

Minutes of the 47th Meeting of the English UK Board

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

Date: Tuesday 18 February 2014 from 13:30 (sandwiches from 13:00)

Present: Sue Edwards (Chair) Sarah Cooper (Vice-chair), Richard Day, Caroline Hugo, Steve Phillips, Shane Wilkinson, Daphne Laing, Kevin McNally, Jane Dancaaster, John Barnett and Simon Cleaver (SCI in minutes)

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

Constitutional business

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Andrew Hjort

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 3 December 2013

The minutes of the meeting on 3 December 2013 were agreed as an accurate record. Some additional points were raised:

- SC noted that there will be an 'FE showcase' elective session at the AGM in order to provide further impetus for an FE special interest group. It would also help to allow time for an FE group feasibility meeting at the AGM.
- TM commented that the meeting with Mike Payne of PWC to talk about the VAT issue would be brought forward from 25th March.

4. Matters arising and updates (paper B47/1)

The board noted the one point here (on payments).

5. Membership of the association (paper B47/2)

SC expressed some surprise about City and Islington College's termination of membership and the reason given (that they have ceased to do much international work).

6. Board elections 2014 (paper B47/3 and NomCom oral report)

The board was happy for NomCom to review the nominations on 10th April as scheduled. SE confirmed she will stand down as chair of the board at the AGM. SC wishes to stand as chair.

Matters for discussion and decision

7. 2014 Annual Conference Programme (paper B47/4)

SE and SP both welcomed the programme. The 10th anniversary venue (Oxford and Cambridge club) was confirmed; RD asked whether there would be invited guests as he would like to invite an honorary member. TM confirmed that the policy was to allow members to book first, and that there was no need to have invited guests or an after-dinner speaker; we could however invite the honorary member for half-price.

Update 27/3/14: all honorary members have now been invited to the dinner and offered a 20% discount

JB asked about the regional groups' breakfast meeting. The consensus was that day two should start later than usual (at 10:00) in order to allow sufficient time for the meeting first.

SE asked about room allocations at the Hotel Russell, as she felt more would be needed than last year. **Update (27/3/14):** 20 rooms are on hold @£159 per night.

8. Mobile IT policy (paper B47/5)

TM spoke to the paper, outlining the four options. JD commented that the decision to give a member of staff a laptop or tablet was not about privileging him or her, but based on their role/the amount of time they spent out of the office. AW commented that the iPads bought for the international team had helped with commitment and productivity. EB felt the benefits outweighed the costs. Option 3 – providing laptops etc for those staff spending substantial time out of the office – was endorsed. SC advised caution – i.e. increase IT provision gradually; JD suggested refurbished iPads/laptops as a cost-effective option. It was agreed that EB would find out who needed what and set priorities.

9. Application of 2013 surplus (paper B47/6)

Tm spoke to the paper, outlining the recommendations for allocating the surplus. SC commented that although the figure for the SESF (£140,000) was high, in inflationary terms it was merely equivalent to the figure agreed 10 years' ago. JD added that although the surplus for 2013 is relatively high at £150,000, this is not a concern for members to judge by the ballot returns agreeing an increase to the annual subscription.

SW asked if we should aim to pay down the mortgage relatively quickly. SC agreed that this would provide both a substantial asset and a reduction in rental costs. TM suggested putting £50,000 into a property renewal fund.

The board agreed the recommendations.

Matters for information and report

10. Pay review and policy (paper B47/7)

TM spoke to the paper. The survey findings suggest a need for adjustment of up to 20% (but generally less) in order to match the pay scales of a comparable organisation within the mid-range for salaries.

AW commented that the proposal to increase the pay budget over the next three years was too long a time-frame and could lead to a lowering of morale. TM agreed that the recommendations would be implemented in the next payroll run, with further adjustments made over the next two years. SW, CH and RD emphasised the need to take action as soon as possible, and the importance of not being seen to underpay staff. There was also concern (RD, JD) that there should be a senior marketing role as replacement for Jodie, and that EB should be part of the decision process on this.

The board agreed with the proposal, with a review later in the year (SE) and clear communication of when further adjustments would be made (AW, JD, HJ).

11. Induction programme for incoming CEO (paper B47/8)

EB welcomed the comprehensive induction programme, allowing him to see the full picture. SE pointed out that NAFSA San Diego (end May) would clash with the proposed Libya mission; it was agreed that the Libya mission should take priority.

12. Enterprises Board (minutes of meeting 6/2/14)

SP asked whether there was a potential gold or platinum sponsor for StudyWorld. AW pointed to likely sponsorship from IELTS for their 'Road to IELTS' product. JB asked that the cap at boutique fairs should be 35 members maximum. RD asked about the possibility of a fifth fair in future years; EB agreed there could be more if there is demand. KMcN suggested repeating fair venues as ALFE and ICEF do. JD stressed the unique value of the fairs in building relationships.

13. Public Affairs (no paper)

TM spoke about the ELT Working Group. So far the group has met four times to discuss six projects, as well as two visits by BIS (David Willets) to Kazakhstan, Colombia and Mexico, all offering significant opportunities for members.

For Kazakhstan, there is an identified need to train IT/HR/marketing/finance staff for Kazinha and subsidiary companies, including those preparing for ACCA qualifications. In addition, there is considerable potential for ELT training in the Kazakh civil service, with 30,000 staff per year being offered different kinds of training.

Initiatives in Colombia include:

- the 80 Antioquia education parks, offering blended learning ELT delivery among other types of vocational training
- the Los Andes University CETT. With a 'train the trainers' programme already in pilot with Reading University and IH London

- the need for the Colombia Civil Aviation Agency to upskill c.500 controllers, including a strong focus on ELT

In Mexico, we will pilot the international associate member scheme with Anglo-Lang (Anglo) and present on this issue at the Latin American Schools of English conference.

JD asked about opportunities for members to work overseas; TM emphasised that opportunities would be shared out as widely as possible; the strategy focuses largely on opportunities outside the UK, although there would be some UK-based (or online) business as well. SC will chair a strategy group (JD/DL/KMcN/TM/EB) to look at how English UK members can take best advantage of the initiatives arising from the English Language Working Group.

14. Nominations Committee (oral report on AM meeting, 18/2/14)

Discussion had centred on board composition – do all the bases (FE/HE/private/UK regions) need to be covered? Nicole de Lalouviere suggested independent external members selected for their specific expertise; this move would require a change to English UK's articles of association. A matrix of the skills and experience the main board would need could be drawn up, with self-assessment by existing board members in order to reveal the key skills/skill-gaps. RD suggested that board members with the requisite skills would be able to be recruited from within English UK's membership. SC suggested consulting an HR professional to find out what is missing.

Other business

15. Date and venue of next meeting

10/4/14 meeting (13:00 start) was agreed.

16. Any other urgent business

CH mentioned the new SELT inspections as being more onerous than in the past. JD felt that this was a good thing in the wake of the ETS-TOEFL scandal.

TM reported that the Home Office is likely to streamline the visitor visa route by removing the separate SVV; the ESVV would then become a separate student visa route. The new Immigration Rules will appear in April.