

**MARY WARD SETTLEMENT
INTEGRATED BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2015 at 6.15pm
Room 11, 42 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AQ**

Confidential items 6.1-6.3, 10.3 and 12

Present: Diana Good (Chair)
Alison Lowton
Andrea Williams
Austin Hill
Alex Horsup
Frances Bates
Helen Carty
Irene Payne
John Edwards
Kate Watters
Maureen Brewster
Nicole Kar
Peter Clyne

In Attendance: Suzanna Jackson (Warden)
Allister Duncan (Head of Finance and Resources – H of F)
Sue Craggs (Head of Adult and Community Education – HACE)

Clerk: Beryl Washington

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1. Apologies for absence were received from Mehul Shah, Alan Humphreys, Andrew Peck, Tina Neessen (Acting Head of the Legal Centre)</p> <p>The Chair expressed her regret for the absence of Mehul Shah. This would have been his final meeting as a trustee and she wished to record the Board's gratitude to him for his years of service. He would be greatly missed.</p>	
<p>2. Declarations of interest: staff conditions of service were under consideration at item 12, when staff, staff trustees and student trustees would withdraw from the meeting.</p>	
<p>3. Minutes of meetings of 7th July and 15th September 2015 were approved.</p>	
<p>4. Matters arising – the Clerk's paper, with updates on <i>inter alia</i> individual fundraising efforts and draft letters to MPs about possible funding cuts, was noted.</p>	

5. Chair's report:

5.1 The Chair referred briefly to the main points in her report, highlighting:

- i. that she had spoken to Christopher Coombe of Linklaters (the lawyer who had advised on the purchase of 10 Great Turnstile) about the Settlement's current property considerations, and asked if he would be willing to provide ad hoc pro bono advice about the Settlement's approach to RFSA;
- ii. that she would be meeting with Caro Millington, the Settlement's representative on the RFSA Board, and would then try to arrange a meeting with the RFSA;
- iii. that she would be contacting trustees to revive efforts in the '1000 cases' fundraising campaign, which had raised £13k last year, a total which it was hoped would be exceeded this year.

5.2 The Chair's report was **received and noted**.

6. Warden's Report:

6.1-6.3 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

SDIs

6.4 The Warden outlined the current concerns about possible further funding cuts. These may have an impact on SDI funding, which came from the FE 'pot' and so may inadvertently get caught up in the cuts which are aimed at non-apprenticeship work. SDIs would be meeting with Nick Boles MP in December. There was also a push for FE colleges to merge: current 'area reviews' would identify where a merger is preferred. Colleges in London are already looking at proposals for closer working with others, and some informal agreements are being formalised. Some subject areas, e.g. arts, have enough students for all, but in other cases colleges cooperate in sharing subjects e.g. MW does not offer modern foreign languages that are available at City Lit. Trustee Nicole Kar cautioned against sharing of the curriculum as a matter of competition law.

6.5 SDIs had agreed that sharing back room services was not a good idea, except perhaps in marketing. Conversations were ongoing.

Operational Plan 2014/15:

6.6 The Warden referred to areas of difficulty highlighted in the plan. The Capitalise project at MWLC was proving problematic and it was hoped to renegotiate the terms. An issue for the Adult Education Centre was earning the SFA allocation. £90k was allocated at the end of last February, which meant that the Centre had had to undertake some late reorganisation to earn it. In the past, there had been a 3% tolerance to earning the allocation, and this year the Centre was within 2%. However, if the 3% was not applied, about £30k might have to be given back.

Operational Plan 2015/16

6.7 Trustees were reminded that this was a 'living document' and that it would change as strategic decisions were made. Some financial KPIs had been added. For the Adult Education Centre, there was a change in quality indicators, with Departments focusing on issues of retention.

6.8 In response to a question about the recording of cases at MWLC, the Warden reminded trustees that the nature of the cases meant that most closed in the same year as they were opened, apart from housing matters. There was a brief discussion about how work done should be presented, and it was noted that effective reporting depended on both information recorded and the ability to report it. Changes were under consideration as to how to measure work done, but while there is a temporary manager, the service is under review and there are other pressing priorities, progress would be limited.

The Warden's report was received and the Operational Plan 2015/16 was approved.

7. Adult and Community Education report on current activities:

7.1 The Head of Adult and Community Education (HACE) reported a positive start to the year, with income currently 19% ahead of income at this stage last year. She clarified that the fee target was broken down by term to enable closer monitoring and action to be taken as necessary.

7.2 The HACE reminded trustees of the timetable for SAR; trustees would be invited to attend moderation meetings. She drew attention to success rates and student satisfaction statistics, and to the good results and progress made in OTL.

Development Plan 2014/15

7.3 The Development Plan 2014/15 showed updated completion dates and ratings. Trustees were advised that Blackfriars had an 'amber' rating because of attendance levels. The HACE further highlighted the themes for 2015/16 that were emerging from self-assessment and the Ofsted observation that there should be a focus on non-achievers.

The report was received and noted.

8. Legal Services – report on current activities:

8.1 In the absence of the interim Head of the Legal Centre, the Warden presented the report and invited questions. She reminded trustees that the Capitalise contract had changed last year: some areas of London had insufficient debt advice available, so organisations had been allocated key boroughs, with a delivery point within those boroughs. Good partners had been found in some boroughs, but in others, e.g. Havering, it was proving more difficult to reach the numbers required. A second problem was with

the use of the computer tool (MAP) that identified the type of advice required, but which did not take account of the severity of the problems for which most of our clients require help. Much work had been done to try and overcome these difficulties.

8.2 Toynbee and MAS were considering how funds would be allocated under the contract next year, and there may be changes which would be beneficial to the Legal Centre; if not we would have to reconsider what we take on. This was a significant issue as the income from the contract formed a large part of the Legal Centre's budget. Debt advice would be considered in the Settlement's service review.

The report was received and noted.

9. Report from Governance and Nominations Committee:

9.1 The Chair of the Committee (Andrea Williams) confirmed that the Chair of the Board's performance review had been completed, but without the input of all trustees. Those who had responded were very happy with the Chair's performance. Andrea reminded trustees that 100% participation was required in this type of exercise, and encouraged everyone to return the Board self assessment form which would be sent out shortly.

9.2 The Board **approved** the recommendations that Kate Watters be appointed as second Vice Chair of the Board with immediate effect, and that Frances Bates be proposed for appointment as Chair of the Board at the next AGM in March 2016.

9.3 There was a short discussion about the recommendation that individual terms of trusteeship be extended from 3 years to 4 years. It was generally considered that the extended term would enable individuals to build up experience and become more knowledgeable and 'useful' trustees. Trustees would have the choice of whether to extend their current term, but future appointments would be for 4 years.

9.4 The Board **approved** the recommendation, which would be put to the next AGM in March 2016. In the meantime, the Clerk would seek the views of individual trustees on extending their current term.

Clerk

9.5 The Board received the updated list of committee membership. It was noted that there was no longer a sitting Fundraising Group (not a Board committee but a group of trustees and staff which had met previously on a regular basis). In future the Chair and the Warden would be convening various groups to consider different fundraising themes, and trustees would be notified in due course of dates and topics.

**Chair
and
Warden**

10. Report from Finance Committee:

10.1 The Committee Chair (John Edwards) referred to the discussion about the knowledge members of the Finance Committee were required to have

and the request for training to ensure understanding of financial documents that come before the Board. It was noted that the Clerk would be looking at the level of need with a view to the provision of appropriate training.

Clerk

10.2 The Head of Finance advised the Board that the previous week's audit had been successful. He tabled a reconciliation of Settlement accounts for 2014/15, highlighting the figures relating to the valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme and the gap between assets and liabilities. In answer to a question he confirmed that the retirement age for LGPS was set at 65 years, and that a key factor in costs was higher life expectancy. He noted that SFA did not take account of FRS17 when assessing the financial health of a college. He further noted that interest rates had been low but may be higher next year, which possibly would have an impact.

10.3 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

11. Report from the Audit and Risk Committee:

11.1 The Chair of the Committee (Andrew Peck) referred the Board to the Risk Management Report which reviewed the most significant risks faced by the Board and provided assurance on the level of control of those risks. He confirmed that all the top risks were financial, and of the top 10 risks noted by the auditors as being common among colleges, the Settlement had recorded 9.

11.2 The Warden advised the meeting that the risk register was now cross-referenced with the Strategic Plan for clarity.

The Risk Management Report and the Risk Management Register were noted.

(The Board agreed to take item 13 before the confidential item 12 which required staff and students to withdraw.)

13. AOB

The London Legal Support Trust was facilitating a fundraising quiz night on 4th November. Austin Hill (staff trustee) agreed to organise a quiz for Mary Ward.

Austin Hill

(Staff, staff trustees and student trustees withdrew from the meeting at this point.)

12. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

**The meeting closed at 8.20pm
Date of next meeting – 15th December 2015**

Beryl Washington
Clerk
November 2015