



FACULTY OFFICE

Quarterly Master's Council Meeting

Monday 9th May 2022 held at 11am via Zoom and office

MINUTES

Present

Howard Dellar (HD)

Ian Blaney (IB)

Morag Ellis (ME)

Neil Turpin (NT)

Sue Goss via Zoom (SG)

Elizabeth Cooper (Minutes)

ME leading agenda

SG not attending until 11:30am and therefore it was agreed that Part 1, point 2 on the agenda would be discussed first, LSB matters and priorities.

LSB matters and priorities

NT confirmed that a response and update had been provided to LSB on 4th May 2022. NT confirmed that the data set had been submitted and that acknowledgement had been received from LSB. Now awaits assessment.

ME stated that progress was being made with LSB and a watchful eye must be kept on it.

MC absence

NT confirmed that the situation is being managed at the moment. ME suggested sourcing temporary cover and HD agreed.

ME questioned what the effect of temporary cover would have on the Budget and if there was an leniency for extra costs. ME explained that MC is a self-employed consultant and asked if he had been paid to date. HD confirmed that he was and that there should be some leniency in the Budget.

Confirmed action points:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

3. HD to contract MH about stepping in to the role
4. HD to contact [REDACTED] and consideration to be given to other suitable people for the role
5. Update to be provided to LSB advising that MC is currently unwell

Part 1 Faculty Office, Governance Manual Update (NT)

NT confirmed that the Governance Manual is mostly ready to be circulated, with role description drafted, but not yet ready for circulation. Privacy remains a point to consider and some information from the policy should be redacted.

HD asked if there is a period in which minutes should be destroyed. IB confirmed not at the moment, but moving forward they would ask for minutes to be deleted after the meeting and a copy could be provided if wanted. ME raised that a software similar to Drop Box is used by the Church Commissioners and this might be useful.

NT confirmed there is a draft advertisements for WL2 1.18.

11:34 – SG joined the meeting via Zoom

Discussion around well-led review continued.

ME raised the points in red on amber on the list. NT confirmed that the deadline for points 116 WL3 is October 2022 and the contract with LBMW should be circulated to the Equity Partners for review. ME asked if there had been any informal feedback. IB confirmed only one partner had provided feedback and HD suggested that the contract should just be signed by the partners with IB suggesting a mid-month deadline.

NT asked whether parts of the papers from this meeting should be published to provide transparency and all agreed this was a good idea. ME suggested that moving forward it should be minuted what action is to be taken on the red and amber points.

HD provided SG with a brief summary of the matters discussed so far and asked what the Budget implications might be for appointing someone on a temporary basis to cover MC. SG confirmed that MC is paid £4,000 pa, £2,100 being for the governance manual. HD stated that £4,000 should be budgeted for next year and that there was a contingency to allow for £6,000, SG confirming this would fall into regulatory expenses.

SG confirmed that regulatory expenses budget was £25,000, £15,000 of which is for inspections and a total of £16,000 of the Budget has only been spent. SG confirmed she would review.

Part 1 Faculty Office, Financial Report and Update (SG/HD)

SG confirmed that the results are pleasing, income being up on both sides. Expenditure has shifted to licences, but both sides were busy. Total revenue from licences is £283,000.

SG stated that notaries income was higher than expected. The practice certificate is split into two payments, however the Levy is really one payment, split into two. SG asked if this could be paid in one? NT agreed that it made sense to pay this in one so to accredit to one financial year. SG confirmed she had put the question to Haysmacintyre who had not come back with a clear response. ME stated that is the Levy could be collected in either way, the most practical option should be taken.

SG stated that the structural deficit of £117,000 is now reserves of £91,000. There were increases in expenditure on the IT project and website, along with the Audit fee, but this was not unexpected.

SG provided a brief overview of the end of the financial year. There is a surplus of notaries of £228,000 reserve which HD asked if it was high enough. SG confirmed it should be. ME asked if extra expenses could be claimed under insurance. IB said they could not and SG confirmed there is slack in the budget for additional expenses. ME confirmed she was happy there is no longer a deficit and in striking distance of a LSB approved surplus.

SG asked about the uncertainty of licences and ME stated there is a potential legislative change which should be addressed in the Risk Register.

SG confirmed that she needs to discuss the contingency fund with Mili before finalising, but there are currently funds on £166,000. TheCoats complaint is £36,000 which NT stated they expect to recover. ME stated this recovery should be a top priority and asked whether a caution could be placed on the register. HD said that once the deadline has passed for payment this should be considered and then a letter before proceedings should be issued before a statutory demand. ME requested that a close eye is kept on this.

SG stated that the contingency fund is typically £100,000 and HD suggested there should be an agreed figure to top it up. NT mentioned that it would not be good public policy to have a contingency fund contribution amount whilst there is the Levy, which ME agreed with.

SG stated the next Audit Meeting is 22.06.2022 and a planning meeting will be held first. HD stated that he would talk to SG and SDL this afternoon to discuss.

NT stated that final bank statements had been received.

IB asked when final accounts need to be approved. SG confirmed that accounts should be approved when audited. HD stated that he hoped the accounts could be shared at the Forum in July and SG stated that she imagined the accounts would be audited swiftly. NT stated that it should be shared earlier because of the practicing certificate fee and that mid-June would be ideal, but early July latest and confident that no minor tweaks would be needed. NT asked SG to review budgets and prepare new ones to form part of consultation. SG would prepare for mid-June.

ME thanked SG for joining and providing an update. SG left the meeting.

Part 1 Faculty Office, Business plan update (HJD)

HD confirmed he had sent a list of priorities and once agreed he will convert into a plan and discuss the cost with JG. ME confirmed she is happy in principle, but not entirely sure about points 2 and 3. NT wants to look at the accounts rules and how they relate in England and Wales.

NT confirmed that the UCL course is still fit for purpose and domestic appeals are ok. NT suggested there should be a non-publishable part of the business plan so that a secure understanding of the rules could be pursued.

ME raised the question of marriage licences. HD said the guide would need updating. NT stated that the Law Commission is not proposing to remove ecclesiastical preliminary or change special licences, with only small changes to bands and common licences, however special licences may not be needed given the change from building certification to individuals. IB wondered whether there would be a carve out similar to same-sex marriage.

ME stated that the General Synod nor Diocesan Bishops would want to be involved. It was agreed that NT would catch up with Alex and Malcom to discuss their meetings with the Law Commission and the proposal to public July/Summer 2022.

HD questioned the perception of pushing for a centralised Church of England, but IB stated the Faculty Office is wider as it deals with Wales and notaries and HD stated no one is seeking to take over the Faculty Office.

ME stated that the priority is to maintain a good relationship with the Law Commission.

ME confirmed she was happy with points 1 to 7 and IB suggested that more focus be given to well-being, ME confirming this should be prioritised as part of the CPE regime.

Part 1 Faculty Office, Consumer Survey (NT)

NT confirmed this is ready for publication is everyone is happy, there being high levels of satisfaction and compliance. ME suggested that provision be made in the business plan to address coverage with remote and in-person to prioritise notary services. Can inform LSB using information from this survey.

NT suggested that focus is placed complaints signposting and encouragement should be given to applicants outside the M25.

Part 1 Faculty Office, Horizon Scanning (IB)

IB confirmed that review of the report and raised the following key issues:

1. Mayson Review – should keep a watching eye on the policy considerations
2. Government's industry experts working group on electronic signatures which may have an impact on remote notarisation
3. Linda Box Case – insurers keep multiple thefts are individual thefts rather than aggregating. ME stated this feeds into the priorities and should be addressed in good modern governance
4. Review of HRA 1998 – impact on Consumer Rights and keep an eye on a British Bill of Rights.

Part 1 Faculty Office, Risk Register (IB)

IB had produced as one page summary of the headlines with recruitment being a priority, replacing lay members of the Boards. Consideration should be given to potential Cyber Attacks and the cost should be discussed as the Audit Committee meeting

NT stated that the headlines should be published with the redaction of the Cyber attacks and contract with LBMW Equity Partners.

Part 1 Faculty Office, Recruitment (HD)

ME stated this is a work in progress and HD stated that someone with good governance skills is needed. IB confirmed that an advert could be put in a civil society magazine and he would enquire and investigate costs.

ME stated that Father Christopher Smith had been identified.

Part 1 Faculty Office, KSI Update (NT)

Admission ready to be published and can go on the website

Part 1 Faculty Office, s.69 Order (IB)

Raised with the commission, ME requested that should continue to chase.

Part 1 Faculty Office, Operations

No new complaints

Part 1 Faculty Office, Boards

IB confirmed.

Part 1 Faculty Office, LSB New Framework

NT confirmed have until 01.07.2022 to reply and that a draft response should be ready for the advisory meeting on 14.06.2022 which should be circulated beforehand.

Part 1 Faculty Office, AML

IB confirmed no updates

Part 1 Faculty Office, Legal Choices

HD confirmed the next meeting would be in June 2022.

ME stated that the legal retirement age for ecclestical judges is to be increased and simplifying the provisions on Glebe and Highways.

NT mentioned the change to Marriage Law which raises the legal age of marriage to 18 and this will be in force when the Lord Justice makes regulations so an eye should be kept on this and will update the website in due course.

Part 2 Overseas

[REDACTED]

Date of next meeting

13th June 3.30pm. Zoom or 1 The Sanctuary- Master's meeting

The meeting ended at 13:03.