

Minutes of Balerno High School Parent Council Meeting held on 17th January 2011

Present

F Barkey parent member/ Chair
C Atkins parent member
C Merchant parent member
S McLeod parent member
L Carrie parent member/treasurer
J Gladstone staff member
S Stride staff member
M Milne co-opted member/BCC

In Attendance

R Mackenzie Headteacher/adviser to PC
K Amos Headgirl
R Henderson Local Councillor (Part)
A Paisley Local Councillor (Part)
D Craigie Dean Park Primary rep (Part)

Apologies

P Aitchison parent member/vice-chair
K Scott PTA rep

The previous minutes were approved

School report

Please see attached.

Mr Mackenzie related that as part of the review of catering services he met with the Edinburgh Catering managers today .Possible updates to both menus and facilities were discussed.

Mr Mackenzie to liase with F Barkey re. S5 parent focus group. ACTION R McK FB

Senior School Report

K Amos reported that S6 has raised £2000 for the school charity to date.

The Cockburn Ceilidh will be held on 2nd February. 75 tickets have been sold.

S5 /6 prelims start on 20/1/11.

Budget Cuts

R Henderson described the proposed cuts that CEC has to make. Total is £90million, with division of £45million in 2011/12, £20million in 2012/13 and £25million in 2013/14. Additional service pressures bring the total savings to be found in 2011/12 to £53million. CEC has put forward a 3 year plan of cuts packages. If the cuts are unacceptable alternatives have to be identified.

R Mackenzie explained that it is proposed that around £2.4million cuts be made to secondary schools this year. Changes will be made to janitorial provision, schools will lose Bursars, community high school funding will be cut and there will be cuts to school management. In an average sized school like Balerno this will mean the loss of 1 Depute Headteacher and 6 Principal teacher posts. This equates to a loss of approx.

£150,000 or 4 teachers in Balerno High School. The school could not operate the curriculum currently offered with this reduction in staff.

Discussion ensued as to how best to oppose the cuts and identify alternative areas where savings maybe made. Rationalisation of the schools estate and a reduction in central management were identified as possible areas for savings.

Regarding opposing the cuts, the feeling was that the huge volume of press regarding the dire state of the economy has led parents to believe that cuts are necessary. This makes mounting a campaign difficult especially when combined with a lack of specific detail of how the cuts would affect pupils directly. Additionally, parents have been asked year on year to oppose cuts by lobbying councillors and there may be an element of campaigning "fatigue". All were agreed the proposed cuts have dire implications.

Balerno Community Council (BCC)

BCC will approach the school re. designing a logo for BCC. A small prize will be offered.

There is new policing in place with a 6 man team covering the Pentlands ward.

LRT are opposed to re-routing the 44 bus permanently to treat the village as a one way system driving up past the Johnsburn to the Cockburn Cres terminal to avoid abandoned vehicles on the roadside.

Local Councillors Report

R Henderson left after the discussion of budget cuts.

A Paisley informed that he had requested information from G Tee regarding what is the access into a school in view of problems with snow clearance, also poor communication with parents during snow closures.

Eco subgroup report

Parents are needed to join the eco-school group. The group is looking at food production, litter and transport. Group is organised by Viv McKay.

PTA wants to start recycling mobiles, printer cartridges and clothing. Community Ed already recycles cartridges and is setting up clothing.

PIPER monies have been banked.

Proposals are to be put forward regarding the use of the money.

PC Website

C Atkins has sent some text to S McLeod. Content can now start to be married with website.

Money Matters

Clerk fees will be recovered in February. L Carrie will submit form.

C Atkins agreed to become bank account signatory. P Aitchison to be deleted as signatory.

Curriculum for Excellence

The PC heard from J Gladstone and S Stride.

Mr Gladstone outlined the new curriculum model.

Essentially, there will be very little change to S1/2 while still fully supporting the principles of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

S3 has a proposed change to 7 subjects. Course choice would stay at end of S2.S3 would have an additional hour of PE to meet national guidelines. There may also be short courses, possibly directed by school ,to give a broad general education. Current proposal does not specify requirements such as all pupils to take at least 1 science.

In S4 courses continue plus the additional PE and extra English and Maths. At the end of S4 there will be national 4 or 5 assessments. Pupils may work at Access/national 4 level or work through national 5 and into Higher during the 2 year S3 and 4 courses. Aim is to push boundaries, raise expectations and challenge pupils.

In S5 English or another communication course will be compulsory.

These are outline plans and require further consultation with professional staff. There will be further consultation with the PC.

Ms Stride described how numeracy has been crossing department barriers.

The S1 pupils have had graph week. Feedback from pupils showed that 67% thought they had improved their knowledge of graphs.

Next is time week. Issues such as reading an analogue clock will be addressed.

Finally, there will be % week.

Ms Stride reminded us that the numeracy booklet is available on the school website.

AOB

R Mackenzie described the difficulties with school closures during the bad weather. A change in procedure caused many problems. It has been proosed that when there is disagreement between HQ management and the Headteacher (over closing the school due to bad weather) the Headteacher will have ultimate authority. The SMT had worked hard to ensure pupils were safe and could get home safely.

F Barkey pointed out the clash of PC meeting dates with those of Dean Park. ACTION F Barkey

Date of the next Meeting

7th March 2011. 7.30pm