

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE
GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
HELD ON THURSDAY, 25th SEPTEMBER 2003, AT
THE STORMONT HOTEL, UPPER NEWTOWNARDS RD, BELFAST**

Present:

Mrs Jeannette Chapman (Vice-Chair)	Mr Dominic McElholm
Mr John Colgan	Mrs Sally McKee
Ms Monica Cummings	Mrs La'Verne Montgomery
Mrs Mary Devine	Ms Aedín Ní Ghadhra
Mr Eddie Ferguson	Mr David Oldfield
Professor John Gardner	Mr Alistair Orr
Ms Maria Graham	Mrs Thea Patton
Mrs Teresa Graham	Dr Robert Rodgers (Chair)
Mr Patrick Kinney	Mr Peter Scott
Mr Tony Lappin	Mr Philip Sheerin
Mr Alan Longman	Mr Gordon Topping
Mr Paddy McAllister	

In Attendance:

- Mr Eddie McArdle (Registrar)
- Mr Barney Ball
- Mrs Yvonne McCool
- Ms Geraldine Garnett-Frizelle (Minute Secretary)

Apologies:

- Mrs Frances Donnelly
- Dr Desmond Hamilton
- Mr Ray McGuigan
- Mr Ian McInnes
- Reverend Dr Derek Poots
- Mrs Grace Trimble
- Very Reverend John Walsh

Apologies were noted.

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomed members to the fifth meeting of Council.

2. Minutes of the Council Meeting of 24th June 2003 (GTC/03/M4)

The Minutes were approved.

3. Matters Arising

4.1 The Chair informed members that, as indicated at the last Meeting of Council, a meeting had taken place with Ms Christine Jendoubi at the Department of Education.

4.4 Standing Orders

The Chair informed members that he had received one query regarding Standing Orders, concerning the holding of more than one position in Committees by members and asked that this be taken later in the meeting. Members agreed.

4.5 Declaration of Interests Forms

The Chair thanked those members who had already completed and returned their Declaration of Interests Forms and asked that if there were any outstanding, they be returned to Council Officers as soon as possible.

5.2 Launch of the GTCNI Website

The Registrar informed members that, unfortunately, the Minister would no longer be able to attend the launch of the website. However, the Permanent Secretary would attend in her place and speak on her behalf.

4. Chairman's Business

4.1 The Chair reminded members that the North of England Education Conference was going to be held in Belfast in January 2004 and that GTCNI was one of the sponsors of the Conference. He invited Mr Gordon Topping, the Chair of the Conference to speak to members. Mr Topping informed members that, owing to the sponsorship they had received, they were able to offer a number of free places to teachers and that so far the uptake had been relatively good, with 200 applications received. It was confirmed that whilst places for teachers were being funded, schools themselves would have to find substitution costs.

4.2 The Chair told members that the issue of office accommodation for GTCNI had been raised at the last meeting of the General Purposes and Finance Committee, with the suggestion that the Committee should begin to explore options relating to the future accommodation of the GTCNI now.

5. Officer's Business

5.1 The Registrar informed members that outreach with beginning teachers had begun. He had attended one session with students at Queen's University to talk to them about GTCNI and a number of other sessions were booked with students at Stranmillis University College and the University of Ulster. The Registrar has also been in contact with St Mary's University College and agreed that he will recontact them after Christmas to arrange a date to meet their students.

6. Standing Orders

The Registrar informed members that the issue for consideration was duality of post holding. The issue had originally been referred to the Policy Committee who had proposed that Standing Orders need not be amended as any election to a post was the will of the Council

democratically expressed. Members had referred the proposal back to full Council for a decision. After due consideration it was proposed that no change be made to Standing Orders and this was agreed.

7. Outreach Strategy (GTC5/03/P1)

The Registrar outlined for members the steps which had already been taken by Officers in order to promote the GTCNI in the public consciousness. Publicity materials had been produced for distribution to teachers and other interested parties, as well as the first GTCNI Newsletter. In addition, the Website was due to be launched on 25th September backdrops had been produced for this occasion and information packs to be handed out to invited guests. It had also been decided that all Corporate documents be given a “corporate” image, with a background wash of the GTCNI logo being used on the title page of all documents. He also informed members that Officers had prepared Outreach Strategy document to show what plans were in place for future initiatives. Mrs McKee suggested that it would be useful to include meetings with Unions under the section on External Relationships and the Registrar agreed to amend this. Mrs Chapman reminded members that Council had previously discussed the possibility of hiring a PR Company to assist with an Outreach Strategy. The Corporate Services Manager undertook to expedite this.

8. Registration Update

The Policy and Registration Manager updated Members on the current situation regarding the procurement of the Registration Database. He informed them that the Statement of Service Requirements had been completed and forwarded to Xansa in late July and they had been asked to respond in August. Their initial submission had raised a number of queries and they were asked to resubmit their proposal by the 28th August 2003. This had been received and the Registration Database Project Board had subsequently met to discuss the document. The Project Board had agreed that there were still areas that required clarification and Officers, as well as members of the Department of Education, had been involved in very detailed negotiations with Xansa. The main area of concern was the scale of the “ongoing maintenance costs” which would fall to GTCNI once it becomes self-funding. The Project Board was due to meet on the afternoon of 25th September 2003 to discuss the viability of continuing with the S-CAT procurement process or to explore an open tender option. Members were concerned that this could cause a further delay in the start of the Registration process, particularly if the issue needed to come back to Council at its next meeting for a decision to be taken. In order to ensure that matters were expedited in a timely fashion, the Chair proposed that Council give delegated powers to the Project Board to enable them to make a decision and this proposal was accepted.

9. Corporate Plan (GTC5/03/P2)

The Registrar presented this paper to members and explained that the foundations of the Corporate Plan were to establish the nature of the organisation, explore the environment within which the organisation finds itself and map out the strategic direction of the organisation over the years. The Chair asked members for comment and a number of suggestions were made regarding content. Members having reflected on the document made several suggestions in regard to possible format and the need to include in the analysis reference to the School Improvement Programme. The Registrar indicated that the final plan would include high order

targets, would be augmented by Annual Business plans and the Council's committees would be the vehicle for the monitoring of progress. The Corporate Plan was approved in its draft form by Council.

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

The Policy and Registration Manager presented this paper to members. He informed them that in drawing up a Code for GTCNI he had looked at a number of other codes, including those of GTC Scotland, Wales and England, as well as a number of other professional bodies. A draft Code had now been completed and it was proposed that, in order for the profession to feel ownership for the Code, a period of consultation was necessary. The Chair thanked Officers for the work undertaken in drawing up the draft Code and proposed that the documents should be put out for Consultation to the profession. Members agreed.

11. Professional Development: A New Remit (GTC5/03/P4)

The Registrar presented this paper to Council. He drew members' attention in particular to Annex C and informed them that this Proposal for a Pilot Scheme would need the approval of Council before GTCNI could then approach DE with the concept. In the ensuing discussion, the issue of equity of access to CPD was raised. The Registrar noted that the concept of equity of access suffused the principles themselves and this was wholly endorsed by the Council. Members expressed their appreciation for the work done on the proposal and the Chair asked if the document had the approval of Council to go forward to the Department of Education. Members agreed.

12. Committee Minutes

The Chair of Council asked the Chairs of the General Purposes and Finance Committee (GP&FC/03/Min6) and the Policy Committee (PC/03/Min6) to present their minutes to Council. There were no minutes from the Audit or Registration Committee as neither had met since the previous Council Meeting.

12.1. General Purposes & Finance (GP&FC/03/Min6)

At this juncture Dr Rodgers vacated the Chair and left the meeting, as did the Registrar. Mrs Chapman having taken the Chair, Mr Ferguson was asked to present the minutes of the sixth General Purposes and Finance Committee. Arising from the minutes, discussion ensued on both the Chairman's Allowance and the Registrar's salary. It was agreed that the Corporate Services Manager would advance these issues with the Department of Education.

12.2. Policy Committee (PC/03/Min6)

The Chair of Policy informed members that there were a number of ongoing issues being looked at by the Committee including Continuing Professional Development and the Code of Professional Values and Practice.

14. The Chief Inspectors Report 1999-2002

This item was presented to Council for information only.

15. Any Other Business

There was no other business to be discussed.

15. Venue, Date and Time for Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 16th December 2003 at 10:00 am and members will be informed of the venue nearer the time.

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