



Cotham Co-operative Academy Forum  
 Tuesday 11 October 2016, 7-8.30pm  
 Library

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

**Parent/Carer Reps:** Emma Gibbins (EG), Simon Wilks (SW), Gareth Edmunds, Jo Eades (JE, Chair), Mukhtar Ali, Sharon Spink

**Staff Reps:** Abbie Allender (AA), Louise Arnold

**Community Reps:** Ken Smith, Lynda Rooke, Nancy Cobblestone (NC)

**Student Reps:** Svenja Helmond, Helen Ashcroft (teacher, student voice co-ordinator)

**Alumni Reps:** Jeremy Birch (JBi)

**School Governors:** Jim Bowyer (JBo), David Yorath, Claire Grocott, Paula Bradshaw

**Also present:** Leanne Sowersby (Clerk), Jo Butler (Headteacher - JBu), Hamish Beeston, Cleo Lake

**Apologies:** Kerry Chester, Valerie Aspin, Becky Chapman (BC)

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome to all and apologies</b> - JE welcomed everyone. JE is chairing the meeting tonight as the Forum is currently revolving the position of the Chair.</p> <p>Everyone introduced themselves.</p> <p>There are two visitors – Hamish Beeston, a parent and Cleo Lake, a Councillor for the Cotham area.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>MAT Discussion</b></p> <p>This will be the main focus of the meeting, with the aim to produce a formal response to the consultation.</p> <p>A groups of parents (approx. 65 people, a Facebook group of over 400 people and a meeting of 10-12 parents) have produced a paper which has been circulated to Forum members and was read out by a parent rep.</p> <p>JBu clarified that this is a Governing Body decision, not a Senior Leadership Team decision.</p> <p>There has already been a public meeting which addressed many issues and there is a formal route to ask questions and receive answers via the consultation section of the website.</p> <p>JBo outlined some of the current issues and discussed the current political situation. This is a conversation, Governors want to hear views.</p> <p>A cooperative structure will only work if people engage with the structure.</p> <p>The Governing Body want to form something that people want to join, not something that people were made to join.</p>	

JBu circulated some documents and outlined the proposed engagement structure. The school community is very diverse and multi-cultural and is changing rapidly. In Year 7-9 around 40% currently take free school meals. It is an increasing challenge to engage and involve students and their parents. Different methods are needed for different groups.

Need to be clear how a forum structure will work on an ongoing basis and how it would work within a MAT.

Comment that Cotham are currently not legally a Cooperative School as the Cooperative Articles are not the ones registered with Companies House. Are, therefore, discussing the Forum as a consultative body.

JE provided information that the parent reps do reflect the school's population and it has become more diverse as it has developed.

**Q - Has the attainment gone down as the school population has become more diverse?** Attainment is not the only measure on which a school is measured but yes, it has.

**Q – How will engagement with hard to reach parents improve this?** This is part of what JBu is discussing with her proposals.

JBu talked through the stakeholder involvement model. There is a comprehensive staff engagement model that has not been in place previously.

Comment that the proposed model does not include any mechanism for horizontal communication to happen among the different groups. Feeling expressed that the Forum could form a part of the proposed structure.

Discussion around how appropriate the Forum is, for example, for students to attend and how it could fit in. Feeling that the Forum is an evolving structure.

Important that the support and engagement is focussed on adding value to all of the students.

Discussion around the Articles. The Forum should provide Community Governors, this has not been working. It is a consultative body.

Need to be clear about the Cooperative articles being discussed. The relaxation of the requirement for schools to be members of the Schools Cooperative Society (SCS) only happened last week. The only difference between the Model 6 Articles is that there is a MAT-wide Forum, there is no mention of school based forums. It is not the same as the structure we currently have in Cotham.

Need to avoid mixing the issues of how the engagement works in the school and the Articles of Association that would be adopted as a MAT.

*Governors left the meeting.*

JE will follow up getting student feedback after the meeting.

Each constituency group gave some feedback to the forum.

**Key points raised:**

Want horizontal communication between the stakeholder groups other than filtered through the Head.

How will existing links via Community constituency be retained & developed?

What legal safeguard will be put in place to ensure Prima Learning Trust is accountable to all stakeholders.

Concern around excluding Members / trustees on the basis of skills only.

What are detailed proposals for the, 'fully representative consultative group'?

JE

