

Committees	Dated:
Committee of Aldermanic Almoners, Common Council & Donation Governors of Christ's Hospital Education Board	27/11/2015
Subject: Christ's Hospital – Process for the Presentation of a Child	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision

Summary

Following a situation in 2014 whereby the Committee's first and second choices of candidates for presentation to Christ's Hospital had unfortunately not achieved the required standard following the residential exam and were therefore unsuccessful in obtaining a place at Christ's Hospital, Members questioned the way in which the candidates were selected and instructed the Town Clerk to investigate whether there was an alternative method of making appointments to the School.

Members also agreed that in the meantime future interview dates would be set once the residential assessments had taken place and therefore subject to any decision this day, the interviews will be set for a date to be confirmed in mid-March of each year.

An alternative method of nominating a child has been identified entitled 'Clerk to Present/Nominate' and it is considered that this would be the best way forward to avoid a recurrence of the situation in 2014.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1) follow Christ's Hospital's 'Clerk to Present' method of nominating one candidate for the Committee's approval after both the Initial Assessments and the Residential Assessments have taken place (Option 3), in March of each year;
- 2) note that the November meetings of the Committee will therefore no longer be necessary;
- 2) indicate whether they would wish to continue to express the wish for a child with a City link or who resides or attends a school within the City or the City fringe to be nominated, whilst accepting that this may not always be possible; and
- 3) indicate any specific views they may have on meeting the candidate and delegate to the Town Clerk, in consultation with your Chairman and Deputy Chairman, the making of arrangements for a meeting in mid-March of each year, once the school knows which children have accepted place offers.

Main Report

Background

1. Since 1970 the Court of Common Council has made a donation to Christ's Hospital to enable the Corporation to present one child per annum to the School. Each child must be successful academically, suitable for boarding and preferably have a City link.
2. In June 2010 the Policy and Resources Committee considered a detailed report reviewing the City of London Corporation's Financial Support for Educational Institutions which contained information on the history of the School and its links with the City of London Corporation.
3. It was agreed that a fixed donation of £48,000 be made for each presentation over six years commencing in April/May 2011 which would amount to £288,000 over the six years and would be equivalent to two years of full fees per presentation place or £6,857 for each of the seven year the City Presentee is in the School. It was agreed that further presentations be reviewed in 2017.
4. Your Committee were also asked to consult the School on strengthening the selection criteria to consider only 'children who reside or attend a school within the City and the City fringe' and a more rigorous yet cost-neutral promotion of the scheme be implemented in addition to the approval of £150 per annum to be made available to each Donation Governor, to be put towards their pupil's extra-curricular activities.

Current Position - Existing Admission Process

5. Currently, in the autumn of each year, after the Initial Assessment results for the children are available, the Admissions Office at Christ's Hospital are asked for the names of suitable candidates.
6. In October/November of each year the City Corporation's Committee of Aldermanic Almoners, Common Council Governors and Donation Governors of Christ's Hospital meet and appoint a Reference Sub Committee usually consisting of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman and the Donation Governor for that year. The Reference Sub Committee meet, usually later that day, and interview the suggested children and select a child to present to the School for commencement at the School the following September. The selection is subject to that child reaching the required standard in the entrance assessments held in January the following year and the demonstration of suitability for boarding at Christ's Hospital. Often a second choice is made in case the first choice is unsuccessful in the residential exam. This situation often leads to the hopes and expectations of the prospective children and their families being raised and ultimately a number of disappointments.
7. Following a situation in 2014 whereby the Committee's first and second choices had unfortunately not achieved the required standard following the residential exam and were therefore unsuccessful in obtaining a place at Christ's Hospital, Members questioned the way in which the candidates were selected and the

Committee instructed the Town Clerk to investigate whether there was an alternative method of making appointments to the School. Members also agreed that in the meantime future interview dates would be set once the residential assessments had taken place and therefore subject to any decision this day, the interviews will be set for a date to be confirmed in mid-March of each year. The Committee also indicated that they may welcome a presentation from the School to explain the process dependant upon the information obtained by the Town Clerk.

Options

8. The Senior Committee Member Services Officer of the Town Clerk's Department visited the School and sought clarification on the options available in the appointment process and the School were very helpful in providing the information to prepare this report.
9. The School is academically selective and there is a two stage selection process for all pupils. An Initial Assessment that uses computer based tests and, for those that pass, a Residential Assessment where there is further academic testing and where the School also assess the child's suitability for boarding.
10. On current figures, the gross family income from all sources of a Presentee must not exceed £56,000 at the point at which the child sits the residential assessment. This figure is set to be indicative of the income of two parents at the national average wage and is reviewed in June of each year. I am advised that the majority of presentees' families have incomes significantly lower than this maximum.
11. Having regard to the above and the rules for the presentation of candidates, attached at Appendix A, there are three options for the selection of a Presentee to the School:-

Option A - The City of London Corporation can nominate a choice of pupil to the Admissions Office at the School before the date of the Initial Assessments, which are usually held in mid-October of each year. Common Councilmen were canvassed annually for candidates over a number of years and, as increasingly few children were identified in this way, this option ceased to be used some years ago;

Option B - School's Admissions Office can send details of candidates after the Initial Assessment results are available, usually early in November. The School tries to find candidates with some form of City link although this has not always been possible. This is the option which the City of London Corporation currently follow and the disadvantages of this situation are referred to in the above paragraphs; and

Option C - The City of London can delegate the selection of a child to the Clerk of Christ's Hospital who would look at applicants after both the Initial Assessments and the Residential Assessments and provide one nomination to the City Corporation. This is entitled 'Clerk to Present'. This is likely to happen in February of each year. The City could continue to express the wish for a child

with a City link but, as above, this is not always possible. The Committee could consider and approve the presentation of the child based on information in papers only, or it could appoint a Reference Sub Committee with Power to Act to informally meet the child in March and make a decision. Further details on how this could work in practice could be drawn up if the Committee agrees to this course of action. It is envisaged however that the arrangements would largely be as present, with the membership of the Committee continuing to be canvassed to discover who would be available to be the Donation Governor for that year and to meet the nominated candidate on a chosen date. The only difference would be that only one child would be met and perhaps the child and parent could be invited to lunch so that they could perhaps be more relaxed.

The School have advised that should the Sub Committee or the Donation Governor take exception to the nominated child it would be possible although, because of the timing, not ideal, for the Clerk to nominate an alternative child to be presented. If that were to happen, the first child would not be refused a place at the School at this stage.

Proposals

12. Having regard to the problems experienced with the current option (Option B) and the lack of candidates nominated by Governors previously under Option A, it is considered that the best way forward would be for Option C to be followed and that the Clerk of Christ's Hospital present or nominate one candidate to the City of London in early March of each year, after both the Initial Assessments and the Residential Assessments have taken place. If the Committee wish, it would be possible for the City to continue to express the wish for a child with a City link or a child who resides or attends a school within the City or the City fringe to be nominated, whilst accepting that this may not always be possible.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. In securing the City of London's presentation rights to Christ's Hospital and enabling children with links to the City to gain a place at an independent boarding school, the City would following its strategic aim to provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure, to London and the nation.

Conclusion

14. Given the recent experiences associated with the presentation of a child to Christ's Hospital and the Committee's instruction to review the appointment process, it is considered that Option 3 should be followed and that the Clerk of Christ's Hospital to present/nominate one child for the Committee's approval in March of each year.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Extract from Christ's Hospital's – Guide for Donation Governors

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