

Council of Governors' meeting, 19th September 2013

Agenda item 45/13: Report from The Vice Chair of Governors 2012/13

First let me thank you all for giving me the chance to try and make some changes to how we work as Governors. In my election address last year I said I wanted the chance to make us all more effective in our roles as governors, so I give you my failures.

I am not seeking re-election this year because I do not think I could do justice to the role of vice chairman and the commitment to the FTGA and the Executive Committee, because Southend should hold a place at Executive Committee level at meetings in London, Cambridge, and other places. I do not travel very well without my daughter driving me everywhere.

- A. I asked the members about us meeting prior to Council meetings so we could discuss the agenda, so we could meet each quarter, just us, no management - no NEDs - no support staff to take minutes, just us looking after ourselves, taking our own minutes, this was rejected by the majority.
- B. I asked the Chairman and Vice Chairman to look at ways which could reduce our sub-committee meetings, the rebuff concluded 'no change', this was accepted by the majority which I accept, that was the committee ruling, but I still think we should look at the commitment we have to make to attend meetings., perhaps have six months between meetings for each subcommittee. We have to change; some subcommittees have a job to hold a meeting as members of that committee are not able to attend.
- C. I wished that all members of the Council would take an active part in sub committees; I am aware of work and other lives that we all live. I had hoped that all worker governors would take up a subcommittee, your fellow council members would welcome you to any of the meetings, and workers have a better knowledge of the workings of the Trust; and your help would be invaluable in getting other members to have a better understanding of the day to day working. As for appointed members, I wish they would take an active part in subcommittee work; I know some do, but most do not; who do they report to? I do not know because no one has told me; when they speak they do it on behalf of the group they are appointed for, or like a few weeks ago, make statements to the press - which I think was wrong - or was the view of that member stated on behalf of the local authority?.
- D. Some Council members said we should do some training for ourselves by ourselves, without the Trust having to find more money. Two members of the Council worked very hard to get it going but look at the response of the members. I repeat what was said to me "I do not need any training" "I cannot attend any more meetings" "I will be OK at chairing meetings, I have done it before" "I don't like the way it's presented so only attended one meeting". I do think whoever chairs a subcommittee has got to keep that group to the agenda, sometimes the chair

loses control and the meeting just drifts along until 7.00pm; that has got to change, now and again it does no harm to say 'shut up' in a nice way.

- E. Members of the Council who attend Board of Directors meetings sometimes try to 'hog' the meeting by questioning board members. This is not acceptable, we are there to listen to policy being made at director level; the public who attend should have the floor to ask questions, we are there to hear what the public are saying. You as Council members have the right, at your subcommittees, to ask questions of the NEDs; remember the NEDs get the agendas the same time as you so you should be able to follow the NEDs in their questioning. It is up to us to question them on accepted policy and monitor them in their work.

Two things that have upset me this year:

- 1) Some committee members do not accept a committee policy so go out of their way to change it; by saying what they would do if they were chairman does not change it, it's the committee members who change it, and it should only be changed if it is against standing orders.
- 2) When members who attend meetings do not ask any questions then at a later meeting try to 're-live the past' and give a reason such as (and I quote) "I did not have time to read it as it was handed round late" or "why are we doing this? it is a waste of time" or "I did not like to ask a question of the presenter" - if you do not ask the questions you will not get the answer.

Yes it has been a good year for me, not only working with you all, but having some stays in hospital and seeing how it all works.

Some changes we have made are not fully in place yet but soon will be. It was agreed we would have quarterly meetings with the Board, at the end of each quarter, not in full yet but some have started. Once a chairman has agreed the minutes of a committee it will be sent to all council members for information and not sent again for Council meetings.

As Vice Chairman I have had input on the Council of Governors agenda, meetings with Alan Tobias OBE at least once a quarter; and I know that other members have been asked if there is anything they wish to add to the agenda.

And finally, it would be nice if at the Board of Governors meetings we all stayed to the end and not leave about 25% of the way through, after lunch !!

Ron Kennedy
Vice Chairman of Governors