, hopefully, help to recruit more members. JBu thanked NW for sorting out the relationship with Future First. | |
| | Coop / Governors Working Group | |
| | <p>Have decided to continue to use Future First for alumni and are sorting out the use of MailChimp to improve communication with Co-op membership and to hold database.</p> <p>NW will report back at the next meeting.</p> <p>NW has met people from the Coop at Ashton Park. They have a more community-focused approach than our democracy approach and there were some interesting ideas shared.</p> <p>NW has been asked to report on membership numbers – there are currently approximately 102 community, 705 parents, 330 alumni members, 165 staff and 1,165 students.</p> <p>Governors were thanked for attending the Forum. Would like every Governor to come at least once in a year.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the minutes that are available to the Forum. Requested that the Forum have access to all minutes of the Governors’ sub-committees.</p> <p>Concern was expressed about resources to support the Forum.</p> <p>Q – What is the impact of having less resource now than previously? This is difficult to judge – there is more that NW could be doing.</p> <p>JB commented that this highlights the difficulties in the current climate, in making decisions around resources. JB reiterated that Governors appreciate the contributions of the Forum and the volunteers.</p> | <p>NW</p> <p>NW</p> |
| | Governors | |
| | <p>JB circulated a report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>JB gave a summary of the discussion around Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) at the Learning & Wellbeing Committee. Governors have always supported school leadership in the need to consider balancing timetables and the practicalities of offering choice. We have not come up with an equitable way of offering choice.</p> <p>Where languages are compulsory, take up drops away. This could be an advantage of working with other schools in a MAT structure, to increase capacity and potentially start language learning earlier.</p> <p>Q – There was a question about whether the small group of students where parents are bilingual could be considered as a special circumstance. This has been taken into consideration in some cases in the past. JBu commented that the school can be used as an exam centre for students to take GCSEs in other languages.</p> <p>A paper was circulated about MFL. JBu talked through the key points. Redland Green are reviewing their current policy of offering a language carousel. Plan to increase access to Spanish.</p> <p>It would be useful if the report could be published. JBu to arrange for the report to be made briefer and published on the website.</p> <p>Forum / Governing Body Communication</p> <p>JB thanked Gareth & Ross for their work on this. Now need to produce a process.</p> <p>JB will feed back to the Coop Working Group to work on a final document.</p> | <p>JBu</p> <p>JB</p> |

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| <p>6</p> | <p>Multi-Academy Trust Consultation Feedback</p> <p>Consultation responses and Governor comments were circulated before the meeting.</p> <p>JB talked through the key points. The GB have set up a working group to look at a MAT structure and there is a draft. Now need to work on which responsibilities lie with which part of the structure.</p> <p>Schools that join the MAT would be encouraged to set up Forums in each of the individual schools, which would feed into an overall MAT Executive Forum.</p> <p>JB asked the Forum to start to consider how that would work. Governors need to produce a scheme of delegation which will inform this.</p> <p>The MAT working group needs to meet again, after which Forum members will be invited to become more involved.</p> <p>Q – Are there any models of co-operative MATS? The SCS have been unable to provide any models of successful, existing Cooperative MATs.</p> <p>There was a query around membership of the SCS and the value of this.</p> <p>Q – Who would be Company Members of the MAT? This has not yet been decided. Legal Members are required in addition to Governors / Trustees and have certain liabilities. It will be important to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest within the structure.</p> <p>Free School Update: JBu, MS and MC made a presentation to the Local Authority. Cotham were not chosen as the preferred bidder. This was Oasis.</p> | |
| <p>7</p> | <p>Cofund (enrichment fund) – progress report</p> <p>Draft documents were circulated before the meeting. There has been very little feedback.</p> <p>An e-mail address needs to be set up, the finance office need to agree to their role as set out and a committee set up.</p> <p>Q – Can this be applied to by sixth form students? Yes.</p> <p>Cofund should perhaps be written as ‘Co Fund’.</p> <p>Q – How would money be received? It is envisaged that this will be done primarily through refunded receipts. There is a provision for petty cash of up to £20.</p> <p>Q – Could the school be invoiced directly for goods / services? Yes - it would require a purchase order to be raised. If there is a grant made for a piece of equipment, for example, this could be purchased in accordance with Best Value through the school.</p> <p>There are two stages – applying for a project and then the process for purchasing the goods or services would be followed.</p> <p>The process needs to be discussed with the school Finance Manager. The money sits within the school budget and it is important to ensure that all procedures are followed.</p> <p>BC suggested that the document also be shared with students for feedback.</p> <p>Student Voice to look at the document</p> <p>JBu to discuss the document with the Finance Manager</p> <p>Q – Are there criteria? There are criteria within the document, which are deliberately un-prescriptive as long as projects support the values.</p> <p>Would be useful to add to the form a brief breakdown of the budget for the project.</p> <p>The Forum thanked JBi for his work on this.</p> <p>Approved by show of hands, subject to the items above</p> | <p>JBu</p> |

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| 8 | School Modern Foreign Languages – update - Covered above in the Governors' update. | |
| 9 | Extra-Curricular School Sports – proposal for co-ordinator - Not discussed | |
| 10 | <p>Website and Rebranding – update and questions</p> <p>JBu gave an update. Looking at branding. Students voted to go back to using the castle logo that is on the uniform, which is being updated and re-drawn.</p> <p>Photographs will be done when the weather is better. There will also be some videography. It is important to promote the school to prospective new families.</p> <p>The plan is that it will be ready to go by the second week of August, to go live in September.</p> <p>Request that parents are involved at an early stage in testing usability. This could happen at a parents' rep meeting as AW is involved.</p> <p>Q – Is there any progress on the VLE? Are looking at different products, Firefly and Show My Homework. Mr Watts has more information.</p> <p>Q – Why do we not use the same system as Redland Green? They use Google Docs for Education, which has been implemented here.</p> | |
| 11 | <p>School Fundraising Strategy</p> <p>JBu – don't have the capacity to develop a school fundraising strategy. No-one has volunteered to look at this. Parents noted that the school has previously been given some advice on fundraising. BC to follow this up (with Ronnie Brown).</p> <p>Future First may also be able to support with fundraising.</p> | BC |
| 12 | <p>Reflection and AOB</p> <p>There was a big dance competition in Swindon, in which Cotham did really well. Year 11 won KS4 and Year 9 also won. Both will go through to the national final in Birmingham.</p> | |

FORUM MEETINGS

These are the Forum dates for the next Academic year. In the library.

- Thursday 5th May
- Thursday 30th June