

Minutes of the Special 66th meeting of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland. Wednesday 30 January 2019, Albany House, Belfast

Present: David Canning (Chair), Raymond Beggs, Clive Bowles, Joanne Burns, David Cargo, Malachy Crudden, Gillian Dunlop, Grainne McAleer, Carmel McCartan, Brendan Morgan, Maria Mullally, Catriona Mullan, Rosemary Rainey, Cliodhna Scott-Wills, Gordon White

In attendance: Sam Gallaher (CEO), Gerry Devlin (SEO), Ned Cohen (EO), Lesley Dickson (PA).

Apologies: Delma Boggs, Paul Boyle, Monica Culbert, Paul Fitzpatrick, Sheila Fleming, Martin Hagan, Eamonn McDowell, Brian McGrath, Paul O'Doherty, Susan Parlour, Mary Lou Winchborne

	<u>Action</u>
<p>1. Welcome, introductions and apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and recorded apologies. He advised that Delma Boggs had been ill and on behalf of Council forwarded to her best wishes for a recovery. Mr Canning welcomed Raymond Beggs back to Council after a period of illness. He thanked members of the PRRC for staying on for the extra meeting.</p> <p>2. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>3. GTCNI Conduct Rules January 2019 GTC/19/66/01</p> <p>The Chair advised members that the purpose of the special meeting was to focus on one item only, that of Regulation. That the PRRC had met prior to the Council and was recommending that Council adopt the proposed Conduct Rules and progress to full professional regulation. A copy of the draft minute of the meeting had been circulated.</p> <p>The Chair stressed that the Council meeting was not to be considered as a mere "rubber stamping" exercise and adoption of the proposed Conduct Rules for professional regulation should only happen if Council were content with the proposed way forward.</p> <p>BM said that he was concerned about the arrangement of the two meetings on one day and the misperception this might give in terms of governance. He was concerned that whilst members of PRRC had the opportunity to consider the matter fully, that Council colleagues may feel pressurised due to the proximity of the meetings.</p> <p>RB stated that he concurred with BM's view and had concern over the perception that Council had been called to rubber-stamp the proposed</p>	

<p>documents. He said that teachers through Unions had voted to have GTC removed because of poor governance and that he did not wish for a reversal of the good work already achieved.</p> <p>GW stressed that it was not a unanimous decision by teaching unions to remove GTCNI and that many in the profession did not share the view expressed and that ATL had not supported this vote. GD added that UTU had also not supported the vote.</p> <p>The Chair advised that there had been no breach of Standing Orders and that the special meetings had been discussed at the last Council meeting and some members had suggested holding both on the same day. He reminded members that the proposal received from DE – which Council was asked to ratify – reflected that put to DE by Council earlier in 2018. Had the proposal from DE contained any material change then in all likelihood things would have been addressed differently. The Chair stated that he was happy for the meeting to proceed if members concurred.</p> <p>RB requested an adjournment of the meeting. He stressed that he was not on Council to represent teaching unions, rather the teachers who elected him and would urge Council not to engage in any activity that may be perceived as poor governance.</p> <p>The CEO advised that after the last Council meeting officers had responded to the Department suggesting some minor (though important) amendments. These had been accepted and the proposed Conduct Rules for regulation had been circulated to members for consideration. Some members had requested both meetings be arranged on the same day. He stressed there is no intention for this to be a “rubber stamp” exercise and there were valid reasons for the meetings to be held as scheduled.</p> <p>The Chair said it was an efficient use of time. If the Committee had had a problem then this should have been aired. He stressed the meeting was an important opportunity for the Council to progress to full professional regulation and would hope that teaching members would understand that the Council is acting with professionalism and that the documents under consideration should afford confidence in the Council.</p> <p>BM reassured the Council that the PRRC meeting had been very productive and hoped that it would be taken on principle for meetings not to be arranged in close proximity.</p> <p>DCargo advised that this was a learning process and there is no inference that the Chair or CEO have acted inappropriately. He proposed that the members concerns be noted and suggested the CEO reviews the Standing Orders to determine if the inclusion of a minimum time period between Committee and Council meetings is required.</p> <p>Members were content to proceed.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p>
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<p>Proposed: DC Seconded: RR.</p>	<p><u>Action</u> CEO</p>
<p>The Chair handed over to GW to give details of the PRRC meeting.</p>	
<p>GW said that the Rules had been returned to DE with suggested minor amendments that had been accepted. He recommended that the Council adopt the rules and proceed to full regulation. He said that the Conduct rules and Guidance had been discussed at PRRC and members were content.</p>	
<p>The SEO said that if the Council ratifies this, it becomes a legal document.</p>	
<p>CB asked for the changes to be highlighted.</p>	
<p>The CEO advised what the changes were and said that they were minor.</p>	
<p>The Chair discussed ILEX and the E O'Loan provided assurances from that the proposed way forward would deliver compliance in this regard. The Chair informed members that this is a living document, that GTCS review their document annually and that post Brexit there may be need for some further amendment.</p>	
<p>The SEO added that this was important in order to provide reassurance to the teaching profession. He said stressed that Council were not being asked to introduce anything new as DE had undertaken a regulatory role prior to the Council being established and through GTCNI this power was now being transferred to the teaching profession itself.</p>	
<p>BM informed members that the EO had mentioned at PRRC that he envisaged 5 people picked from Council (though not from PRRC) would sit out the proposed Council Sub-Cttee. It would not be appropriate for PRRC members to be on such sub-committee. It was further indicated that all members of Council (other than PRRC) would be expected to participate in such sub-committee dealing with final regulation decisions.</p>	
<p>The SEO advised that he in due course he will bring further advisory documentation to Council for information.</p>	
<p>The CEO said that discussion was ongoing with DSO to determine what legal advice is now required and how this will be provided. He also stressed that this will be an additional annual cost pressure to be accommodated going forwards.</p>	<p>SEO</p>
<p>E O'Loan summarised the different roles of the independent panel members and Council members stressing the importance of independence and of avoiding perceived conflict of interest, adding that only Council has the role to remove teachers. PRRC would have</p>	

<p>oversight of the process so members of this committee should not sit on any Council sub-committee dealing with regulation decisions.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p>
<p>The EO stated that a paper will subsequently be brought to PRRC regarding the Terms of Reference of the Council sub-committee and that training will be provided to all Council members in due course. He said that present estimates are for 2-3 conduct panel hearings per year.</p>	
<p>CB asked about the independent members and training. EO stated that all current independent panel members had been contacted and two had stood down. Refresher training for panel members will take place April/May.</p>	<p>SEO</p>
<p>DCargo welcomed this important step and commended the work of staff and the Committee. He proposed that Council adopt the recommendation of the PRRC to accept the Rules and Guidance and progress to full regulation.</p>	<p>SEO</p>
<p>BM highlighted that the Guidance is a working document.</p>	
<p>DCargo said he would propose the Conduct Rules.</p>	
<p>Members discussed and accepted. The Chair asked for a show of hands. This was unanimous.</p>	
<p>Proposed: DC Seconded: RR</p>	
<p>4. Guidance on role of Council</p>	<p>GTC/19/66/02</p>
<p>The Chair advised members that, as discussed at the PRRC meeting earlier Terms of Reference would be drawn up for the Sub-Committee.</p>	
<p>The EO stressed that the guidance document was to help members understand their role. He said that details of Indicative Sanctions would be brought to the PRRC for information and directed members to Page 13 of the guidance which outlined the role of Council and said that training and support would be available to Council members.</p>	
<p>BM requested an outline of the ILEX case be provided to Council members for information.</p>	
<p>Members discussed how these cases would be reported on the GTCNI website.</p>	<p>SEO</p>
<p>5. Action Plan</p>	<p>GTC/19/66/03</p>
<p>SEO emphasised that all guidance documentation will now be updated, training scheduled, legal services requirements finalised and a communications programme progressed. It will be emphasised that the Council is not a complaints body and that staff will meet with</p>	<p>SEO</p>

<p>stakeholders to advise them of the regulation process.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p>
<p>6. Communications</p> <p>The CEO advised that a communications plan was being developed and three key priorities had emerged for the coming months. These were; Regulation, the election and more general awareness of GTCNI and its purpose and role. The plan will be circulated for information in due course. Staff would be taking steps to meet/communicate with all key stakeholders including principals and employing authorities.</p> <p><i>CSW left the meeting at 3.10.</i></p>	<p>SEO</p>
<p>7. Risk Sharing</p> <p>The CEO advised members again that at a meeting that the Department had indicated that they were prepared to share risk. He said that a meeting had be scheduled for Tuesday 5 February with the aim of obtaining greater clarification.</p> <p>DCargo asked that the result be put in writing.</p>	<p>SEO/CEO</p>
<p>8. AOB</p> <p>RB said there was a need to publish forthcoming meetings on the website. The CEO thought this was being done and will follow up.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>9. Date of next meeting</p> <p>A meeting of Council will take place on 21st March 2019 venue TBC.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>Signed.....<i>D. Carrington</i>..... Dated<i>21/3/19</i>.....</p>	<p>CEO</p>