

## **Minutes of the 40th Meeting of the English UK Main Board**

Held at: English UK, 219 St John Street, London EC1V 4LY

Date: Thursday 14 June 2012

Present: Sue Edwards (Chair), Sarah Cooper (Vice-Chair), Michael Cornes, Jane Dancaster, John Barnett, Richard Day, Kevin McNally, Steve Phillips, Graham Simpson, Shane Wilkinson

Attending: Andrew Hjort (Chair, APSB); Tony Millns; Huan Japes (minutes)

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### ***Constitutional business***

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Caroline Hugo and Greg Watson

#### **2. Declaration of any interests**

JB declared an interest in point six.

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting on 4 April 2012**

These were agreed to be an accurate reflection of this meeting.

#### **4. Matters arising and updates (paper B40/1)**

TM outlined that 150 ABLs, BAC and ASIC accredited centres offer ELT classes. BAC has in the last year lost 200 centres through withdrawals, closures and mergers, calling into question its continued viability. TM asked if the board had any doubts about approaching some of these centres. JD agreed that we could look at the possibility of their becoming members/signing up to the ACS but sounded a note of caution – it is the private FE sector that has been most closely associated with the issue of bogus colleges.

On the matter of the SESF TM gave examples of longer established schools that had been forced to close. Regarding the financing of the SESF, RD asked if new members could contribute an additional fee – e.g. via an application for membership fee? TM explained that the application fee had been removed several years ago, around 2002, deliberately so as not to create a barrier to new members, as part of our agreed strategy to increase membership of the association and increase our resources, reach and influence.

For the 2013 AGM conference, it was agreed that we should ask the Hotel Russell to offer an early bird rate on bedrooms.

The points in paper B40/1 on the Accreditation UK agreement should be raised in due course with the BC.

Dates of future meetings:

17<sup>th</sup> October suggested for the remaining meeting in 2012 (with a possible meeting at StudyWorld if required). [Note subsequent to meeting: at present it is not envisaged there is likely to be any urgent business which would necessitate a meeting at SW. 17 October may be problematic because a) it clashes with a major Education Exports conference and b) TM is being pressed by the BC to go to Kurdistan that week with D Willetts MP to sign a MoU with the Kurdistan Regional Government. When matters are clearer we may need to do a doodle poll to decide the date.]

Amend the proposed April meeting to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

#### **5. Membership of the Board and other bodies, and external representation (paper B40/2)**

SE noted for the record that Michael Cornes, Jane Dancaster, Richard Day and Greg Watson were elected/re-elected unopposed at the AGM.

It was proposed that SE stay as Chair of the Board for another term. This was seconded by SW and MC. SE was thanked for her contribution.

Additionally, it was proposed that SC remain as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by SP and MC.

TM asked the board to recommend anyone suitable for the sub-boards and finance panel, which are a good proving grounds for the main Board.

JD asked if Tony Evans was part of INTO's English UK membership. TM replied that he was not, since he holds a HQ group-wide post, but that it was useful to have him on the ASPB and (unlike the main Board) there is no requirement that members of the sub-boards should all be members of staff of member centres (eg Nicole de Lalouviere is not currently employed by a member centre).

Alison Chambers is leaving Stevenson College as part of staff changes consequent on the Edinburgh FE college mergers, and she may face difficulty in continuing on the APSB.

TM turned to the proposals for the Nominations Committee. The board agreed that Martin Raven should chair this, with, in addition, Nicole de la Louviere, Diane Mullen, Sarah Cooper and one further member of the Board, to be decided later.

The board additionally agreed that Richard Day should continue as Chair of the ELPG.

#### **6. Membership of the Association and application for English UK East regional group (paper B40/3)**

TM confirmed that Newcastle International School of English is now an English UK member. A number of organizations (currently five) are in the ACS.

There are also two new corporate members: Western Union Business Solutions and Study Pay.

TM mentioned that English UK Wales was a possible future regional group, given the growth in membership in the country.

The Board approved the formal establishment of English UK East and JB was asked to convey congratulations on the hard work put in by all to bring the idea to fruition after several years of meetings.

#### **7. Review of the Annual Conference and AGM (paper B40/4, with Minutes of the AGM)**

The minutes of the AGM were approved for distribution to members.

The conference feedback was generally highly positive, with a few dissenting voices. Most agreed, however, that the Croner Employment Law update needed more focus. JD suggested a 1.5 day conference. JB mentioned that the event tends to work best when delegates stay overnight.

The timing of the ELTONS had provide problematic – TM mentioned that the 2013 AGM Conference dates had been brought forward to avoid this clash and also allow for the Parliamentary Reception to be held on the Wednesday evening.

SP asked about hiring the Terrace or a larger room for future receptions. TM pointed out that this would entail a large contribution to an MP's office costs, since bookings of the Terrace are limited. It might be possible to have the reception in the Lords. SW mentioned that it was good to see UKBA staff at the 2012 reception.

#### ***Matters for discussion and decision***

#### **8. Premises and mortgage (paper B40/5)**

English UK's bank (NatWest) has asked for accounts and a cash flow statement. It was agreed that TM and MC should have delegated authority to conduct and conclude negotiations on the mortgage. TM reported a valuation by the surveyor of £900K, leaving a shortfall between the maximum amount the bank will lend under its new rules (70% of valuation, ie £630K) and the current amount outstanding on the mortgage of c£675K. This and the 'arrangement fee' of nearly £10K will have to be found from reserves.

JD suggested the building must be worth more. TM agreed, noting that the Farringdon Station redevelopment and other local improvements (such as Waitrose opening 200m away, the Design Festival, and the impact of the KX/St Pancras transport hub) indicated that the area has risen in desirability in the 5+ years we have been based here. However the valuer was working on behalf of the bank and had been very cautious, particularly downrating the property on the basis that it could not practicably be made 'DDA compliant'.

## **9. Public affairs (paper B40/6)**

TM outlined English UK's forthcoming comparative study of ISI and Accreditation UK reports, which will be followed by meetings with Damian Green and Neil Hughes.

TM went on to outline the possibility of a Liberal Democrat/Labour coalition, and its implications. SE asked about the future of the APPG. In this scenario, there would need to be a committee of 10 Labour and LibDem MPs, and 10 Tories, which would be slightly easier to manage than the current requirement, where with Labour as the Opposition we have struggles to find 10 Labour MPs and peers to make up the Group.

JD asked about progress on the campaign to take students out of the migration figures. TM mentioned the recent IPPR report which had had wide coverage, with generally strong support across the media. The fact that Migration Watch are now campaigning against this move could mean that the government are actively considering it.

JB asked if ISI were falling behind their schedule of inspections. TM commented that although ISI state that they are on course, they could be in denial, and UKBA have said that they would if necessary be prepared to move the goal-posts, indicating that the possibility of the inspections not being completed by the end of 2012 has been considered.

AH asked if paying ISI a deposit held them to particular inspection dates? SE replied that it was in fact a simple 'application fee' without imposing obligations on ISI. TM went on to say that the ISI cycle of re-inspections would be on a risk-assessment basis – e.g. those with some grade 3 sections might receive a re-inspection within a year. UKBA would not be drawn on whether they had plans to accept Accreditation UK for Tier 4 purposes in future.

GS mentioned that the government and UKBA had been surprised by the hostility they had faced from language schools. They had presented their policies as part of the drive to 'clean up' the industry but did acknowledge that the problems that there have been were not associated with accredited language schools.

RD commented that the two schemes were likely to continue in tandem for some time, although perhaps Accreditation UK is not adapting fast enough to the changed reality. AH mentioned that there had at least been some movement on the issue of report publication.

AH raised the danger that the ISI approach would lump all PFE organizations together.

SW outlined the International Education Group meeting with Damian Green (11/6/12). This centered largely on issues of concern to organizations in the Bournemouth area, although the future status of the ESVV had been on the agenda. ISI had defended their role by stating that the British Council was not an accrediting body by design. TM noted that the BC did have a charter duty to promote the teaching of English worldwide, and the UK Accreditation scheme for English language centres had been in existence for over 30 years, so de facto the BC was an accrediting body and its role as such predates many other such bodies (eg Ofsted was not invented until the early 1990s).

#### **10. Risk register (paper B40/7)**

The Board received and noted the updated risk register.

#### ***Matters for report and information***

#### **11. Accreditation UK Executive Board, 25 April**

These minutes were received and noted.

#### **12. Accreditation & Professional Services Board, 16 May**

JD expressed approval for the two tier membership approach.

JB asked why the 3 for 2 offer on training days had been abolished. HJ explained that it had been administratively complex and therefore had been replaced with an alternative early bird booking system. HJ also mentioned that there would be an ASPB 'task and finish' group on the issue of publishing Accreditation UK reports.

#### **13. Enterprises Board, 6 June**

The international team was praised for their good work. GS highlighted the fact that not all the English UK fairs were fully subscribed – particularly Jordan. JD stressed the excellent opportunities presented by the fairs and suggested that there should be a Middle East event every other year only.

There were positive comments on the SW discount and special badge offered to Partner Agents. SW commented on the improvement in StudyWorld numbers in recent weeks.

#### ***Other business***

#### **14. Any other urgent business**

JB asked when the formation of English UK East could be announced. It was agreed this could be done immediately.

#### **15. Dates of future meetings (paper B40/1)**

See 4 above.