



## **Minutes of Meeting of Balerno High School Parent Council 13 March 2017 at Kirknewton Primary School at 6.30pm**

### ***PC members***

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

### ***School staff***

Neil McCallum (NM) (Headteacher, BHS), Michelle May (MM) (PTC – English, Media & Drama), Eileen Brown (Headteacher, Kirknewton Primary School)

### ***Senior pupils***

Calum Greer (CG) Head Boy

### ***Public***

Mandy Irvine (Parent)

## **Apologies**

Ricky Henderson, Sanjay Kallat, Naomi McLeod

## **Introduction and Welcome**

1. The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed all attendees and introduced Eileen Brown (Headteacher, Kirknewton Primary School).

During the course of the evening Eileen gave a tour of the refurbished school, describing the changes and upgrades implemented during the refurbishment. She briefly explained what the transition period was like for Kirknewton pupils.

## **Minutes and Matters arising**

2. 2.1 No changes were suggested to the last minutes. Proposed by Mike Humphries, seconded by Christine Paterson.

2.2 JB asked that funding for Advanced Highers courses could be discussed. See HT report for more information.

## **Headteacher report**

3. Neil McCallum gave his report. Particular topics covered include:

### **Staffing Update**

**Music Vacancy**- Interviews on Thursday morning

**English** – Sam Davies has now started in English

**Biology** – Karen Maitland has now returned from maternity leave

**SfL** – 2 new PSA positions. Mr John Hoy and Miss Ruby Beveridge.

**Martin Bleck** – IT support has returned after a medical absence.

**Librarian service reorganization** – we have secured E Timoney

### **Edinburgh Leisure**

Edinburgh leisure are in the process of taking over the management of school sports facilities from 6pm Monday to Friday, Weekends and Holidays. This is to have no impact on the school programme. It was due to start on February 22, but has now been delayed and we are waiting on confirmation of a hand over date.

### **Upcoming Events**

**21/22/23 March** – Dance Show

**30 March** – Spring Concert at 19.00

**31 March** – End of term at 13.00

**18 April** – All resume

**1 May** – Holiday

**2 May** – Start of the SQA exam diet

**4 May** – In-Service

### **Events and News update**

**Building work** – This has been delayed further and the start date is now 6<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Parents Evening and Coursing Evenings**

The parents evening consultation have now taken place for all year groups. The new system has been well received and any small issues have been shared with the company.

The coursing evenings for S2, S3, S4, and S5 pupils were all well attended and positive conversations had with parents.

### **SQA**

The exam diet starts on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May. First exams are Design and Manufacture N5 and Higher.

The last day of timetabled classes for S4, 5, 6 will be Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April.

We have now received notification from the SQA about the assessment modifications to be made to N5 courses for next year.

### **Parent Pay**

CEC moving to parent pay and feedback is that this has a better interface for parent's and should be positive in its application. A transfer date has still to be confirmed.

### **Excursions / Visits**

We had a visit from the GeoBus on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, which is an earth science outreach project.

A group of S4 pupils visited the Scottish parliament on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, learning about the parliament and having a tour as well.

Higher Biology group visited Edinburgh Zoo to study animal behaviour on 9<sup>th</sup> March.

Higher Media pupils organised the 'Breakfast club' with Balerno Village screen.

Electoral registration will visit on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March (PM) to support S4/5/6 pupils not registered to vote.

## **Sport**

A range of sporting success across the school, with pupils competing at the Edinburgh and National cross country championships. Pupils participating at the National Indoor Athletic championships. School teams in a range of sports: football, hockey, netball, basketball all developing and having success. Dance show is taking place on 21/22/23 March in the drama studio at school and this is linked with the feeder primaries, who are attending rehearsals at the High school.

## **Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)**

School has received £19,000 from the Scottish Government and this will be implemented from August 2017. This was allocated to the school on the basis of FSM and £1200 per registered pupil. The use of this money is aimed at pupils in S1 – S3 and will be used to close the gap and raise attainment in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and well-being.

## **Catchment Review.**

Update in relation to the proposed catchment review for both Currie HS and Balerno HS. Further information to be shared as it is obtained.

## **School Improvement Plan**

The timeline for this year's school improvement plan is currently taking place and input will be sought from the parent council. This is to assist with the creation of a parent friendly version of the plan to be share through the school website.

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

4. Calum Greer gave a report on their activities in the school since the last meeting. Notable points include:
  - S6 committees involved in planning end of year events (prom and final day in school for S6 pupils) were busy finalised plans and on target for their timescales.
  - Pupil council continued to meet weekly.
  - Since BHS had received the Rights Respecting Schools Award the head boy and girl were working with Mr Russell to set up a 'Leadership Focus Group' – a forum where ideas were put to pupils for discussion and comments fed back to Neil McCallum.
  - Sports results were now being mentioned in the bulletin, raising awareness of school teams and their fixtures; giving pupils recognition for their participation and informing the wider school of results.
  - A suggestion had been made to start including a 'daily quote' in the bulletin.

This was Calum's final meeting at the Parent Council as Head Boy. He was thanked for his attendance, information sharing and input to the Parent Council and thanked for his services to the school.

## **Other reports**

5. 5.1 Marion Milne (Balerno Community Council) reported that Annabel MacDonald had recently given a presentation on her travels which had partly been funded by the Louise Duncan bursary.

Applicants for this year's bursary will shortly be interviewed.

5.2 Balerno Community Council are working to pull together the 'Community Plan' and are actively involved in commenting on house building plans in the area.

PR asked what involvement (if any) the Parent Council could have in commenting on house building plans and any impact on the school roll.

NM commented that a catchment review meeting had occurred (involving schools along the Lanark Road) and a consultation was planned.

Projected S1 intake for August 2017 was 134 (an increase on the current year)

PR asked if NM had any involvement in West Lothian catchment reviews (if they would impact on the BHS school roll).

NM confirmed he would have no involvement as it was a different local authority.

TF commented that local Kirknewton residents may have more involvement through their local community council.

5.3 MM attended the south west neighbourhood meeting in February where a presentation had been given on '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Edinburgh'. NM commented that staff were aware and informed with 2 inservice days having been spent on the subject.

## **Q&A**

6. No parents of primary aged pupils in Kirknewton were present.

## **Wider Parent Participation & School Communication Meeting update**

7. 7.1 TF informed that a sub group (Lisa Coffey, Depute Head, JB, AB and TF) had met to discuss ways to improve parental engagement and communication.

JB commented that the general feeling was that communication had improved greatly. Discussion centred around how to improve it further.

Claire Dixon (parent with a marketing background) had also met with NM to discuss how the school could best use social media to communicate and to provide advice and feedback on the school website. Claire had sent a paper with her comments to TF.

TF to forward the paper to NM.

Suggestions included considering how many twitter accounts were associated with the school; reviewing how many parents were actually following the twitter feeds; a Headteacher's blog and updated the front page of the school website.

TF added that consistency of information on the website between different departments would be helpful and suggested giving staff a deadline by which point website information had to be submitted.

NM said that the Senior Management Team (SMT) were meeting this week to discuss the suggestions further and would provide feedback to the sub group and then the Parent Council after that.

A brief discussion followed on other ways to improve two-way communication with parents. Suggestions included:

- Plan a systematic review of what we are doing throughout the year
- Parent Council presence at parents' nights – inviting dialogue and asking parents for comments about the school. The new online booking system means parents may have fewer gaps between appointments but with generally 80% attendance of parents at each parents' night it was a valuable opportunity to meet people.

TF asked if there was a common thread to parents' questions to teachers that could be fed back to the PC.

MM commented that it was generally questions about a young person's level of work.

NM commented on the importance of SMT presence at parents' nights as a further opportunity for parents to talk with senior staff.

All parents evenings have occurred for this academic year. Suggestion to be discussed further at a future meeting.

- Providing more feedback to parents on their comments ('You said, we did.....'). This could be used to respond to any comments parents made at a parents night.

PR suggested also referring back to the survey carried out during the Headteacher recruitment process and feeding back to parents how comments had been taken on board.

NM agreed to look at the results and decide how to respond.

### **Chair election**

8. 8.1 TF reiterated that he was keen to step down from the role as Chair.

AB agreed to chair the next meeting as a trial while considering the role. AB commented that if she took on the role she was keen to involve others in sharing the workload and involvement.

PM agreed to take the next minutes in May 2017.

### **Banking**

9. 9.1 Recently it had become apparent that it was unclear who the signatories were for the Parent Council bank account. Contrary to understanding TF was not actually a signatory and recognised signatories at the bank were past PC members who were no longer involved.

As TF is keen to stand down as chair, PR suggested starting afresh with new signatories who will continue to serve on the PC in the longer term.

Peter Reekie, Christine Paterson & Andrea Brewster will become the new signatories.

PR to contact the bank and start the process of changing over signatories. The following is being supplied to the bank as an extract of minutes (signed by TF as chair) as part of the changeover process:

#### ***Extract from Minute of Meeting held on Monday 13 March 2017 at Kirknewton Primary School***

##### ***Item 9 - Banking***

*The Chairman noted that the meeting was quorate and properly constituted.*

*The Treasurer reported that following discussions with Royal Bank of Scotland over completing forms to add his name to the banking mandate, it had become clear that only one authorised signatory, Elizabeth Carrie, remained available to sign the necessary documentation. Members discussed and agreed that for a resilient banking arrangement, requiring two signatories for all transactions, three signatories should be authorised from amongst Members intending to remain on the Parent Council in 2017-18.*

*It was agreed that the Treasurer, Peter Reekie, should be one of the signatories, along with Andrea Brewster and Christine Paterson.*

*To implement this agreement it was resolved that the authorised signatories in the current mandate for the BHS Parent Council account detailed in section 2 of the Royal Bank of Scotland Unincorporated Club, Society or other Community Organisation Mandate, be changed in accordance with sections 5 and 6 and the current mandate will continue as amended.*

## **AOCB**

10.10.1 AB asked for information on the school policy for mobile phone use in class following concerns that some pupils are inappropriately using phones to text, go on social media and record other pupils / staff.

NM confirmed that the phone policy was regularly emphasised in assemblies; pupils had signed a 'responsible user' form and information on appropriate phone use would be re-emphasised to parents.

10.2 PR asked for an update following the recent focus on appropriate school uniform to wear.

NM said that communication had recently gone to parents, reiterating the school dress code and informing that school uniform would revert to the summer dress code of blazers (albeit under warmer jackets if necessary).

Since receiving the Rights Respecting Schools Award orange slips had been used to track those not wearing school uniform. Pupils not wearing appropriate uniform would be given an orange slip and a demerit during period 1. Some feedback had been received e.g. from senior pupils about to leave school who no longer had a blazer that fitted and the school were showing some flexibility in these situations.

NM reported that the number of orange slips being given out was already tailing off.

AB asked if any progress had been made with the idea of a thrift shop.

NM said that although there was no thrift shop the school had a lot of nearly new blazers available to pupils if affordability was an issue.

NM will also ensure all parents are informed when Aitken and Niven will be in school for blazer fitting for the p7 transition pupils.

## **Date / time of next meeting**

11. Next meeting is Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at 6.30pm in Balerno High School.