

Minutes of the 43rd Meeting of the English UK Board

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

Date: Tuesday 26 March 2013 from 13:00

Present: Sue Edwards (Chair), Sarah Cooper (Vice-Chair), Richard Day, Caroline Hugo, Daphne Laing, Steve Phillips, Greg Watson, Shane Wilkinson, Andrew Hjort, Kevin McNally and Jane Dancaster

Attending: Tony Millns, Annie Wright and Huan Japes (minutes)

Constitutional business

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from John Barnett and Simon Cleaver.

2. Any declarations of interest in the business of the meeting

The candidates standing for election to the board declared their interest in item 13.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 17 January 2013

RD asked about progress on promoting membership to the public-supported sector. SE confirmed that this would be carried forward to the next meeting.

4. Matters arising and updates (paper B43/1)

TM confirmed that Edinburgh College (incorporating the former member centre Stevenson College) had now paid their subscription fees in full.

RD asked that 2014 English UK Board meeting dates avoid a clash with the English UK fairs. AW agreed to check and report back.

5. Membership of the association (paper B43/2)

TM confirmed that there were now 462 members, with 8 applications in the pipeline, including Speak Up London, ISIS Oxford and Islington College London.

Five accredited non-members, when contacted by the British Council to pay their SESF subscription surcharge, had erroneously declared in 2012 that they were English UK members. GW was concerned that they might not pay the subscription, due to the confusion. TM confirmed that they would now be required to pay, with the British Council to be invoiced if the money did not arrive promptly.

AW mentioned that to date 30 centres had still to complete their annual declarations.

6. Annual Report and Accounts (draft supplied) and recommendations from the finance panel (B43/3)

SE asked for approval for the annual accounts to be circulated. There were four consequential issues for decision, all of which were approved by the board.

- a) Finance panel surplus recommendations
- b) Reserves policy
- c) Management response to the auditors on three items of financial control (appendix B)
- d) Re-appointment of Buzzacott's as auditors for three years. TM commented that the other tender last time was not as good, and that it was in any case more efficient to tender and potentially change auditors only every 9-12 years.

7. Annual Conference (programme supplied) and AGM (draft agenda supplied) (paper B43/4)

HJ confirmed that of the speakers approached only the OU had yet to confirm their attendance (*post-meeting update*: they did not agree to present and their place was taken by Gavin Dudeney of the Consultants-e).

JD asked if English UK were looking at pension providers other than Endsleigh for auto-enrolment. TM confirmed that other meetings had been organised.

One Great George Street was confirmed as the venue for the Parliamentary Reception.

RD commented that the programme was marketing-heavy.

SE mentioned that in April 2014 examination boards would have to re-tender for SELT status, and this may have resource implications for schools, including UKBA spot-checks on examinations. Could this be an item for the AGM? It was agreed that another event might be more suitable for this focus – e.g. the 2014 Management Conference.

Matters for discussion and decision

8. Public affairs update (paper B43/5)

TM spoke to paper B43/5, and noted that some aspects of current debate have struck a reassuring note.

- Nick Clegg had backed a policy of certain 'high-risk' migrants having to pay a returnable £1000 bond for their stay in the UK; this was felt to be too low to have a deterrent effect and had been widely criticised
- TM had written to Yvette Cooper following her speech at the IPPR on 7th March in order to challenge her taking increases in SVV figures at face-value

- Vince Cable had delivered a speech attacking the net migration target as the key determinant of public policy on immigration
- Mark Harper had struck a positive note in response to TM's letter, indicating that there would be no further major changes to the SVV and ESVV routes. He will also look at ISI charges; Hansard records him as saying that the SVV is not at risk of abuse and does not therefore need a review
- TM mentioned some new civil service appointments: Mark Sedwill moves from the Foreign Office to become the Home office Permanent Secretary; Jeremy Oppenheim now has a non-portfolio role at UKBA; Paul Wells and Paul Morrison have also moved to UKBA.

SE asked about the development of the BIS strategy. TM replied that it was at an advanced stage, with publication most likely due before the summer recess, with the Mexico/Colombia visit serving as a pilot for the general approach.

JD highlighted the meeting with Roudy Shafie of the Mayor of London's office on 27th February, focusing particularly on the visitor visa situation. . She mentioned the need to survey English UK London members in order to demonstrate the value of ELT business to the capital. In addition, English UK London is now a member of London First – this is an expensive option, but it genuinely increases English UK's lobbying power.

SE commented that English UK and other organisations were close to agreeing funding for a further IPPR publication on migration. GW asked why IPPR had been selected for this research. TM commented that the previous report had been well received across all major news media.

JD commended the approach to the ISI situation, given that they feel free to charge large fees for inspections and monitoring visits without being accountable for their value and outcomes. SE commented that the new UKBA premium service was essentially a way of forcing people to pay for a level of service which should come as standard.

Matters for information and report

9. Accreditation UK Executive Board (minutes of 6 February supplied by email)

TM gave some updates on British Council staff changes: Melissa Cudmore is returning to ELT; Tony Jones will be moving to be Deputy Director in Pakistan.

RD asked about Accreditation UK's strategy, in particular with regard to Educational Oversight. SE commented that there had been little follow-through from the previous strategy away-day and that the Accreditation Unit did not seem to think strategically. TM commented that they were in a difficult position and tend to concentrate on the day-to-day running of the inspections.

10. ASPB (minutes of 12 February supplied)

AH outlined the decision to create best practice guidelines going beyond those required by Accreditation UK, with a paper to be presented on this at the next APSB.

JD asked the PS team to investigate a shorter version of the current CertSSM programme, focusing essentially on safeguarding and counselling.

11. Enterprises board (minutes of 28 February supplied)

There was discussion of the make-up of this board, with the possibility of JD re-joining it. AW commented that a new contract had been signed for StudyWorld. For 2013, there had been a slight increase in agent bookings over 2012, and IH World had confirmed silver sponsorship alongside the other sponsors – PPI and Cambridge English.

12. Finance panel (minutes of 11 March supplied)

It was noted that the majority of the English UK surplus came from Enterprises.

13. Nominations Committee (minutes of 17 January supplied, plus revised Terms of Reference, and an oral report from 25 March meeting)

January meeting: the Terms of Reference were approved.

There was, however, a need to clarify the rules (25th March meeting): some proposers were not Nominated Representatives, while others were proposing or seconding more than one candidate.

25th March NC meeting oral report (TM): for the five places on the English UK board up for election, the two current co-optees, Simon Cleaver and Daphne Laing, have been nominated, together with the three retiring by rotation - Sarah Cooper, Shane Wilkinson and John Barnett – and two Northern Ireland members: Paul Murray and John McGowan. Ballot forms would go out on 8th April, for return by 10th May 2013.

Other business

14. Dates of future meetings and proposed dates for 2014 (paper B43/1)

The dates suggested in paper B43/1 were agreed.

15. Any other urgent business

The board congratulated Regent's University on obtaining University status.

16. Succession Planning Group (oral report – Board only item and not minuted here)

See separate report (Board only).

End: 15:00 (at item 15).