**Minutes of the General Meeting held 17th November 2009**

**At the Malthouse, Elsey’s Yard, Risbygate Street, Bury St Edmunds**

**GM 09.09** The meeting opened at 5.15pm. The President welcomed those present.

**GM 10.09 Present**: Graham White (Division Secretary), Martin Goold, Alan Wright, Rob Murray, Linda Rutter, Peter Dunnett, Rebecca Green, Rosa Castellina, Maire Armstrong (Committee), Andy Nicholson (HT Beyton Middle), Peter Jones (King Edward Upper School), Hope Gaskin (Howard Middle School), Avril Dawson and Lynda Todd (Parkway Middle School, Haverhill).

**Apologies** were received from Keith Borrett (Committee) and Ian Nurcombe (King Edward Upper School).

**GM 11.09** The Secretary proposed that the meeting should close no later than 6.30pm. Seconded by Mr Dunnett.

**GM 12.09** The minutes of the previous General Meeting of 21st January and a report of the Summer Tea meeting were agreed a true record.

 **GM 13.09**  The Secretary’s written report was received.

**GM 14.09** There are four nominations for attendance at conference. Martin Goold, Linda Rutter, Keith Borrett and Hope Gaskin.

**GM15.09** Schools Re-organisation. There was a lengthy discussion on this issue. The main reason that SCC have always given is that it is being done to improve results, but as far as KS2 SATs are concerned the results were worse in 2 tier than in 3 tier schools. In Bury St Edmunds results were much better than in Ipswich and in fact Norfolk a two tier authority came bottom.

NUT proposals to federate middle schools with high schools, making them KS3 annexes, had been ignored. Pupils were being severely disrupted and, in some areas close to the borders, pupils were already being moved out of county into an existing 2 tier system. Residential PRUs had been closed and it looked very much like SCC planned to close all those that remained. This would hardly be a cost saving.

From September 2010 year 5 pupils will remain in their primary schools in the Lowestoft and Haverhill areas. This alone poses problems for small primaries like Hartest where pupils currently move to either Sudbury (phase 1) or Bury St Edmunds (phase 3) at the end of year 4. It cannot be guaranteed that parents will leave their children at schools like Hartest when there is so much parental support for the middle school system.

The current economic crisis makes funding an issue. The NUT have asked SCC for a moratorium until there is guaranteed funding. In the Lowestoft area there will be four 11-16 schools, yet pupils will have to remain in education until they are 18. In phase 1 downsizing begins this September with current year 4 pupils remaining in their primary schools. Staff in phase 1 are not finding jobs and so a redundancy situation looms. Staff must be advised by February 14th if such a situation is to arise. TAs are in the same position.

In Haverhill one member who is currently a year 5 leader has so far been put forward by the SOR team for positions such as year 3 teacher, teaching English in a secondary school, and two terms maternity cover in a primary school. These are hardly commensurate posts. The letter being sent out to teachers in phase one schools states that they have been ‘put forward for the position’ and the staff member must contact the school direct. A full interview process follows.

No promoted posts are available although the 3 years safeguarding applies. There are very few primary jobs coming up and it appears that primary school heads do not want middle school staff anyway. The danger for staff appears to be if they try to ‘slot you in’ and you refuse. As people leave staff are having to teach other subjects. Federation between middle schools and uppers/primaries would help because appointments would be made by a joint panel and redundancies could be managed more effectively.

Schools in phase 1 are no longer sure if the usual grants will arrive as school roles fall. Heads are being told to look after number one. SCC think recruitment and retention are fine!

The job situation is even worse for SMT and Headteachers as there are far fewer jobs available.

Ofsted are making no allowances for the huge upheaval being caused by the uncertainty surrounding SOR.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm