



## **Minutes of Meeting of Balerno High School Parent Council 14 November 2016 at Balerno High School at 6.30pm**

### ***PC members***

Andrea Brewster (AB), Jessica Bryce (JB), Tony Foster (TF) (Chair), Mike Humphries (MH), Peter MacLean (PMac), Paula Miller (PM), Marion Milne (MM), Peter Reekie (PR)

### ***School staff***

Neil McCallum (NM) (Headteacher), Michelle May (MM) (PTC – English, Media & Drama)

### ***Senior pupils***

Naomi McLeod (NMcl)(Head girl)

### ***Public***

None

### **Apologies**

Rehana Shanks, Christine Paterson, Sanjay Kallat, Calum Greer

### **Introduction and Welcome**

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.

### **Minutes**

2. No changes were suggested to the last minutes. Proposed by Mike Humphries, seconded by Marion Milne.

### **Matters arising from last PC meeting**

3. 3.1 TF informed everyone that he had met with AB & NM to complete an online survey on behalf of the PC as part of the review of Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act.  
3.2 TF bought flowers for Rehana Shanks and Liz Carrie to express thanks for their contribution to making the 2G pitch become a reality. TF to be reimbursed from PC funds.

### **Head boy / Head girl report**

4. NMcl gave a report on their activities in the school since the last meeting. Notable points include:
  - Weekly meetings between head boy & girl with the year heads (Mrs Anderson & Mr Fullarton)
  - Monthly meetings with Headteacher to discuss relevant issues

- 6<sup>th</sup> year area now furnished with sofas. Shortly to be painted and a kettle and fridge to be added for hot drinks.
- Prefects are active and fulfilling their roles
- Bavelaw held a successful bake sale
- Balerno pupil Facebook page is up and running (for pupils and parents). Daily bulletin will be posted here as well as other information e.g. on dress down days.
- Pupil Council meets every 2 weeks. Issues recently discussed include:
  - Wifi access for pupils
  - Pupils not hearing / seeing the bulletin every day
  - Gathering pupil voice on homework (purpose, amount given etc)
  - Social areas and clubs for junior pupils in their break times
- House teams are busy planning Christmas events

### **English presentation**

5. Michelle May (PTC English, Media & Drama) was welcomed to the meeting (see copy of slides on school website)

Questions / discussion arising from the presentation:

- A perceived difference in workload & homework between junior and senior years. MM reiterated the homework plan for S1-3.
- Clarification on S1-3 coursework and how it helped to develop skills required for Nat5 & beyond
- Are there any differences seen between abilities and standards of pupils from different cluster schools? MM confirmed that a lot of cross moderation and dialogue occurred between all feeder schools and there were no significant differences.

### **Headteachers Report**

6. 6.1 Neil McCallum gave his report.

Particular topics covered include:

- Staffing update

CL (Curriculum Lead) Maths post advertised.

Science department: All staff have returned from absence. We have been unable to completely fill the vacancy of Mr Nugent, but we have staffing for physics on a Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday. The timetable has been amended to ensure all pupils are being taught the appropriate curriculum in all three sciences, in all years.

- Events and News update
  - 14th September – RTWC (Raising Teens with Confidence) parent's presentation for S1 parents very well attended with over 100 parents present.
  - 26th September – Academic Prize giving – Olympian Karen Bennett was our key note speaker and presenter of prizes
  - 5th October – P7 Open Evening – with over 250 people attending.
  - 3rd November – S1 Parents Evening – 94% attendance - positive feedback from parents in relation to transitions.

- RTWC (Raising Teens with Confidence) course – run over three Wednesday evenings – full to capacity.
- £3000 from the PTA distributed to departments and for whole school use as follows:

- Whole school
  - 3D printer - £200
  - Display boards - £600
  - PA system - £300
- Departmental
  - Computing – raspberry pi - £60
  - DT – visualiser - £250
  - Art – mastermind trimmers - £360
  - Art – mirrors – £142
  - Modern Studies – modernity subscription - £200
  - FHT – donation of £350
  - Music – donation of £350
  - Modern Languages – donation of £150
- New Floor in the concourse – laid over the October break.
- S3 Pupil Emma Thomas chosen as one of the Christmas card designs that will be displayed on bus shelters across the city.
- S1 pupil Romany Moffat is a finalist in the Pentland book festival writing competition – with her piece “The Final Crush”
- S1 Pupil Jamie Alexander came 3rd in the Scottish men’s gymnastics and 40th in the GB
- Ewen Mackie and Katie Swanson represented Scotland at U’18 and U’16 respectively.
- Opening of the 2G pitch by Olympian Graham Moodie
- Dean Park Autumn Fayre held in the school concourse and a very successful event.
- 10 pupils attend the Edinburgh mini trials at Edinburgh Sheriff court.
- 2 senior Pupils in Auschwitz for a History trip
- S1 Residential at Ardentenny Outdoor centre – week beginning 10 October
- S4 Work experience – week beginning 10 October
- Parent’s focus group on reporting – with positive feedback to help support reporting and parents evenings.
- Trialling the online parents booking system.
- Whole school remembrance assembly – joined by Rev Andre Groenewald – Balerno Parish Church.
- Developed links with BVS for media and debating.
- Upcoming events
  - Pupils in the Scottish Maths challenge final in Glasgow tomorrow
  - Senior pupils attending MUN (Model United Nations) in Copenhagen from Wednesday to Sunday
  - Friday 18th November – supporting the charity JDRF (Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation) with “Typeonesie Day”
  - S4 Parents evening Monday 21st November 16.30 – 19.00
  - S4 prelims 28th November – 6th December

- S2 Lyceum experience, Project 2 with pupils visiting the theatre on 30th November
- Christmas concert Monday 19th December
- S5/6 Prelims 10 – 17 January
- Building works pending with work on heating and lighting
- Other information
  - New HT twitter account
  - HT Blog just about to be launched
  - Parental calendar – including events, excursions, reporting dates.
  - School uniform policy – has not changed and this has been shared with pupils. Request to share about winter uniform and a letter will go out to parents this week. Looking at reviewing the policy to ensure that we follow up with the pupils not complying.
  - Updating the RRS (Rights Respecting Schools) policy and hope to have this in a format to share with parents via the website shortly.

### 6.3 Questions arising from the presentation:

- S5/6 timetabling

Will the current structure of the S5/6 timetable be reviewed to spread classes more evenly through the school day?

NM said any review would occur after Christmas and pupil and parental opinions would be sought. A review of volunteering by senior pupils would be included in the timetable review.

- Uniform

Did Neil McCallum feel financial constraints were preventing some pupils from wearing school uniform?

NM was aware that families may be under financial pressure. While vouchers are available for families to go towards uniform costs it may be that the school could look at hosting a thrift shop in the future.

- Notice for prelims / parents nights

A request for more advance warning.

NM said this would be resolved by the school calendar being available on the school website.

- Are there any other major changes in the offing?

NM said the structure of the school day will definitely not change in the near future. Changes may occur in the timetabling and allocation of the senior phase curriculum depending on the outcome of any review after Christmas.

## **Community Council & Local Updates**

### 7. 7.1 MM provided feedback from Balerno Community Council:

- They are fundraising for Christmas lights for Balerno Main Street
- Planning permission has been granted for the Newmills development.

## **Resignation / election of Chair**

8. 8.1 TF would like to step down from role as Chair at the end of the (calendar) year.

AB asked for clarification of the remit of the role. It includes

- Monthly meetings with Headteacher
- Attending (or delegating attendance) at wider council meetings e.g. CCWP, South West partnership.
- Involvement in larger scale relevant issues e.g. CATS, Headteacher recruitment
- Responding to emails directly from parents (although parents encouraged to go directly to the school with individual concerns)

8.2 There was a discussion about how the role could be shared to make it less onerous e.g. by wider shared responsibility with the Vice Chair.

TF asked everyone to go away and consider their involvement and invited expressions of interest.

## **AOCB & date of next meeting**

9. 9.1 Website maintenance

MH would like to step down from role.

Martin (school IT officer) is happy to give training to other users. Role requires approx. 1 hour of time per month although the person responsible has to be able to be responsive, uploading information at short notice if communication is urgent / time sensitive.

JB has agreed to take on role. MH to follow up further with JB before next meeting.

9.2 Website upgrade

Following previous discussions MH asked if the school were still considering upgrading the school website to the advert free version. PC funds are available to pay for this.

NM to follow up with Lindsay Fullarton to find out what should happen next.

9.3 Governance review

TF informed that there is information circulating from the Scottish Government looking for input on their 'Education Governance Review'.

TF to forward emails. Review to be discussed at a future PC meeting.

9.4 Next meeting is Monday 23 January 2017 at 6.30pm in Ratho (time and venue tbc)