

Minutes of the Food Focus Meeting held on Monday 30th January 2023

Chaired by: Mike Naworynsky, Director of Operations

Attendees: Edward Morton, Catering Operations Manager; Rob Hussey, Head Chef

Will Elviss (B1); James Maloney (BH); Austin Crapper (C2); Charlie Hammond (C3); Max Moyes (CO); Obaa Yaa Acquah (DA); Jemima Eary (EL); Nigella Broackes (IH); Rafe Phillips (LI); Siyona Munjal (NC); Kai Neu (PR); Jack Harper-Hill (SU); Charlie Kirkwood (TU)

Absentees: Henry Lloyd-Baker (C1); Beverly Ward (MM); Paula Reategui San Martin (MO)

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

Mr Naworynsky (MN) Director of Operations, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mr Morton (EM) the Catering Operations Manager and Mr Hussey (RH), the Head Chef.

MN said that he looked forward to hearing feedback from House representatives about issues relating to food and catering provision across the College. He said that it was his intention at this and future meetings, to remind pupils of the department's commitment to continue to drive up standards and to promote awareness about sustainability and efficiency in all aspects of catering for the College. It is hoped that pupils and staff alike can become more engaged with the processes involved in food provision across all areas of the College. He encouraged representatives to actively become the visible reminder to others of how small changes made by individuals can make a big difference, both in terms of global sustainability and financial efficiency for the College; this can be achieved collectively through good practice, being mindful and thrifty, and avoiding unnecessary wastage of food and resources.

General comments from Pupil body shared at the meeting, via feedback from representatives:

- **Hash Browns:** There was a request that these be served more frequently. Several pupils had commented that Hash Browns had been substituted with waffles; this was not a popular substitute. **RH said that he would try to ensure that waffles were only served once a week in place of Hash Browns.**
- **Granola Options:** Please could a greater variety of options to serve with granola be provided? Pupils requested yoghurt and fruit. **MN said he would look into this and added that the team would continue to focus on providing options based on seasonal foods, which would therefore be more economical to source.**
- **Theme Nights:** Pupils had enjoyed the recent theme night and the wraps in particular had been very well received. **RH said it was good to hear such positive feedback and he would pass this on to the Catering team.**
- **Curly Fries:** These continue to be very popular and it was not a surprise that to hear that pupils would like them to be served more frequently. **EM said unfortunately, they are just not an easy option to provide for large numbers; it is not possible to maintain the quality necessary for this type of offering.**

- **“Greasy Wednesday”:** There was a request for a non-greasy option on Wednesday evenings, (when it had become traditional to serve burgers and/or fries), for those who would prefer a healthier option. **MN said this was possible and will be looked into.**
- **Lime Jelly:** Pupils are less keen on the Lime flavour jellies and asked if other flavours could be provided instead. **RH said the full range of flavours would continue to be offered; this includes Strawberry, Raspberry and Orange as well.**
- **Rocky Road:** Please could the raisins be removed? Pupils preferred the standard recipe for these and asked for a return to this please. **RH will report back to the Catering team.**
- **Light Option:** Pupils had noticed that the plated Light option was no longer available. These had been popular as they saved a lot of time; could they please be reinstated? **EM said that unfortunately, pupils had often taken this alongside a main meal option which did not make it cost efficient or an effective way to offer this option. As it was popular, a Light option would return to the menu, but not in a “plated” format. This will be offered on the salad counter soon.**
- **Krispy Kale:** Pupils in TU asked whether this could be provided as a snack on the salad bar. **RH said he would discuss this with the team to see if it was a practical option to offer.**
- **Feta & Olive Salad:** Could this be provided more often please? **This will be looked at.**
- **Pasta:** Consistency of pasta was found to be a bit “heavy” by the end of sittings – could this be looked at please? **MN said it was not always easy to determine the number of pupils coming through at any one time; however, this could be rectified by topping up at the counter more frequently.**
- **Variation of offers in Evening Meal:** Pupils asked whether there could be a salad option for supper, in the same way it was an option at lunch service; not all pupils wanted a heavy meal in the evening. **MN said he would take this on board and that the Catering Team would be trying to use local produce, with a particular emphasis on seasonality; this will influence what is offered.**
- **Gluten-free Options:** Pupils said that there were still occasions when Gluten-free options did not appear to be available, even when requested (which pupils had been advised to do). **MN said there should be a Gluten-free option at each sitting and that if there are problems with this he needed to be made aware. He asked Representatives to feedback to the pupil body that these special options were kept behind the Counter because otherwise there was a danger they are not available for the pupils who need them. He reiterated that if pupils with special dietary requirements could not find an appropriate meal choice, they should make their request to a member of the Catering Management team, rather than to a server at the counter who may not be aware of the system. This would ensure that the Head Chef is made aware of what is needed.**
- **Water Pressure:** The issue of low water pressure was raised again by pupils. **MN said that unfortunately there would be no progress on sorting this issue until the refurbishment of Norwood kitchens; this is scheduled for Summer 2024.**

- **Sausages:** Frankfurter sausages were not universally popular with pupils when recently served as part of hot-dog night. Pupils missed the sausage whorls which had been served in the past. **EM thanked pupils for feedback and would make a note to offer alternatives in appropriate quantities where possible.**
- **Self-service Coffee Machines:** Now that new coffee machines had been installed in Norwood pupils were keen to know whether these could be operated by nominated members of the Upper School at break times and lunchtime perhaps? Pupils were aware that staffing issues had been the reason hot drinks that had previously been available to them, were no longer being served. Pupils said the quality of the coffee was appreciated by pupils and feedback had been very favourable. **MN was grateful for this feedback. He will discuss with Mr Finlay whether pupils can serve coffees to other pupils at times when staff were not available due to shortages. EM said that new machines had been installed in Norwood which would provide pupils with hot chocolate and orange juice on a self-serve basis.**
- **Fish Portion Sizes:** Recently there had been a lot of wastage of battered fish. Pupils suggested that portion sizes were too big, either for appetite or time available in which to eat. **RH said he would look into providing smaller portions.**

Discussion between Catering Team and Food Representatives:

- **Situation in PR:** Tom's arrival as weekday Chef has been welcomed and food options in Preshute have been enjoyed since he started. Weekend provision has not been so good. **MN said that SRH intended to have a meeting with pupils to discuss. RH said that menus should be rotated at weekend as was the case in other out-Houses. EM asked pupils to continue to give honest feedback, so that the situation could be monitored and improvements made where necessary.**
- **Situation in LI:** Scott has been welcomed by pupils. There is currently an external chef at weekends and so far, the feedback has been good.
- **Situation in CO:** There had not been any complaints from pupils in CO.
- **Portion Sizes:** MN asked representatives whether there had been any feedback from pupils, since this was raised at the last meeting. Feedback had been positive and servers at the counters were understanding when pupils asked for larger portions. MN was pleased to hear that servers had responded well to this, following discussions with the Catering team after the last meeting. Pupils need to remember that occasionally there may be a language barrier. Pupils are encouraged to ask to speak to a Catering Manager if they need to make a special request.
- **Food Wastage - Pupil Awareness:** MN said that he was keen for pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. He reflected that the downside of allowing pupils to help themselves to food rather than always being served, was that often this led to greater opportunities for food wastage. It was pointed out to the committee that on average 63kg of food waste was accumulated at each sitting. It was hoped that if pupils were encouraged to have greater awareness of what they actually needed, a large proportion of this could perhaps be avoided.
- Pupils felt that sometimes it was not always that pupils had taken more than they could eat, but often that they ran out of time to eat because of time constraints; sometimes queues were

longer than anticipated and although hungry, rather than be late for sports commitments, pupils had to leave food unfinished. There was a suggestion that if afternoon fixtures/lessons could be moved back by 15 minutes, there would be less rush for pupils who found it difficult to fit lunch in to the second sitting. MN would like to try to change the culture surrounding wastage and asked the committee how best this could be communicated to the pupil body as a whole. The response was via year group assemblies. MN said it was unlikely that timings could change. Over the next few weeks he will focus on communicating to the pupil body about reducing food waste in general as well as encouraging nutrition awareness. He said the team was determined to drive down food waste and welcomed thoughts from representatives about how to address this issue with their peers.

- **Cost saving Ideas:** Responsible food consumption was discussed, particularly in the context of current price rises. Recent increases in requests for vegetarian and vegan dishes brought about the suggestion for less meat, which would be a way to cut down costs. Changes such as reduction of meat in dishes like lasagne were discussed. “Meat-free Mondays” and “Vegan Wednesdays” were ideas that had been taken up in other schools. Would this be an option? Representatives felt such ideas were morally good, but not necessarily likely to be well received. Attention was drawn to the efficient use of leftovers which were often made into soup; this was welcomed by pupils who liked the homemade recipes and appreciated this economy and approach to using up otherwise wasted food. MN said he had already introduced measures to drive down the carbon footprint of the school, such as having less deliveries and by using better specialist suppliers. Work on this will continue.
- **Pupil Involvement/Feedback:** MN reiterated that he wanted pupils to have a greater awareness of the processes involved in food production and the costs involved. Representatives said that pupils were not always happy to use the Comment cards as this was not anonymous. There was a concern that pupils needed some way to communicate their feelings because not all were happy to voice issues directly to their House representative. Could comments be made via the Norwood Hall Firefly page? EM said that the option to use Comment cards had been withdrawn, as some feedback had been unkind and had left staff feeling upset, which was not productive. MN suggested that a professionally organised Food Survey would be beneficial. He also felt that cultural changes would be better received by pupils if they came from within their own community. He would like Representatives to be agents of change and encouraged them to share thoughts on good practice with the wider pupil body. There are many issues that need to be considered and MN will talk with the Second Master to determine an approach and next steps.

MN thanked pupils for their input and suggestions and looked forward to seeing them at the next meeting which would be in the Summer term. The meeting closed at 2.00 pm.

MN

30.01.23