

Minutes of the Food Focus Meeting held on Monday 1st May 2023

Chaired by: Mike Naworynsky, Director of Operations

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

Will Elviss (B1); James Maloney (BH); Henry Lloyd-Baker (C1); Austin Crapper (C2); Charlie Hammond (C3); Max Moyes (CO); Obaa Yaa Acquah (DA); Jemima Eary (EL); Hannah Agosta (IH); Rafe Phillips (LI); Beverly Ward (MM); Paula Reategui San Martin (MO); Kai Neu (PR); Jack Harper-Hill (SU); Charlie Kirkwood (TU)

Absentees: Siyona Munjal (NC); Nigella Broackes (IH)

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 explained the format of the meeting for those attending for the first time and said that he looked forward to hearing feedback from House representatives on any issues they wished to report/discuss, reminding them of the importance of their role and emphasising that changes had been made which reflected issues raised at previous meetings.

Follow up to points raised in Minutes from last meeting:

- **Light Option:** MN said that menus were in the process of being finalised for the return of a Light Option, but a final decision had not been made on what container to serve this option in. Good progress had been made into researching bio-degradable containers and pricing was being looked into. Once up and running, this option will be available from the salad bar as a “Grab & Go” offering.
- **Environmental issues:** MN said that the Second Master had plans to appoint 2 pupil environmental representatives in the next academic year, who would join the Food Committee and attend this meeting in future. These representatives will consider issues relating to environmental concerns and topics such as recycling in House. There is still lots of food waste in Norwood and although the College is considering options like an anaerobic digestion plant, the ideal would be to produce less food waste in the first place. James Maloney (BH) said that since discussions at the last meeting, he had read up about biomass fuelling and asked whether this was something the College might consider in future. MN was pleased to hear discussions had raised interest in the topic and said there was a real relevance at the moment, as the wider consideration of how to ‘decarbonise’ the College estate was under review with members of the senior management team; research into biomass boilers and the possibility of introducing an anaerobic digester somewhere on the campus was ongoing as well as the consideration of ground source heating.

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

- **Porridge:** Pupils are disappointed that this has not been offered this term – could it be back on the breakfast menu please? RH said this is usually not offered in the Summer term, but it would be possible to provide a small quantity; he will monitor how popular this is.

- **Chicken Caesar:** There was a request for the pre-prepared Caesar salad to come back please. EM said this would return as part of the “Lighter Option” choice shortly. It will be part of the new “take-away” option once suitable packaging had been chosen. RH said this may also be one of the options chosen to be offered on “Greasy Wednesday”; this will be offered in rotation with other choices such as: pulled pork burger, or mock chicken/lamb (vegan/free-from) choice.
- **Hygiene in Norwood:** A pupil has asked whether it might be necessary to ask staff to wear hairnets in Norwood, after occasionally finding stray hairs in their food; this had raised the question about hygiene standards within the kitchens/serving counters. There was also a query about cleaning standards for crockery and water cups. MN was very surprised by this and said he was satisfied that staff in Norwood operated under very strict hygiene conditions. He suggested that with open serving counters and the numbers of pupils accessing the area, both at the Servery or the Self-service counters, it was highly likely that occasionally a stray hair could contaminate dishes after they had left the strict control area of the kitchen. Routine kitchen practices will be double-checked. He explained that whilst the plastic glasses often had a cloudy appearance, this did not mean they weren’t clean and that all plates, cutlery and glasses were cleaned to a very high standard. He asked representatives to reassure pupils of these facts.
- **“Breakfast Halal options”:** Pupils from one of the “Out Houses” asked if it would be possible to have Halal options served at breakfast please? RH said he had recently ordered beef sausages for one House and it would be possible to extend this to others. EM wanted to remind pupils that as Norwood was not a “Halal Kitchen” (because occasionally alcohol was present), it needed to be stressed that none of the food served/provided from there could be referred to as Halal, but was of a “Halal type”.
- **Shell in Norwood:** A Shell representative wanted to share with the Committee that often pupils in Shell found Norwood intimidating and wondered what could be done to lessen this. This has been mentioned in the past too and MN acknowledged that it was an issue for each new intake of Shell and sympathised. He said that as part of the process for planned refurbishment of Norwood Hall, the College would undertake a pupil/staff/OM survey, which would give everyone an opportunity to express opinions and make positive suggestions for change; this could be regarding any aspect relating to catering provision in the College, as this would determine how best to make any changes to the internal layout of the space. The refurbishment project is being considered as a matter of urgency alongside other building refurbishments. MN meets with consultants next week to plan the survey.
- **QR Code for Review:** Pupils asked when the QR Code that had been discussed previously might be up and running. MN said that the proposal for a QR code where pupils/staff can express favour or dislike following meal choices is still at the planning stage. It is hoped that it could be incorporated into a new system which is being developed in the form of an App which will be available to pupils and staff once launched. Pupils responded by asking whether slips with the QR code could be placed on the tables, so that comments could be made at the point of service?
- **Vegan Options:** For some pupils, the Vegan options were too spicy, so there was a request for some dishes with less heat please. RH said this should be possible; often Vegan options tended to be dishes that lent themselves to being spiced, ie curry, chilli etc.

- **Dedicated Counters:** Younger pupils were still finding it difficult to make decisions at the Servery Counter in Norwood, when feeling pressure from older year groups behind them in the queue. Representatives discussed this and agreed that it often seemed this way, although not intentionally by older pupils, who were often just more confident and under time-pressure with lesson commitments. There was a suggestion made about dedicated Counters for younger pupils. MN understood that there was already an informal arrangement for Shell pupils to go to a specific counter, but he will discuss this with SMW and ask that it is reinforced to the pupil body as a whole.
- **Breakfast options:** Pupils said that the recently offered breakfast options were often only sweet and that they missed the savoury options. RH said that he could offer half & half sweet and savoury. This was appreciated by pupils.
- **Pigeon Holes:** A pupil had recently lost a mobile phone that had been left in one of the pigeon holes in Norwood and asked if anything could be done to improve security and prevent theft like this. Could there be doors on the shelves? MN was sorry to hear about this. When any items are found or handed in to Norwood staff, they are kept for an hour and then taken to Security where pupils can claim them. There is no obvious practical solution to this issue other than keeping valuables with an individual at all times.
- **Gluten-Free options:** Some pupils were still experiencing a lack of Gluten-free options available at lunchtime in Norwood. EM said this had been mentioned before and reminded pupils that they will need to ask serving staff for the Gluten-free options, as these need to be kept behind the counter so that they are available for pupils who need them, rather than being an option for all pupils.
- **Moussaka:** Pupils really enjoyed this evening meal and asked if it could be served at lunchtimes sometimes too please. RH said this should be possible and will see if it can be added to the menu rotation.

Discussion between Catering Team and Food Representatives:

- **Coffee in Flasks:** Following a request from the last meeting, coffee is now being provided in flasks and MN asked what the reaction had been from pupils. Reps said that pupils were very pleased and there had been good feedback on this, but had commented that it was still difficult to get orange juice; Could this be served in the same way?
- **Individual Pies:** MN asked pupils what the reaction had been from their peers, when individual meat pies had been offered from the Servery counter last week. These were on trial from a new supplier. Representatives said that they had been liked and very well received by anyone they knew who had chosen this option. Mini toad-in-the-hole dish had also gone down very well.
- **Benches/Seating options:** Comments relating to the anxiety of some pupils in Norwood, brought MN to asking what pupils felt about the current seating options. Did pupils like the benches? He said the up-coming survey would be an opportunity for everyone to have their voice heard on this. There was a general fondness for the benches from pupils, although girls did often find it difficult in skirts when trying to fit into a crowded bench, or to leave before others. Boys spoke in favour of shared lunch time when on benches and preferred the wooden

seating over plastic chairs; both girls and boys all agreed that it was good to be able to “squeeze” onto a bench at a busy table, when this would not be possible if chairs were the seating option. MN encouraged everyone to make their opinions known via any future survey when invited to do so.

- **Theme nights:** MN said these seemed to have been popular and pupils agreed that they were very well received and looked forward to more, suggesting that if held on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays, then Out Houses could enjoy them too. **Catering plan to organise more Theme nights in future.**
- **Theme Day:** MN asked pupils whether a theme day in the Summer term would be welcome, or if this was difficult to fit around exams. Pupils felt this would be a good distraction and if held at supper rather than lunch would not impact exams. **EM suggested a themed picnic sometime in June.**
- **Situation in PR:** MN asked whether the situation in Preshute had continued to improve. **Pupils said meal options were much better. Sometimes evening meal options in the Out Houses seemed to be the same as those offered in Norwood at lunchtime the same day.** EM said that he would look at making sure this was addressed.

MN closed the meeting by reminding pupils that their input at this meeting was making a real difference and he hoped they could see this reflected in changes that had already taken place. The meeting closed at 1.45 pm.

MN

01.05.23