

## **Minutes of the 44th Meeting of the English UK Board**

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

Date: Thursday 13 June 2013 from 13:45

Present: Sarah Cooper (Vice-chair), Richard Day, Caroline Hugo, Steve Phillips, Greg Watson, Shane Wilkinson and Andrew Hjort (observer)

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

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### ***Constitutional business***

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

Apologies had been received from Sue Edwards (Chair), John Barnett, Daphne Laing, Kevin McNally and Jane Dancaster. Sarah Cooper acted as Chair for the meeting.

#### **2. Declarations of interest in the business of the meeting**

None.

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting on 26 March 2013**

The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2013 were an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **4. Matters arising and updates (paper B44/1)**

##### State sector recruitment

SC confirmed there was reasonable interest in an FE sector interest group following discussions held at the Annual Conference in May. SC and Janette Donjon (The Sheffield College) met with twelve FE representatives at the conference and will look to take the proposal forward. TM noted there was interest in a HE sector interest group following his visit to the University of Warwick, but no-one actually taking the lead on this so far.

##### Annual declarations

TM noted he was still waiting for a response from the BC regarding the payment of SESF dues by the 5 centres who wrongly declared to the BC that they were English UK members. [Post-meeting note: they have all paid.]

##### Annual Report & Accounts

TM informed the Board that the decisions on the application of the 2012 surplus are currently being implemented and Buzzacotts have been notified of their re-appointment as auditors.

## **5. Minutes of the AGM on 15 May 2013**

The Board agreed the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 15 May 2013 were an accurate record of the meeting and could be circulated to members.

## **6. Membership of the association (paper B44/2)**

TM spoke to the paper.

### Withdrawals, closures and new members

The Board noted the withdrawals and closures and admitted to membership the three new applications received from the University of Warwick, Accord Manchester and Accord ISS. The Board delegated authority to the chief executive to admit the expected applicants, Westminster Academy, ATC International Ltd and Walsall College to membership on receipt of their completed applications.

### 2013 Basic subscription debtors

TM informed the Board that Jacqui and Caroline Fox of Twin Group have agreed to investigate why the direct debit for their basic subscription fees continues to bounce. A new direct debit mandate was provided on 22 May but is yet to be tested. The Board agreed it was unacceptable to continue to accept subscription fees by cheque and suggested allowing one more attempt to collect their fees by direct debit. If this fails TM agreed he would visit them. The Board proposed implementing a supplementary charge should the situation continue.

### Other membership issues and updates

The Board noted the updates and TM confirmed there were no additional issues to report.

### Accreditation Consultancy Service

The Board noted the twelve current subscribers to the service.

### Corporate members

The Board welcomed the news of the application received from Topdeck Travel. The Board noted the termination of membership of two corporate members who had failed to pay their 2013 membership fee, Study First Group and TADS Media Ltd/e-test me. TM informed the Board that take-up of exhibition stands at StudyWorld 2013 from corporate members had been slower than in 2012 with 4 stands still available. [Post-meeting note: 41 of the 42 stands are now booked.]

TM noted his meeting with Mark Anderson of Anderson Tours, who may be interested in joining as a corporate member.

## **7. Membership of the Board and other bodies (paper B44/3)**

TM spoke to the paper.

### The Board

The Board formally ratified the re-appointment of Sue Edwards as chair and Sarah Cooper as vice-chair of English UK for the 2013-14 year

### Committees

TM informed the Board that the Nominations Committee had met on Tuesday 11 June 2013 and had discussed appointments to the subsidiary boards and committees.

The Board agreed Paul Murray of Foyle International Language School, Mick Davies of Anglia Ruskin University and Janette Donjon of The Sheffield College should be approached with a view to joining the Enterprises Board.

Edward Bressan of Oxford Brookes University should be approached with a view to joining the Accreditation & Professional Services Board.

John McGowan of North West School of English and David Walker of Ardmore Language Schools should be approached with a view to joining the Finance Panel.

### Nominations Committee

The Board agreed there should be no change to the membership of the nominations committee.

### Finance Panel

The Board agreed there should be no change to the membership of the finance panel however it was noted that in 2-3 years time the number of qualified accountants on the panel is likely to diminish as a number of members are approaching retirement. GW agreed to approach Bell's new finance director, Joanne Moore.

### External representation

The Board agreed that the association's current representation on the various external boards and committees should continue for 2013-14.

## **8. Risk Register – revision (paper B44/4)**

TM spoke to the paper and explained that the main identifiable risks facing the association should be reviewed at least annually to examine where and how these could be avoided, mitigated or insured against.

RD questioned how steps to mitigate the risks identified in the register were executed. TM advised that all risks are 'owned' by someone on the team who ensures the agreed action is effective and current.

SW questioned whether the potential for significant loss of revenue amongst member centres and reduced numbers attending StudyWorld needed to feature on the register. TM commented that the potential risk of loss of revenue amongst centres was mitigated by the subscription banding system for supplementary subscriptions which allows for orderly retrenchment.

TM agreed to add loss of revenue amongst member centres and reduced numbers attending StudyWorld to the risk register. The Board subsequently approved the revised version of the register subject to the addition of the amendment discussed.

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

### **9. Annual Conference 2013 (paper B44/5)**

TM spoke to the paper written by membership manager Alice Marcolin, which presented an overview of delegate feedback from the 2013 Annual Conference. Overall feedback scored good to very good with the venue and programme also scoring good to very good. The conference attracted 120 delegates with 99 attending the AGM (compared to 130 and 110 in 2012).

The Board noted the drop in delegates and GW proposed reducing the conference to a one-day event, with an earlier start and later finish time. TM said that a contract, for a two-day event at the Hotel Russell in 2014, had already been signed. GW suggested negotiating with the venue to see whether an agreement could be reached and HJ agreed to follow up on this matter.

In terms of planning for 2014 the Board suggested the number of more commercially driven elective sessions should be more closely monitored in terms of assessing the content of the session pre event. CH suggested rescreening speakers.

TM noted that 2014 will be the tenth anniversary of the formation of English UK.

### **10. Public Affairs update (paper B44/7)**

TM spoke to the paper which provided an update on recent lobbying activity.

A copy of TM's letter dated 23 May 2013 sent to Mark Harper MP was attached with the paper. The letter provided a summary of the three concerns voiced in a meeting with Harper and a group of 8 members from Cambridge held on 16 May 2013. The three concerns raised were the temporary nature of the ESVV, restrictions to studying on a visitor visa, and ISI and Accreditation UK. The meeting was reported to be positive in tone with Harper appearing to be open and receptive to the points made.

A report from English UK's public affairs adviser MHP was also included with the paper and detailed a summary of the two recent debates on 6 June 2013 relating to international students, one in the House of Lords and one in the House of Commons. It was noted that the debates saw highly supportive contributions by MPs and peers with whom English UK has good relations but in replying to the Commons debate Mark Harper have used the standard lines to defend the Government, though there was an acknowledgement of the lack of reliable exit data. TM noted that the data ONS are due to present in August could potentially change the debate.

The Board noted the content of the report and letter.

TM reported ExEd UK and Universities UK intend to look very carefully (and quickly) at the statistics produced by ONS in August with a view to proposing again that students are taken out of the net migration figure. TM proposed organising a private meeting in mid October with the Home Secretary and Immigration Minister to press the case for the final time in this Parliament, privately rather than submitting an PQs or an EDM.

In reference to Home Office Research Report 71 on Student Visitors, TM noted that the reported helpfully concluded 'The evidence suggests the student visitor route is being used as

intended and abuse is minimal'. TM plans to highlight this in a short standard letter which all members can adapt and send on to their MPs.

On the subject of studying on visitor visas, as discussed in the meeting with Mark Harper, TM reported on two foreseeable ways forward. One would allow some study and find ways to circumscribe this – such as offering this route to accredited providers only or limiting the total number of days of study in six months. Another would be to get rid of the SVV and only have the ESVV but allow visitors to do as they please on a VV, which is what many other countries do. This second option may risk allowing the unaccredited sector back into the game and TM questioned how the Home Office would police this.

TM reported that Rebecca Bradford, Head of the Home Office's Student Migration Policy Team, has been charged with coming up with an options paper on these two approaches. The paper is expected to be completed before the end of the summer with a view to changes to the IRs in autumn.

GW asked whether lobbying plans post General Election in 2015 had been considered and TM advised that he would expect Labour, if elected, would not set a net migration target, and the Lib Dems have said privately that they would not again if in coalition agree to a net migration target, so the only way that a similar policy would be likely is in the event of an outright Conservative victory – but since that would mean that David Cameron would continue as Prime Minister, and he is known to disagree with the target, the chances are it would not happen even then. A Tory-UKIP coalition is felt still to be on the wilder fringes of probability.

SC noted that until the debate moves on to 'settlement' and away from 'entry' English UK has few options.

RD asked if TM had arranged a meeting with Chuka Umunna MP, Shadow Business Secretary. TM said Umunna has declined a meeting saying he is too busy.

SW commented that the big issue was getting hold of real figures to demonstrate the economic impact of the sector including figures for loss of revenue and taxes. TM noted that the economic argument has traction with BIS but the Home Office refuses to acknowledge it.

TM noted that the new BIS unit, Education UK, is focusing on delivery outside the UK.

## **11. Strategy 2013-15 (paper B44/8)**

TM spoke to the paper which proposed the October meeting of the board should consider a wide-ranging review of the strategic context up to and following the 2015 General Election in order to guide the staff team and focus activities appropriately.

RD questioned whether the timing was appropriate in the context of succession planning. TM commented that the strategy would be a horizon scanning paper providing the context for a more comprehensive and detailed strategy.

## **12. Succession planning (paper B44/8)**

SC spoke to the paper. Discussion took place in two parts – one part involved all those in the meeting, including English UK personnel TM, AW and HJ. The other part was confidential and was a discussion among Board members only.

The succession planning sub-group updated the Board on the timeline for recruitment including the planned advertisement period, deadline for applicants and proposed interview dates. SC noted prospective applicants would have roughly 3.5 weeks from the date the advert is published to the deadline for applications.

GW agreed to join the succession planning sub-group resulting in the group having four members, GW, SC, RD and SE. [Subsequently GW has advised he is leaving Bell and standing down from the Board; the Chair and Vice-Chair have asked Simon Cleaver to join the group.]

The Board agreed the final shortlisted applicants from the first round of interviews should present to the whole Board.

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

#### **13. Enterprises Board 11 June 2013**

SP gave an oral report of the meeting which took place on Tuesday 11 June. AW reported on the success of the Libya mission.

#### **14. Accreditation & Professional Services Board 13 June 2013**

AH gave an oral report of the meeting which took place on the morning of 13 June. It was reported that English UK had trained 450 individual staff at language centre members during the 2012-13 academic calendar, representing 150 more than in 2012.

#### **15. Accreditation UK Executive Board 6 May 2013**

The Board noted the minutes of the Accreditation UK Executive Board Meeting on 6 May.

### ***Other business***

#### **16. Any other urgent business**

TM informed the Board that he had been asked to chair a BIS working group overseeing the ELT part of the forthcoming international education strategy, following his participation in the BIS organised mission to Colombia and Mexico in April.

#### **17. Date of next meeting**

17 October 2013. This will be an all-day meeting at Regent's University London, with the final interviews in the morning and a Board meeting in the afternoon. Please note the change of date from 10 October.