

## Minutes of the Food Focus Meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**Chaired by:** Andy Barnes, Estates Bursar

**Attendees:** Julia Hodgson, Head of Boarding; Will Finlay (Proctor) Rob Hussey (Head Chef)  
Will Elviss (B1); James Maloney (BH); Henry Lloyd-Baker (C1); Austin Crapper (C2);  
Charlie Hammond (C3); Obaayaa Acquah (DA); Nigella Broackes (IH); Rafe Phillips (LI);  
Sam Pickering (MO); Ava Dean-Smith (NC); Kai Neu (PR); Jack Harper-Hill (SU); Charlie  
Kirkwood (TU)

**Absentees:** Stas Lonskiy (CO); Phoebe Pilkington (EL); Tilly Norman (MM)

**Discussion/Points Raised:** (Response/Action from Norwood Team in Red)

Mr Barnes welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked pupils for their enthusiastic attendance at the recent Food Festival, held on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April. The event was very well received and enjoyed by everyone who attended. There have been excellent levels of feedback with over 800 responses returned by pupils and thoughts and views expressed have been passed to the Catering Team for consideration and action.

Mr Barnes introduced Robert Hussey, the new Head Chef who has recently joined the Catering Team. Mr Hussey will be involved in reviewing the feedback from the Food Festival, in order to provide a range of healthy and interesting menus that will appeal to the very broad cross section of pupils and staff within the College community, whilst also meeting the many different needs of the busy school calendar.

- **Popcorn Chicken:** Barton Hill pupils enjoy this and asked if it could be served more frequently. Mr Barnes said this could be looked into, but reminded everyone that due to current world issues, higher prices on many food items could mean certain dishes would remain as occasional, rather than regular options.
- **Fajitas at lunch:** A request for these to be served at lunchtime was made by Ivy House. This will be looked into.
- **Early Saturday Lunches:** A request for alternatives to the pasta routinely served was made – pupils suggested a more substantial main meal option. Mr Barnes said the question of early lunches and necessity for a quick and filling option had been raised at the last two meetings and he awaits a response from the Sports coaches.
- **Soup at Dinner:** TU pupils asked if soup could be offered for a dinner option with bread please? Some pupils (BH) like to put their helping of pasta in their soup, but know that this is not encouraged. Can this be permitted please? This should be achievable.

- **Hash Browns:** There was a complaint that recently Hash Browns were often soggy and appeared under-cooked, although other pupils reported that they felt Hash Browns had been over-cooked.  
Mr Barnes will review with chefs how these are produced at peak times, in order to try to maintain consistency.
- **Pain Au Chocolats:** Many pupils agreed that there had been a vast improvement in the quality of these since the matter was raised at the last meeting. Pupils thanked the Catering Team.  
This was acknowledged by Mr Barnes and the supplier will be noted.
- **Strawberry Yogurts:** Please could there be a greater number of these provided. The Toffee flavour was not popular and pupils would prefer more of the standard flavours like Strawberry.  
This was noted by the Catering Team.
- **Teryaki Salmon:** This was a really popular option – please could it be served more frequently.  
The retail price of Salmon has recently doubled, this would need to be monitored and reviewed accordingly.
- **Smoothies:** These are increasingly popular – please could they feature as a desert option more often.  
These will appear more often.
- **Raisins / Brownie flavours:** The raisins often found in salads and cakes were less popular; pupils would prefer plainer options and a basic brownie recipe.  
Head Chef to assess and reduce the raisins and increase brownies.
- **Extras for Burgers:** Pupils expressed their thanks for the variety of toppings/sauces provided for Burgers.  
Feedback received with thanks.
- **Vegetarian Options:** Pupils often felt the vegetarian option was the same. Could there be greater variety please?  
AB suggested that it would be a good idea for a group of pupils to meet with him and the Head Chef to discuss in greater depth the wishes of vegetarian pupils, so that the Catering Team can work to provide a more tailored offering. Nigella Brookes will liaise with pupils who might like to attend such a meeting. Mr Barnes will then arrange a suitable time for discussions.
- **Fabulous Flapjacks!** Several pupils said how much they appreciated the delicious flapjacks served at break recently. The Head Chef said he had been disappointed by the quantity that had been left untaken. Pupils suggested this was because pupils had not realised the recipe had changed.  
AB congratulated RH on this new recipe and said that once word got around hopefully there would be no wastage in future.
- **Pizza bases:** Feedback from the recent Food Festival showed that pupils would prefer thinner pizza bases.

AB said that this would be taken on board by the Catering Team and changes to the current offering would be considered.

- **Scampi on Sunday:** Some pupils were not keen on the Scampi that was on the menu for a Sunday, whilst other Houses welcomed it as a choice and hoped it would continue.  
A mixed view from pupils on scampi, so if scampi is on the menu an alternative is to be provided.
- **Coffee Machines:** Some members of the U6 had asked if they might be able to operate the coffee machines on Sundays and at lunchtimes please?  
AB said that coffee machines had never been used at lunchtimes and quoted statistics for the amount of coffee that is already used each year, at considerable expense with current problems of supply. It was therefore highly unlikely that an increase in use of the machines would be possible. WF reminded reps that coffee was available for pupils via the coffee machine located in the Guidance café, throughout the day week-times and this might be extended to include Sundays.
- **Fish Friday:** Pupils enjoyed having Fish on Fridays, but asked whether there could be an alternative to the battered fish currently offered? Fish Fingers were one suggestion as well as Ricotta Ravioli which used to be offered occasionally. WF commented that the boys preferred the batter option more than the girls, so this should be taken into account when looking for an alternative.  
Offering Fish Fingers alongside battered fish would be considered as well as the reintroduction of the Ricotta Pasta dish.
- **Cherry Pie Request:** Could this be served again please?  
Yes – it should be possible to include this in the menu rotas again.
- **Wednesday Lunches:** Often known as “Greasy” Wednesday due to the prevalence of burgers/pizza options, pupils asked whether pulled pork could perhaps be an option then instead please, or BBQ pork? Some of the girls commented that the chickpea burger offered as veggie option was not as good as in the past.  
The Head Chef will investigate options for Wednesdays.
- **No More Gammon:** This was not a popular choice with some pupils. WF commented on the day this was suggested in the menu cycle, as this is usually served with chips and these are already offered on the menu on another weekday (– Tuesday ?)  
A mixed view from pupils, Head Chef to look at carved joints over steaks.
- **Vegetarian Sausages:** Could vegetarian sausages please be offered on Sundays with the brunch option? WF also commented that at the later sitting on weekdays, this sort of option had often run out by this time, which was hard for vegetarian pupils who would not then have an alternative choice.  
AB said that after half-term there would be a return to the salad bar as known pre-pandemic. This would offer greater flexibility and may address some of the issues of reduced choice for vegetarians and some pupils with restricted diets.
- **Timings:** There was general discussion following mention of options running out before pupils arrived for the later sitting. WF commented that the In-House App was being worked on as a

way in which pupils would be able to make instant comment and reaction as to whether they had liked a dish or not. This should help to work out quantities and when something was not popular.

AB said he was working with the Head Chef to determine quantities necessary for peak demand of certain options, which hopefully would address this. It might be possible to increase production in the kitchens at certain times, but there was also the wastage to be considered. Servers at the counters are encouraged to ask pupils to come back for seconds rather than take additional helpings when first served. This has been proven to reduce wastage, as pupils often realise they don't need as much as they had initially thought.

- **Pasta:** Often pupils took a helping of pasta as well as another main option, which made it difficult to keep up with genuine demand for this.  
Self-management of pupils and what is taken is the solution to this issue.
- **Singapore Rice:** This spicy dish was very popular.  
Feedback appreciated and this would remain on the menu cycle.
- **Pasta in the Salad Bar:** Pupils liked the cold pasta option in the salad bar.  
Feedback appreciated – this can definitely remain as a regular option.
- **Coleslaw:** This is a firm favourite with many pupils, although raw onion was disliked in large quantities.  
Head Chef will check this out.
- All pupils expressed their gratitude, saying that they felt the standard and quality of meals provided had improved a lot since the last meeting.  
Mr Barnes said he appreciated these comments and would make sure this message was passed back to the Catering Team who had worked hard in difficult circumstances since the pandemic to provide the high standards that everyone has come to expect at Marlborough.

Mr Barnes thanked all the pupils for their input to the meeting and once again was pleased to hear the wide range of feedback from Houses. Representatives were reminded that this meeting was not the only way in which feedback could be passed to the Catering Team. A list of contact email addresses will be circulated to Representatives and pupils will be encouraged to pass their thoughts and views to the team regularly rather than feeling it has to wait to be discussed at one of the termly meetings.

Mr Barnes thanked everyone again for attending and the meeting closed at 1.45 pm.

9/5/22