Rudolf Steiner School South Devon School Council
Minutes of the Meeting - Monday 1 December 2014

Present: Marcus Link (Chair), Christopher Cooper, Juliet Crittenden, Ian Powell, Mark Drewell (trustee in abeyance) and Edwina Ratcliffe

In attendance: Jonathan Liddle (Vision Group Chair), Simon Berkley (Vision Group representative), Kevin Jones (Estates Manager) and Tatiana Cant (Secretary)

Apologies:

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<th>Declarations of any conflict of interest in the matters to be discussed</th>
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<th>Declarations of any benefits to any trustees arising from any of the matters to be discussed</th>
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1. Chair's Opening Remarks
1.1 The Chair welcomed Kevin Jones to the meeting.

2. Estates Manager, Introduction
2.1 Kevin Jones explained that he had recently joined the school and taken on this role which was a new function within the school. Council members provided clarity on the function of the Council body and its relationship with the key activities within the organisation. Kevin was thanked for his clear and informative report.

2.2 The current priority was the Gateway Project and the new boiler was due to be commissioned in December. There had been some difficulties such as the relationship with Treco and failure of South Devon College to be entirely reliable and these areas would need to be more closely managed in the future. Dave Chapman had now withdrawn from the project and no handover had yet occurred although a handover meeting had been scheduled. The need for robust documentation and reporting was underlined in terms of providing good continuity.

2.3 A discussion regarding the effectiveness of the Management Group highlighted concerns about the levels of expertise and skills although it was clear that everyone was committed and doing their best. Communication across the school also needed to be improved.

3. Minutes of last meeting
3.1 Minor amendments were made to the draft minutes of the last meeting and these were then agreed as a true record, and would be submitted for publication on the website.
### Matters Arising from last minutes

#### Questions for Vision Group.

a. Gateway Project finances. The Vision Group Chair explained that detailed information was not available but would be sought from the project team.

b. IT. KJ reported that a proposal had been submitted to Management Group by Kamal Sayany with a suggested plan to manage and resource the IT function. However it was felt that consideration needed to be given to whether the proposal reflected the school’s needs. KJ described an alternative plan to instead obtain competitive costings from external sources.

The Chair stressed the need to assess the IT needs of the organisation and move forward in a constructive way to address the frequent complaints received about IT across the school. Council recognised the importance of Finance and IT to the organisation and was prepared to support a realistic plan to take this forward.

KJ stated that his job description implied that IT came within his remit. and that it would make entire sense that it did as it was usual in other organisations for IT to come under the remit of the Premises and Facilities or Estates Manager. KJ would therefore be content if this happened within this organisation. Council and the Vision Group Chair confirmed that this made sense and unanimously agreed.

c. Finance Project Plan. A paper had been submitted by the Finance Bursar (SC/14/051). It was agreed that the plan was clear and well prepared and should be supported with the understanding that a report would be received every month to ensure that progress was being made.

The review of the finance systems would be ongoing. It was noted that a mechanism for review of the new key posts was required. The need to recruit a Business Development Manager was discussed. Constraints included the need to first establish the newly created key posts and lack of funds.

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#### Action List

This was reviewed and updated.

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## Report from Management Group

This was noted.
6. **Management Review**

6.1 The Chair suggested that a radical approach was needed to managing the school as the current structure was not effective. The Chair of Vision Group reported that Steering Group was currently under review and that he would be standing down from his position next Easter.

6.2 It was recognised that the prime reason for making a decision must be with ensuring that the aim of benefiting the students is foremost. The spiritual element of the school should be renewed through the education. The experiment of restructuring has been worthwhile so far but has not been wholly successful. The need was identified for effective processes and efficient structures in an integrated approach. This may involve individuals from different groups meeting to work on specific projects. While the teachers are generally working in a proactive way, this is not always the case on the administrative side and there was a need for greater self motivation. It was also noted that much useful work had taken place and it was important not to redesign the wheel unnecessarily.

6.3 MD offered to meet with key people over the Christmas period to develop some ideas in preparation for the scheduled 5th January 2015 workshop involving Council, Management Group, Vision Group and Steering Group with a view to align the annual management and reporting cycle.

7. **Trustees review**

7.1 ER’s presentation deferred to next meeting.

8. **Council review**

8.1 The Secretary updated members on the progress made in collating governance documentation. Most key documents were now in place but some were still outstanding.

9. **Forward Calendar**

9.1 This was noted.

10. **Dates of forthcoming meetings**

10.1 These will be:

- Monday 12 January 2015 (apologies: IP)
- Monday 2 February (apologies: IP)
- Monday 2 March
- Monday 13 April