

COUNTY BOARD
Tuesday 26th May 2009
4.15pm
The Sanctuary, 1st Floor, Trinity Church,
Mount Street, Stafford.

MINUTES

County Board Members Present:

Michael Creek (Acting Chair)
 Richard Wingrove
 Cyril Burton
 Mohammed Jamil
 John Titlow
 Dennis Firmstone
 Carl Bennett
 Harry Ferguson
 Jo Chapman

Support from Host:

Linda Seru, Host Director.
 Sue Baknak, Host Coordinator.

Apologies

David Kenton

In attendance

Julie Thompson-Edwards
 Dorothy Ferguson

Note

The Acting Chair called the Board to meet following the early closure of the AGM and declared that the meeting was not open to the public as the LINK was following the advice of the DH. Several outcries from District Committee members present were aired and John Sneddon (Newcastle-under-Lyme District Committee member) asked that he be minuted: This is not the way the LINK should be conducting its business and he will be taking this matter up with the DH. MC agreed. JT-Ed reiterated the DH's advice and explained this had been given at a meeting which LINK representatives, Host and Local Authority had attended following a meeting several LINK District Committee members had attended with Ministers in London. A Board Member from Newcastle-under-Lyme (who is a full-time carer for his wife) asked if she be allowed to attend. MC advised that she could and again this raised comments from a District Committee member.

Item	Discussion	
1. Declarations of Interest	MC asked if Board members could please declare conflicts of interest if any arose through the course of the meeting.	
2. Draft Minutes and matters arising	Draft Minutes from the County Board meeting on 2 nd April 2009 were distributed with apologies from LS that they had not been available sooner.	
	Decision(s) MC asked Board members to take the Minutes away with them and bring any comments/matters arising to the next meeting.	Action Board Members to bring any comments/matters arising to next meeting.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair	Board Members felt this should be deferred to the next meeting.	
	Decision(s)	Action
	Election of Chair/Vice Chair to be an agenda item for next meeting.	Acting Chair to liaise with Host re: agenda items.
4. Draft Annual Report and Accounts	Board Members discussed the draft Annual Report and Accounts. MC asked if District Committees could provide details of activities and engagement which had taken place locally so that the information could be included in the annual report as previously requested by LS. LS advised that the report could then be edited and MC felt this was appropriate. MJ asked if there was a protocol required for feeding back from events/photos etc. so that it could be used to publicise the LINK and its activities. LS advised there is a report feedback form.	
	Decision(s) District Committees to provide information on local activities by Friday 12 th June 2009.	Action DCs to provide Host with local feedback. SB to send MJ report feedback form.
5. Meeting with DH	<p>MC invited JT-Ed to provide background and future steps.</p> <p>JT-Ed advised that 3 people had been to see DH Ministers who were members of the LINK but did not go in that capacity. Subsequently, the DH had requested a meeting on the morning of 19th May with the Local Authority, MC as Acting Chair of the LINK, the Host and OSC. The DH invited the PPE leads to attend a second meeting in the afternoon. Several issues had been discussed and the following highlighted as key areas in the LINK to be looked at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour • Leadership • Agenda – main issues • Structure <p>The DH had requested a review of the LINK and an action plan to be provided to them within 4 weeks. JT-Ed stated that all parties need to work together, the Board needs to be stronger and enforce the Code of Conduct if breaches do happen and questioned if this would be done by the Board, relevant sub-group, district committees or by an independent panel. MC advised that he had received two letters of complaint from the University regarding LINK District Committee members' behaviour and MC was implicated in one of the complaints. MC advised that the normal procedure would be to convene a number of LINK members. However, one complaint had been aired at</p>	

	<p>a district committee meeting and MC felt that district committee members who had been present could not be on a panel as their independence could be compromised. Board members agreed. MC asked the Board how the complaints should be taken forward. CBennett advised that a disciplinary process had been developed but this was not adopted as part of the governance at the County Board meeting in December 2008.</p> <p>CBurton gave his apologies as he had to leave. CBennett continued that the LINK does have a Code of Conduct and the Board should invite an independent person to Chair a panel of 3 to investigate the complaints. MC asked the Board to vote in respect of appointing an independent Chair for this purpose and the Board voted unanimously in favour. Discussion followed with regard to the other 2 members of the disciplinary panel and CBennett proposed all 3 should be independent, HF seconded and the Board again voted unanimously.</p>	
	<p>Decision(s)</p> <p>That an independent panel of 3 people be established to investigate the complaints.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Agenda item for Extraordinary Board meeting on 8th June 2009.</p>
	<p>MC advised that the University is carrying out its own independent investigation and asked the Board if there could be two separate investigations or if the independent panel should ask a University representative and, say, an ACAS representative to join its panel. CBennett advised that the independent panel could investigate the complaints and then refer issues under another heading. LS commented that the LINK needs to look at its integrity and conduct generally and not just in respect of specific complaints. RW agreed and advised that the LINK Code of Conduct must be enforced.</p> <p>JT-Ed asked how the Board wanted to proceed in respect of the review and action plan – should the LA, Board and Host work together on the review or should an independent review be carried out. The Board discussed and agreed that an independent review should be carried out. The Board voted unanimously. MJ raised the issue of a response to any adverse press coverage as a result of events at the AGM and Board members also discussed press coverage which could be produced with regard to the review and action plan.</p> <p>JT gave his apologies and left. JC gave her apologies and left. JT-Ed advised that she will implement an independent</p>	

	<p>review as agreed by the Board and will do so from a contract monitoring point of view. The Board agreed. JT-Ed gave her apologies and left.</p> <p>CBennett advised that Cannock Chase DC meets every 2 months and have called an extra ordinary meeting for 27th May to discuss issues to be put forward to the Acute/PCT sub-group in respect of Stafford Hospital as previously agreed by the Board. MC proposed an extraordinary Board meeting to be held on 8th June 2009 at 2.00pm. The Board agreed. The scheduled Board meeting for 30th June 2009 at 2.00pm will still go ahead as previously arranged. MC will check whether there is a legal requirement for the LINK to reschedule its AGM.</p>	
	<p>Decision(s)</p> <p>LINK Code of Conduct to be enforced.</p> <p>JT-Ed to implement an independent review of the LINK.</p> <p>Extraordinary Board meeting to be held on 8th June 2009 at 2.00pm</p> <p>Rescheduling the AGM.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>JT-Ed to action.</p> <p>Host to book venue. Host to liaise with MC to produce agenda and supporting papers for distribution.</p> <p>Agenda item for Extraordinary Board meeting on 8th June 2009.</p>
	<p>Meeting closed.</p>	