

TUCO Welsh Regional Meeting
Wednesday 7th September 2022 at 02:00 pm
Online via Teams

MINUTES

Attendees:	Jeremy Mabbutt	Aberystwyth
	Li Davies	TUCO
	Jason Edwards	USW
	Jane Eve	TUCO
	Vanessa Heritage-Smith	Wrexham
	Judith Hoyle	TUCO
	Annabel Hurst	Cardiff
	Ian Kemp	Denbighshire Council
	Andrew Phelps	Cardiff Met
	Mark Waggett	USW
	Dafydd Williams	Conwy
	Sue Williams	Wrexham
Apologies:	Daniel Gregory	NHS Wales Shared Services
	Sarah McLoughlin	TUCO
	Andrew Phelps	Cardiff Met
Guests:	Barry St Leger	Simply Lunch

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Apologies as listed above. Jeremy welcomed all members.

2. Presentation by Barry St Leger of Simply Lunch

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were taken as agreed.

4. TUCO Chair's Board Update

We have now booked our Winter Conference for 30th November at Newcastle University. There will be a Strategy Development Day held in November for the Board and TUCO Staff to discuss strategy for the next 3 years. This will then be opened out to the wider membership.

5. Framework Update (Jane)

Fresh Fish and Seafood is a new agreement as from 14th August.

Grocery, Frozen and Chilled – Jane asked for volunteers to be on the Tender Working Party to support Nicola.

The new agreement is due to go live on 1st April 2023, so most of the work will be from now until February. We used Camden BRI to score this and the Tender Working Party to do the sampling so we put the two scores together. This has proved to be quite an onerous process, so we are looking at just taking the BRI score into account. Mark asked if many universities score the samples when running mini-competitions.

Fruit & Veg – recommendations have gone to the Tender Working Party so the Intention to Award Letter will be sent out the following day. There have been some changes to suppliers for members.

Design and Installation – this will start next month.

Sandwiches – went live on 1st July.

Soft Drinks – this has been extended to the end of September. The Go Live date for the new agreement will be 1st October.

Food Waste Management – Jane asked that if any members have had issues with BioHiTech then please could they contact Mandy, mandy.johnston@tuco.ac.uk.

EPOS – this is a DPS but no new suppliers have been added recently.

CICS – several new suppliers have been added and the SQ has been opened for any new additions.

Catering Light & Heavy Equipment – Strategy Documents are with the Tender Working Party. Natalie Phillips is leading on this.

Kitchen Equipment Maintenance – Hobart have been added and Ovensclean removed. Li Davies is starting work on the re-tender and is looking for volunteers to sit on the TWP.

Kinetics – Tenders have finally been issued for return on 15th August and are being evaluated at the moment.

The following Contract Review Meetings have been held virtually – Grocery, Frozen and Chilled (May) and Vending (October). Notes will be produced and uploaded to our website.

Our Insights Document is covering the current adverse effects on the market – inflation, raw materials, cost of living, minimum national wage, national insurance, fuel.

September/October price increases have been received on Convenience Retail. Catering Light and Heavy has seen raw materials prices increase by up to 39% on stainless steel and aluminium by over 50%. Churchill are putting their prices up on crockery. The DipChem agreement has seen price increases. On Fresh Fish and Seafood, Norwegian salmon prices are the highest they have ever been. On Grocery, Frozen and Chilled market prices are extremely volatile with distributors passing these onto the customers.

Hot Beverage – price reviews are being done for September with substantial increases expected.

Meat and Poultry – prices being reviewed monthly until the market settles.

Milk and Bread – quarterly price increases.

Sandwiches – suppliers are being hit by increases in products and services.

Soft Drinks – Both Bidfood and Brakes have introduced price increases.

Vending – Selecta have hiked their prices due to Brexit, COVID and the war in Ukraine.

M&J/Freshfayre – they are closing all sites as a result of Brexit and COVID. Brakes can help Freshfayre customers with some of their requirements. Direct Seafood and Stickleback can also assist M&J customers.

Sustainability

The MSC fast-track scheme to get certified is still available to members at a cost of £350 for up to 5 sites or £400 for 6+ sites. We now have 223 users of the NetPositive tool.

Due to Kim Ashley returning to her previous role as Category Manager for TUCO there has been a couple of changes in responsibility. Kim will manage Convenience Retail and Fruit and Veg and Mandy will look after EPOS.

Annabel asked about prices for Matthew Algie and Jane replied that this should be the last agreed TUCO price. Mark asked about the food sampling weighting set at 15% and Jane confirmed that this was 15% for Fruit and Veg.

Menus of Change

Annabel explained that this is made up of 24 principles. At Cardiff, they re-write their residential menus each term every time they look at a different principle. However, the micro-business she wanted to use for milk was not SALSA accredited. The website link for the Menus of Change pledge is here:

[TUCO Member; Menus of Change Pledge \(cognitofirms.com\)](https://cognitofirms.com)

6. Training Academy Update

We have now delivered over 1000 qualifications in the 3.5 years since we became an awarding body centre! If you need any courses delivered, we can do them face to face or as a webinar. The Academy has just delivered an 'Achieving Customer Service Excellence' face to face for 32 people from a number of different departments across the RNCM – IT, Security, Events, HR Front of House and Catering. The group found it a great exercise to discuss how to work better cross functionally over several departments as well as meeting people they had only ever communicated with by e-mail. Just a quick reminder that the University is a member and any department can use the Academy at the subsidised training charge. There is a great course coming up about ESG (Environmental social governance) see the article in the magazine - 29th and 30th Sept - morning only.

Regarding the Menus of Change - we will be repeating the opportunity to attend the 2023 conference in NY.

Trip to Freiburg in conjunction with Studentwerke (European student services)

Successful conference, great opportunity to network with other universities and there will be another conference in Normandy in 2024 that we plan to attend.

Webinars are still being run around every quarter. There will be another good one on 23rd September that relates to utilities and cost control in catering. Forthcoming Study tours include Berlin in January and Liverpool in March

Any course needs please contact Sarah: Sarah.McLoughlin@tuco.ac.uk

7. Updates from Members

Cardiff

Their biggest concern at the moment is spending levels. Annabel has had a meeting with a staffing agency as they went into COVID with 27 vacancies and never recovered. Last year they only recruited 5 or 6 people for 32 vacancies. This can impact their recovery as they do not have enough people to cover their vacancies. Compass are currently paying staff £19 per hour and Starbucks are offering a £1,000 payment up front for new staff. They are offering discounted food across their peak times. They are working with Student Life for hardship food boxes and their hope is that the students will want more part-time work.

Conwy

It is the beginning of term and Dafydd is getting ready to provide the free school meals for the infants. However, not everybody has taken up this offer. They have had to swap to new grocery suppliers and new fruit and veg suppliers.

Denbighshire

Ian explained that recruitment is a big issue with staff. They are offering low hours in the middle of the day so not as attractive as people offering full-time work. The roll-out of free school meals has started with Reception year and he has been surprised by the low take-up. They have had a busy summer installing combi ovens into the kitchens and training staff on how to use them. Free school meals for Years 1 and 2 will be rolled out in October. Their new contract for fruit and veg award is imminent.

USW

Jason has had no problems with recruitment as they employ lots of local people. However, they have lost some good staff members. They are launching a new Starbucks in their Sports Park, making 4 Starbucks in total. Pontypridd FC will be taking over the Sports Park for home games. They have a new procurement person with Mark Waggett.

On the Sustainability side they are re-visiting they are re-visiting the circular economy they launched last year and are hoping to be back to normal by September.

USW Procurement

Mark asked who everybody in Wales uses as their sandwich supplier. Cardiff have done direct awards with Simply Lunch (retail) and Tiffin (hospitality) and Annabel is very happy with the service from both. On hot beverage, she made a direct award to Caffology. USW are using Bidfood for their Grocery, Frozen and Chilled. Cardiff ran a further competition where only Brakes and Bidfood tendered, so they went with Bidfood on price. Creed are good but their prices are higher.

Wrexham

Sue is struggling currently with recruitment of staff. They are in the process of implementing universal primary school meals with Reception. Years 1 & 2 is scheduled for next year but they are under pressure to bring this forward. Sue has had meetings with all the Primary School Head Teachers; she has also been buying new equipment, getting it installed and doing the training. Serving food in the classrooms has resulted in better behaviour and they have been mindful of Natasha's Law. She also reported that suppliers have come up with some interesting ideas. The difference in the hourly rate between Cooks and Kitchen Assistants is negligible.

They have just had training on operating Kitchen Manager and are now rolling this out to the Cooks.

They have a new grocery supplier as they were with Blakemores but started using Harlech in summer, with good quality food and service. They use Harlech for ambient and chilled and the Little Food Co for frozen. They are also using Orin Foods who have been good so far. Two new Support Officers have also been taken on. They look after around 70+ high schools and primaries in total and only 2 high schools and one primary have opted out.

Aberystwyth

Because of the cost-of-living crisis they have re-done their menus for a £4.95 main course. Jeremy is also suffering staffing issues. The energy crisis is also beginning to impact. They have replaced 8 of their multi-decks in the last couple of weeks and are now looking at all their old kit to make energy savings.

8. Any Other Business

Mark advised that Blakemores are pulling out of the Education sector with schools but Jason added that they do not do much within higher education.

Members discussed ideas for future presentations, particularly Castle Howell as Annabel commented that they have been really good throughout COVID. She would also like to see something on kitchen re-furbs and new equipment. Members would like to see a supplier from the Catering Light and Heavy framework to come in to talk about the impact of how they see the long-term future.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be a virtual one via Teams to be held early 2023 (Date TBC).