

**MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE  
GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2003, AT  
GTCNI, ALBANY HOUSE, GT VICTORIA ST, BELFAST**

**Present:**

Mr Ivan Arbuthnot	Mr Paddy McAllister
Mr John Colgan	Mr Dominic McElholm
Ms Monica Cummings	Mr Ray McGuigan
Mr Eddie Ferguson	Mr David Oldfield
Professor John Gardener	Mr Alistair Orr
Ms Aedín Ní Ghadhra	Mrs Thea Patton
Mrs Teresa Graham	Rev Dr Derek Poots
Dr Desmond Hamilton	Mr Patrick Kinney
Mr Peter Scott	Mr Tony Lappin
Mr Philip Sheerin	Mr Alan Longman
Very Rev John Walsh	Dr Bob Rodgers (Chair)

**In Attendance:**

- Mr Eddie McArdle (Registrar)
- Mr Paddy Hanna, Teacher Support Northern Ireland
- Mrs Yvonne McCool
- Ms Geraldine Garnett-Frizelle (Minute Secretary)

## **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Having welcomed members to the third meeting of the GTCNI, the Chairman, in keeping with Standing Order "Order of Business" asked that the Council approve the taking of two additional items to be considered under Item 10 on the Agenda (Any Other Business). Members agreed.

The Chair then introduced Mrs McCool and Ms Garnett-Frizelle and asked members to make themselves known to Miss Debbie Law, the Council's new receptionist.

**Apologies:**

- Mrs Jeanette Chapman
- Mrs Mary Devine
- Mrs Frances Donnelly
- Mr Richard Egan
- Ms Maria Graham
- Mr Ian McInnes
- Dr Marie Murphy
- Mrs Sally McKee
- Mr Gordon Topping

Apologies were noted.

## **2. Minutes of the Council Meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> January 2003 (GTC/03/M2)**

The Minutes were approved subject to an amendment to Item 10 (Registration System: Procurement GTC2/03/P4) to reflect the input of Mr Oldfield which had not been appropriately recorded.

## **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising to be discussed.

## **4. Chairman's Business**

The Registrar informed members of the bereavement suffered by Ms M Graham and Mr Egan. Members expressed their sympathy and the Chairman asked the Registrar to convey the Council's condolences.

## **5. NI Teachers' Health & Wellbeing Survey 2001 (GTC3/03/P1)**

The Chair introduced Mr P Hanna, a former member of the Working Group Party responsible for the Report and now Northern Ireland Director of Teacher Support Northern Ireland.

Mr Hanna outlined the backdrop to the report and reflected on the findings, dwelling on particular aspects such as Health, Stress and Job Satisfaction.

Of particular interest to members was the issue of costings offered in respect of stress related illnesses and the issue of future developments in respect to the findings.

Mr Hanna informed members that the data in regard to costings was based on projections based on the year 1999 – 2000. With respect to the way forward, Mr Hanna indicated that a new group had been established to review the report and conduct an audit or mapping exercise of resources and strategies currently in place to address the issues thrown into relief by the report. He further reported that there was to be an implementation group comprising representatives of the Trade Unions and Employers. Mr McArdle drew attention to paragraph 11.1 of the Recommendations, in which the report calls for a partnership embracing GTCNI. Following discussion it was agreed that the Chairman would write to Mrs McClenaghan (the Chair of the Implementation Group) requesting that GTCNI be included in the membership of the Implementation Team.

Mr Hanna then left the meeting and the Registrar reviewed the report and outlined issues that he felt were of potential significance to GTCNI.

### Capacity to deal with stress

In regard to this, the Registrar drew members' attention to paragraph 6.14 which indicated that teachers felt less able to cope with stress than civil servants. He speculated that this may reflect a

feeling that teachers are less in control of their working culture than others. He noted that this issue would feature in paper **GTC3/03/P3**.

He also noted that the recommendation in paragraph 11.24 identified the need for a differentiated training programme in keeping with GTCNI thinking, as outlined in the CPD principles (**GTC3/03/P3**).

Finally, he drew attention to the table at paragraph 4.5 outlining the age profile of the profession. He noted that 44.6% of the Teaching Profession were aged 45 years or more. It was noted that this data, when taken in conjunction with the demographic trends identified in paper **GTC3/03/P4** would impact on the work of GTCNI in coming years.

## **6. GTCNI: Input to the Independent Inquiry on Teachers' Pay and Conditions (GTC3/03/P2)**

The Chairman introduced this issue and reminded members that the Council had mandated the Registrar to make a response to the Independent Inquiry, which he had duly done.

The Registrar reviewed the submission and noted that it had been submitted as an initial response to facilitate further reflection by the Council. In reviewing the paper, the Registrar drew particular attention to three issues:

- the need for an evidential base for policy and decision making;
- the need to reflect on the broader context of educational and societal change; and
- the need to develop a sense of professional community.

It was noted that the Council's Policy Committee had issued an invitation for the Inquiry Team to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Policy Committee. The Registrar informed members that this had proven impossible to schedule and an invitation had been issued for GTCNI to offer evidence to the Inquiry at a date to be arranged.

It was agreed that there should be an additional meeting of the Policy Committee to prepare for the meeting with the Inquiry Team. The Registrar agreed to schedule such a meeting.

## **7. Continued Professional Development – Guiding Principles (GTC3/03/P3)**

The Chairman asked the Registrar to speak to this paper. The Registrar, in his opening comments, drew attention to the amendments to the Guiding Principles and indicated that these would be the basis for substantive discussion.

In reviewing the “backdrop” paper the Registrar drew attention to the tension between the concept of professional practitioner and a technically skilled person. The paper also addressed those factors seen as having a negative impact on teacher development work.

Before addressing the issue of “Guiding Principles”, the Registrar outlined what he termed as the imperatives that should underpin the notion of Professional Development, namely: Enlightenment, Encouragement and Enfranchisement.

In reviewing the Guiding Principles members, whilst approving the concept and indeed most of the principles, did raise a number of issues. Amongst the issues raised were:

- the importance of resources;
- the issues emerging from life-work balance; and
- the issue of what might be seen as the previously disenfranchised in terms of access to CPD.

In addition to the above, members expressed concerns regarding the recognition of informal learning and the issue of accreditation. The Registrar undertook to amend, where appropriate, the principles.

Discussion ensued as to how best to expedite consultation and it was agreed that this process should be a “considered” process rather than rushed.

Members did, however, ask that officers initiate a limited consultation process in respect of the Guiding Principles.

## **8. Demographic Trends (GTC3/03/P4)**

The Registrar introduced this item and indicated that whilst it was primarily for information, members should be aware that the patterns revealed in the papers had a significance for GTCNI.

The Registrar noted that the general trends illustrated had been identified by NISRA in past publications based on data collected in 1998. The projections now being considered had been recalculated on the basis of the recent census.

It was noted that the potential impact of the fall in pupil numbers on issues such as Teacher Supply were, as yet, uncertain.

## **9. Scheme for Payment of Travel and Expenses for Council Members (GTC3/03/P5)**

The Registrar introduced this scheme and outlined for members the statutory basis for the scheme and the fact that the definitive scheme had to be approved by the Department of Education. It was noted that until such approval was forthcoming the GTCNI would continue to operate under the current Civil Service Schemes.

In the ensuing discussions several issues emerged as particularly significant:

- Substitution Costs for Teachers – it was noted that whilst the scheme proposed to pay these at actual, this was not in keeping with schemes in the rest of the UK. It was also noted that substitution for Trade Union Activity was paid at actual.
- Subsistence – the Registrar noted that given the difficulties faced by the Council in providing for lunch etc, the decision had been made to provide a subsistence “as of right” as set out in 5.2 of the scheme.
- Travel – the scheme proposed provided for a graduated approach reflecting engine size. It was noted that such a scheme did little to foster an environmentally friendly approach. It was agreed that the papers should be reviewed again by GP & F Committee.

The Registrar reminded members that in the absence of agreement, the scheme would not go to the Department for approval at this stage and that in the interim the existing arrangements would continue.

Proposal approved.

## **10. Reports from Council Committees:**

### **10.1 General Purposes & Finance Committee (GPFC/03/Min3 & GPFC/03/Min4)**

The Chair of GP&F Committee advised Council that there were two sets of minutes for approval. GPFC/03/Min3 had had a single item agenda to discuss Database Procurement, during which meeting members had discussed the SCAT process and XANSA.

GPFC/03/Min4 had also had a single item agenda to discuss travel, subsistence and other expense payments to members.

The minutes were agreed by Council.

### **10.2 Policy Committee (PC/03/Min2)**

The Chair of Policy Committee advised Council that Policy Committee had elected a Chair and Vice-Chair. In addition, they had discussed two papers presented by the Registrar, the first on CPD and the second a consultation document on the Special Education Needs and Disability Bill.

It was noted that the election to Chair of Mrs Chapman had been omitted from the Minutes. Mr McArdle undertook to rectify this omission.

Subject to this amendment, the minutes were agreed by Council.

### **10.3 Registration Committee (RC/03/Min2)**

The Chair of Registration Committee advised Council that the Registration Committee had discussed database procurement and that a sub-committee (to comprise members of GP&F and Registration Committees) is to be established to procure the “Managed Service”. The Registrar informed Council that he had asked for the agreement of the Chairs of the Registration Committee and the General Purposes and Finance Committee to attend these meetings and they had given their agreement.

The Chair of Registration Committee also informed Council that the date of the next meeting given under Item 5 in the Minutes had now been changed. The scheduled meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2003 had been postponed until June.

The minutes were agreed by Council.

## **11. Any Other Business**

As agreed at the start of the meeting, Members considered two further items of business.

### **11.1 Outline Business Plan**

The Registrar explained the rationale for setting out an outline plan, i.e. the need to establish immediate priorities and communicate these to Council Members. He reviewed the plan and indicated that it would form the basis of a substantive planning exercise developing a 3 year Corporate Plan.

Members noted the need for GTCNI to outreach to the profession and suggested that consideration be given to preparing “promotion” materials or a newsheet.

### **11.2 Registrar’s Business**

The Registrar drew attention to two aspects of his recent work, namely the meeting with the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer regarding the election to the vacant nursery slot on Council and the various meetings attended or scheduled with Teacher Unions.

## **12. Schedule of Meetings**

.The Registrar asked Members to note that that there was an error on the original list of dates of Council Meetings which had been circulated – the correct dates for the autumn meetings of Council were Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September and Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

## **13. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Date of next Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2003

**Signed..... Date.....**