

**MARY WARD SETTLEMENT
INTEGRATED BOARD
Minutes of the meeting held on
15th December 2015 at 6.15pm
Room 11, 42 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AQ**

Present: Andrea Williams
Alan Humphreys
Andrew Peck
Frances Bates
Helen Carty
Irene Payne
Jake Lee
John Edwards
Kate Watters
Peter Clyne
Raja Nadarajan (from item 7)

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

Clerk: Beryl Washington

Agenda Item	Action
1.	Apologies for absence were received from Alex Horsup, Alison Lowton, Austin Hill, Diana Good, Nicole Kar, Maureen Brewster. In the absence of Diana Good (Chair) Andrea Williams (Vice Chair) assumed the Chair for the meeting.
2.	Declarations of interest: there were none.
3.	Minutes of the meeting of 20th October 2015 were approved .
4.	Matters arising – the Clerk’s paper, with updates on trustees’ response to the planned extension of term of service to four years and the offer of finance training sessions, was noted .
5.	Chair’s report: 5.1 In the absence of the Chair, Andrea Williams went briefly through her report, highlighting the following items:

a) Frances Bates was shadowing Diana Good and attending various internal and external meetings with her in anticipation of Frances' election as Chair at the next AGM.

b) Legal advice had been sought on the conflict of interest which faced the MW trustee on the RFSA Board. Caro Millington was stepping down from that role and it was hoped to find a replacement who was not a current MW trustee. In answer to a question the Warden clarified that organisations who received grants from RFSA had the right to nominate a trustee to their Board, not to represent their organisations but to ensure that the charitable aims of RFSA were being met. There was a potential conflict of interest for someone who sat on both Boards. Consideration was being given to former trustees or sessional tutors – a previous MW nominated RFSA trustee had been a tutor. The next meeting of the RFSA was due to take place in March.

c) Property matters, including the likely engagement of professionals and the terms on which they would work with the Settlement, would be the main item on the January awayday agenda.

5.2 The Board also noted the Chair's requests for action under fundraising.

5.3 The Chair's report was **received**.

6. **Warden's Report:**

6.1 The Warden drew attention to the suggested arrangements for the **Board awayday** on 16th January, to take place at either 42QS or 10GT from 10am to 3.30pm. Papers would be sent out the week before the meeting. Fundraising would be discussed at a subsequent meeting, when the aims of a campaign would be clearer.

6.2 Thanks were expressed to the Legal Centre team, in particular Tina Neessen and Ian Greenidge, who had successfully prepared the MWLC for the **Specialist Quality Mark audit**.

6.3 The **All Party Parliamentary Group for Adult Education** had been launched at the end of November and the Warden undertook to circulate membership details to trustees. The Warden had been involved in interviews for secretariat support for the Group, and expected that the successful candidate would be in touch with trustees.

6.4 The Warden also reported on a very encouraging **meeting with Nick Boles MP**, Minister of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and Education. He was very supportive of SDIs, recognised their value and showed understanding of their purpose.

6.5 **Blackfriars** – the next meeting was due to take place on 12th January. Discussions were not as advanced as MW had hoped, and Frances Bates confirmed that the last meeting had gone over old ground and that Blackfriars seemed unclear about what they wanted to do. If the next meeting resulted in no progress, the Warden thought that the Board would have to consider alternate partners at the awayday on 16th January.

6.6 **Public WiFi** had been installed in 42QS. Students were being advised, but it would not be advertised to the wider public, e.g. cafe patrons, so as not to encourage casual users.

6.6 The Warden's report was **received**.

7. **Adult and Community Education – report on current activities**

7.1 The HACE drew attention to her report which highlighted a positive picture of fee income and enrolments.

7.2 The attention of trustees was drawn to the reports on Widening Participation and on Equality and Diversity, which provided information on MW's work in the community and on the advancement of equality matters. The HACE then presented the SAR, the format of which had been updated to reflect recent changes in Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework. She outlined the process for preparing the SAR report, which began with HoDs writing their own assessments, which were then subject to moderation meetings attended by the HoD, another team member, the HACE, the Warden and a trustee. The purpose of the meetings was to offer a fresh view, challenge judgements and identify areas where more evidence would be helpful. Following the meetings, the HACE produced a cross College SAR, which was subject to another moderation meeting involving trustees, SMT and other staff.

7.3 There was a brief discussion about the process, during which the following points were made:

- It was an interesting process that enabled others to see strengths that HoDs saw as normal
- MWC could be more assertive about strengths. 'Good' was a wide grade, and it should be made clear how close to 'outstanding' particular assessments fell. Moderation showed the need to be more confident in success and individual impact
- Outcomes for students who did not learn as well as others could lower performance levels – that should be recognised in assessments
- It was difficult to identify 'value added'. Well being and social integration were not easy to value, although these were areas

where MW made an impact

7.4 Further discussion considered how information on progress was put to the Board. The HACE advised that a quality improvement plan would be devised, taking into account issues identified in the SAR. The regular HACE report to the Board considered quality aspects and would address Ofsted's comments. The development plan would be updated accordingly. It was noted that aspects of leadership and management were outstanding, but there was a need to improve the evidence of provision of information to the Board.

7.5 In answer to another question about quality monitoring, the Warden reminded the Board that the now disbanded QEC (Quality and Equality Committee) had not been effective. SMT were discussing how best to address quality monitoring – one idea under consideration was a cross Settlement committee to look at particular issues.

7.6 The HACE then presented the individual assessments within the SAR, all of which were agreed by the Board.

The Board approved the SAR, agreeing the overall assessment of good with outstanding aspects.

8. Legal Services – report on current activities:

8.1 A correction in the figures for Debt Team cases was noted (this year's and last year's figures had been transposed).

8.2 In presenting her report the Acting Head of the Legal Centre highlighted the following matters:

- Whilst outcomes for MWLC under the Capitalise project were similar to others, MWLC's outcomes were particularly low in targeted boroughs. However, efforts were in place to meet this difficulty, through advertising and with the assistance of Camden CAB.
- Figures for the Housing Team were slightly lower as a daytime drop-in session had been cancelled.

8.3 The Warden reminded trustees that there was an ongoing series of internal meetings to inform the MW service review: discussions included the broader issue of how to manage pro bono work in future, as well as the underachievement of the Money Advice Service.

The Board received the report on current activities at the Legal Centre.

9 Finance Matters:

9.1 The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 24th November

2015 were noted.

9.2 The Q1 accounts were received. It was noted that these were promising: fees were up on budget, with a higher proportion of advance payments. The Head of Finance would advise the Board in January whether the improvement was continuing.

H of F

9.3 The Board noted the SFA Financial Health grading. The Warden advised that the 'dashboards' sent with the SFA notification were new, and that not all the information given in them applied to MW. Relevant items would be highlighted for the Board in future.

9.4 The Finance Committee had so far overseen matters relating to the formation of a building strategy. It had been suggested that a new **Premises Subgroup** should be established which would be dedicated to the consideration of all building matters. The group would include senior staff and trustees, and it was hoped to engage an external member with appropriate skills.

The Board approved the formation of a Premises Subgroup, and trustees were asked to let the Clerk know if they were interested in joining it.

Trustees

10. Report from the Audit and Risk Committee:

10.1 The Chair drew attention to his report on the various recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee. The Clerk's minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2016 provided fuller information and clarification of the matters under discussion.

10.2 The annual accounts for the Settlement, the Adult Education Centre and the Legal Centre were presented in their final form. The auditors had expressed their appreciation of the ease of work with the MW Finance Team during the audits. There were no outstanding issues.

10.3 The Board approved the 2014/15 accounts for the Settlement, the Adult Education Centre and the Legal Centre.

10.4 The Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee was received.

10.5 **The Board noted the Post Audit Report**, in particular the Auditor's report on the financial statements, and the Accountant's report on regularity on page 1 of the report.

10.6 **The Regularity self-assessment report was approved** subject to drafting amendments to the penultimate paragraph on page 1.

HoF

10.7 The letters of representation were approved for signature.

10.8 The Head of Finance's paper on the changes to SORP set out the choices to be made and the background to the recommendations which the Audit and Risk Committee had agreed. The proposals were:

(i) To adopt the accrual method where government capital grants can be recognised over the useful life of the relevant asset

(ii) To adopt the opening balances method in relation to 'Plant, Property and Equipment (formerly known as 'tangible fixed assets')

The Board approved the recommended changes in accounting policy

10.9 The Head of Finance would restate the 2014/15 accounts in the new format at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. He advised trustees that account would have to be taken in future of the value of outstanding annual leave – this was likely to be £70-80k, since most annual leave was taken in August, after the end of the financial year.

11. Governance matters:

Board Guidelines

11.1 The Chair of the Governance and Nominations Committee introduced the revised Board Guidelines. There were few changes to the actual guidelines, mostly tidying up and the inclusion of a reference to the proposed increase of the trustee term of office to four years. All Committees had seen and agreed the revisions to their terms of reference which were appended to the Guidelines.

11.2 There was a request for clarity on the use of the terms 'Board' and 'Boards', which the Clerk agreed to address.

Clerk

11.3 The Board Guidelines were approved, subject to the clarification requested.

Board Self-Assessment:

11.4 **The Clerk's report on the self-assessment responses was noted.** Consideration would be given to those aspects where lower grades were achieved.

11.5 Board self-assessment would be considered by the Clerk and the Governance and Nominations Committee with a view to adopting a process that would enable trustees to be more responsive and provide a clearer picture of those areas where follow-up work might be necessary.

**Clerk,
Gov &
Noms**

12. AOB – there was none.

13. **Confidentiality** – it was agreed that no items need be treated as confidential.

14. **Dates of next meeting:**
The Board would next meet at the **Awayday on 16th January 2016.**
The next scheduled meeting of the Board would take place on **26th January 2016.**

Beryl Washington
Clerk
December 2015