

**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE
GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24TH MARCH 2004, AT
GLENAVON HOTEL, COOKSTOWN**

Present:

Mr John Colgan	Mr Ray McGuigan
Mrs Jeannette Chapman (Vice-Chair)	Dr Marie Murphy
Mr Richard Egan	Mr David Oldfield
Mr Eddie Ferguson	Mr Alistair Orr
Ms Maria Graham	Mrs Thea Patton
Ms Teresa Graham	Rev Dr Derek Poots
Mr Patrick Kinney	Dr Robert Rodgers (Chair)
Mr Tony Lappin	Mr Peter Scott
Mr Alan Longman	Mr Gordon Topping
Mr Paddy McAllister	Very Reverend John Walsh
Mr Dominic McElholm	

In Attendance:

- Mr Eddie McArdle (Registrar)
- Ms Myra Pearson (GTC Scotland)
- Mr Barney Ball (Policy & Registration Manager)
- Ms Geraldine Garnett-Frizelle (Minute Secretary)
- Ms Debbie Law (Minute Secretary)

Apologies:

- Mr Ivan Arbuthnot
- Ms Monica Cummings
- Mrs Mary Devine
- Mrs Frances Donnelly
- Professor John Gardener
- Dr Desmond Hamilton
- Mrs Sally McKee
- Mr Ian McInnes
- Mrs La'Verne Montgomery
- Ms Aedín Ní Ghadhra
- Mr Philip Sheerin
- Mrs Grace Trimble

Apologies were noted.

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomed Members to the seventh meeting of Council and introduced Ms Myra Pearson, Deputy Registrar of the General Teaching Council for Scotland and welcomed her to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the Council Meeting 16th December 2003 (GTC/03/Min6)

The minutes were approved by Council with the Chair asking for an amendment to be made to Myra Pearson's name which was wrongly recorded.

3. Matters Arising

10 Code of Professional Values and Practice (GTC5/03/P3)

The Registrar informed Members the rate of response had been impacted negatively by industrial action at the time of the dissemination of the Code. He commented that the responses received had been, on the whole, positive and a full analysis of the exercise would be reported to Policy Committee and a report produced for the next meeting of Council.

5.2 NEEC Conference

The Chair took this opportunity to congratulate both Eddie Ferguson and Gordon Topping on their part in the organisation and success of the NEEC Conference held at the Waterfront Hall in January 2004.

13.1 Risk Management Training

The Chair informed Members that the issue of Risk Management Training for Members was being addressed by a training session directly following the Council meeting.

4. Chairman's Business

4.1 The Chair updated Members that meetings had taken place with Political Representatives from the DUP and Alliance Party and that a meeting had been scheduled for April to meet with the Education Spokesperson from the SDLP.

4.2 The Chair also informed Members that the initial meeting of both the Teacher Competences and Continuing Professional Development Working Groups had taken place and an update would be given by the Registrar under Officers' Business.

4.3 It was noted that the Department of Employment and Learning in partnership with the Department of Education would be holding a Teacher Education Conference on May 6th - 7th 2004 in Belfast. This Conference would parallel the Conference held at Limavady in 2003.

5. Officers' Business

5.1 The Registrar updated Members on the progress of the Working Groups which met for the first time in March 2004. He informed them that the initial meetings had been a success in the sense that the structure had been formed for further meetings. He emphasised that the Working Groups were only advisory in nature and that the final report to the Department would come from the Council. A list of the Members of the Working Groups was handed out

to Council Members. Members asked about the selection process of the Practitioners on each group and who had initially put their names forward; the Registrar assured Members that the group selected represented all relevant sectors and that their names had been suggested by each of the Education & Library Boards.

6. Business Plan (GTC7/04/P1)

The Registrar introduced this paper and informed Members that it had been drawn down from the Corporate Plan core goals. These were now expressed in the context of a Business Plan for the period 2004 – 2005 and more detail had been added to them, such as the personnel responsible for the implementation of individual targets and implementation dates. He also explained to Members that some responsibilities currently allocated to staff may change as more staff are recruited. The Registrar highlighted some key issues for Members over the coming year and the associated risk with these activities, in particular the setting up of the registration database and the reviews of CPD and Teacher Competences currently being undertaken by the Working Groups. He also informed Members that the Council was currently sponsoring a project being undertaken at Queen's University over the next year, in which an electronic repository of all educational research carried out in Northern Ireland will be created. Work will also be completed on the Code of Professional Values and Practice, referred to in (3) above and the Council's solicitors were currently looking at the Council's regulatory function and how that can be best expressed.

The Chair welcomed the paper as anticipation of the work to be carried out by the Officers and staff over the coming year and suggested that it may be used as an accountability index and progress be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

7. Registration Update (GTC7/04/P2)

The Policy and Registration Manager updated Members on progress with the Registration Database to date. He explained the project task areas and outlined the difficulties faced regarding the data conversion from Teachers' Pay and Pensions Branch. The Chair of the Registration Committee informed Members that he had written to the Department expressing the Committee's concern regarding the arrangements to make allowance payments to teachers and the data transfer process. There were some concerns raised about the "Deduction at Source" process.

Points were made by Members concerning the Data Protection Act and payment of the registration fee. The consensus amongst the Council Members was that a representative from the Department of Education should be in attendance to clarify such matters. A proposal was made by Mrs Teresa Graham and seconded by Mr Paddy McAllister, for the Chair to contact the Department regarding clarification on these matters and asking that someone from the Department attend Council as a matter of urgency.

8. Management of Staff Development (GTC7/04/P3)

This paper was presented by the Registrar who ran through the key points made in the paper. He reminded Members that part of the GTCNI's remit was a responsibility to advise on the training, career development and performance management of teachers and reaffirmed the guiding principles in this preliminary paper.

The Council welcomed the paper as a basis for future discussions and congratulated the Registrar on the paper. The Chair then asked for the paper to be issued for consultation with, Unions, the Department of Education and other Stakeholders in Education.

9. End of Year Review (GTC7/04/P4)

The Policy and Registration Manager took Members through a presentation highlighting all of the accomplishments and actions of the GTCNI over the past year. The Council Members acknowledged all of the efforts and asked that the highlights be included in the next GTCNI Newsletter to be published.

10. Committee Minutes

10.1 General Purposes and Finance Committee (GP&FC/04/Min8)

5. Accommodation Proposal

Mr Eddie Ferguson, Chair of Committee, informed Members of the decision made at Committee, after consultation with the Department of Education, to extend the lease on the current premises at Albany House and to lease further space in the same building rather than purchase new premises. The decision was ratified by Council.

6. Staffing Review and Ratification

Mr Ferguson made Members aware of new staff who were now in post, explicitly the Registration team and the current recruitment drive underway for two new posts; that of the Senior Education Officer and a Finance and Administration Officer.

8. Any other Business - Registrar's Salary - PRP Scheme

The Chair of Committee notified Members that the Registrar's salary increase for 2003/2004 had been approved by the Department of Education.

As this increase is part of the Registrar's Conditions of Service, the increase for 2004/2005 would still have to be decided and this would be carried out by a Remuneration Committee

Mr McAllister asked that it be minuted that attendance at this meeting had been poor because it was an additional meeting called at relatively short notice to deal with specific issues.

10.2 General Purposes and Finance Committee (GP&FC/04/Min9)

2. Matters Arising

The Chair of the GP&F Committee informed Members of the formation of a Remuneration Committee established to review the Registrar's PRP Scheme. The Committee would consist of the Chairs from each of the Committees and would be chaired by the Chair of Council; Mr Patrick Kinney was also invited to sit on the Remuneration Committee.

10.3 Policy Committee (PC/04/Min8) & (PC/04/Min9)

The Chair of the Policy Committee thanked Mr John Colgan for taking the position of Chair in the absence of both herself and the Vice-Chair.

10.4 Registration Committee (RC/03/Min5)

The Chair of Registration pointed out to Council Members that the minutes had not been to Committee as yet; however everything seemed to be in order.

13. Presentation by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Mr Nigel Williams

The Chair thanked the Commissioner for Children and Young People for coming to the Council's meeting and agreeing to give a PowerPoint presentation to Members explaining his role and areas of responsibility.

Any Other Business

Concerns were expressed by Members regarding the amount of time available to them between the arrival of their Council papers and the meeting. Officers agreed to look again at the issue. It was also suggested that the timing of meetings was still not suitable for all and the Registrar informed Members that he would be looking at this issue again with a view to possibly holding afternoon meetings. The Registrar also agreed to write to the Minister on behalf of Council inviting him to attend the September meeting of full Council.

14. Venue, Date and Time for Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 16th June 2004 at 10:00 am and Members will be informed of the venue nearer the time.

Signed..... Date.....