

Balerno High School Parent Council Meeting Minutes 6th June 2011

Attending:	Francis Barkey	Chair
	Liz Carrie	Parent Member
	Sue McLeod	Parent Member
	Chris Merchant	Parent Member
	Clare Atkins	Parent Member
	K McKeown	Parent Member
	Karen Scott	Chair of PSA
	Susan Stride	Staff Member
	Jim Gladstone	Staff Member

In attendance:	Rory McKenzie	Head teacher/adviser to PC
	Bobby Smith	Chair of Ratho Primary Parent Council
	Viv McKay	Manager of Community Education Office
	Mike Molleson	Parent

1. Apologies:	Marion Milne	Member of Balerno Community Council
	John Craig	Parent Member
	Alastair Paisley	Councillor
	Ricky Henderson	Councillor

2. Previous Minutes

Previous minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting with the addition of an apology from Chris Merchant.

3. Renewable Energy Projects – Mike Molleson

Mike Molleson, parent, was invited by FB to address the meeting. MB explained that he was working on a Masters degree in renewable energy and would like to use Balerno High School as a case study with a view to providing green energy to the school. Mike's deadline for this project is 30th August. MB will be looking for feedback and attendance at a meeting on 17th/18th or 19th August. FB then opened the floor to questions and these were as follows:

FB: Would any monetary savings go back to central funds or would there be savings for the school?

MM: There could be a saving to the school in year 1 of any scheme but the energy budget would no doubt be reduced accordingly thereafter.

CM: What benefits would you see this exercise bringing to the school?

MM: A Green Flag award to the school as well as helping to integrate renewable energy and eco-sustainability issues into the curriculum for Balerno High School pupils.

RM: Is there a financial outlay?

MM: That depends on the scheme that's chosen – for example solar panels payback over a period of time. Roof space to mount solar panels could be rented out. But as the school, and therefore the roof space, belong to the council it's unlikely that the school would realise this income either. But it would still be a worthwhile exercise for the school to be part of.

FB: Is access needed to the school?

MM: Not really but site plans might be useful.

MM concluded his presentation by saying that he hoped that the members of the PC would support him in this project. FB agreed to provide MM with the PC email distribution list to allow him to arrange a meeting of interested parties.

4. School Lets

Viv McKay attended the meeting for this item. VM gave an update on the CATS review of Community Education schools. The CEC has asked all schools to provide information on the following:

- Number of lets
- Number of users
- Age of users
- Peak usage
- Charging structure

Edinburgh Leisure want to remove both Head teacher and Parent Council input to pricing on lets i.e. Edinburgh Leisure are looking for a free reign on price increases.

The 5 organisations VM has already approached have agreed to pay the increases – which are uniform across the council area.

FB asked what leeway there was for the school to offer some kind of subsidy to groups which have financial difficulties. VM confirmed there was some leeway but the group went on to discuss whether or not this was in fact the school's problem. RM felt there a community aspect to this because the groups affected are mainly attended by Balerno HS and Dean Park Primary School pupils.

VM reported that Jane Goulding was in negotiation with Balerno Community Hall to use this space instead of Balerno HS

VM has been given the authority to negotiate with Jane Goulding..

VM went on to give an update on the on-going review of community schools. The review should have been completed but the audit questionnaire, which is part of the review, has not yet been issued to schools. VM has seen a draft report but is unsure what the final outcome will be.

The various models which have been mooted by the CEC are as follows:

- Edinburgh Leisure to run all lettings
- Lettings to be run centrally by CEC
- Lettings to be run from, yet to be decided, hubs
- Each school runs their own lettings as they do currently

There is a pilot scheme running at Queensferry High School where Edinburgh Leisure are running the lets – VM is unsure whether the school gets a fair share of any profits under this scheme.

RM reported that the Dept of Children and Families is not happy with the Edinburgh Leisure letting model. A comparative exercise was run between Queensferry and Currie High schools and Currie came out significantly ahead in terms of profitability.

VM's final update to the PC concerned the withdrawal of the Balerno HS after school club from the Care Commission as the club was unable to comply with the rules and regulations around staffing requirements. Unfortunately the Community Education office has no budget to train more staff having lost 3 trained staff recently. However there may be the possibility of running an activity club instead where staff are employed as coaches rather than carers. Childcare vouchers can't be used for this service. This would also affect Working Family Tax Credits savings.

FB thanked VM for attending the meeting and for providing such a comprehensive report.

5. School Report

Attached.

6. CCWP

This item is covered under EIS Budget Cuts on the agenda.

7. PSA Report

KS reported that it had been a quiet year for the PSA. The Fashion Show was a great success. PTA members now attend Parents' Evenings and provide teas + coffees which is much appreciated by parents.

8. Community Council Report

No report available.

9. Councillors Reports

FB reported that Councillor Paisley had emailed to ask that if budget should be become available then where would the school/Parent Council want the Astroturf to be. FB commented that he thought the current ash pitch would be best but asked for comments from the council. RM mentioned an email that he had had from Councillor Henderson suggesting the football pitch. After some discussion it was agreed that the ash pitch would be the best site as there is no requirement for Balerno High School to have an international standard pitch. FB will go back to Councillor Paisley on this basis.

10. Eco-Sustainability Report

CA reported little progress in this area but VM had previously confirmed that the school Eco-Sustainability Committee would welcome PC involvement in the new term.

11. PC Web Site

SM spoke about the last of the testing which is needed for the soon to be launched Balerno High School Parent Council Website. SM went on to explain how this website is hosted for \$10 per annum but this will be changing to \$10 per month. SM wants to change how all the websites she has created and manages so that they are hosted by the same company. SM would pay the costs and then charge back to the PSA.

CM asked where the server is currently hosted. SM was unable to confirm where the current server is hosted but could confirm that the new server will be hosted in England. CM asked if the current arrangements would continue if SM moved on. SM confirmed that this would, in the main, be the case with the proviso that SM would hand over the site to her nominated replacement to manage the site. SM agreed that some kind of arrangement to deal with this scenario should be in place and this needs to be discussed further.

SM went on to tell the group that there is a need for a website policy for the new site – this will cover who gets to do what e.g. who has publishing rights, document review dates, who decides when documents should be archived or removed from the site etc.

We also need to separate any further development of the site from the day-to-day management of the site.

SM is looking for volunteers to provide further content. LC, CM and KM put their names forward and SM will arrange appropriate training.

KS noted that the PTA had previously agreed to provide content and she will provide this when it's available.

FB thanked SM again for all her hard work and congratulated her on doing a fantastic job.

12. EIS Budget Cuts

FB had sent out a flyer to council members giving details of various meetings that were going to be taking place.

One of these will be a debate chaired by Councillor Godzik on 21st June. The Edinburgh Parent Council Network (EPCN) will be sending a delegation to try to persuade the CEC the overturn decisions made on teaching, Principal teacher and Depute Head posts.

RM has spoken to affected teachers in Balerno High School to explain the changes that these decisions will have on them. There are no Head Teachers in Edinburgh who are happy with the proposals but Balerno High School might emerge from the exercise relatively unscathed but only due to the ages of teachers and the current structure.

All head teachers in Edinburgh feel that the speed of change and the potential savings are both unrealistic.

RM noted that he had always been opposed to the Faculty model.

JG and SS both asked to address the council.

SS explained how she couldn't see how savings could be made in first 3 years. Nor how Curriculum for Excellence could be introduced successfully at a time of so many changes – e.g. many experienced teachers leave the service through the early retirement scheme (VERA).

JG spoke about how there would still be someone in front of a class of students but agreed with SS that it was very worrying to consider the levels of expertise that those leaving education will take with them at this time of change in the curriculum. RM noted that principal teachers will be reduced over and above those staff reductions due to the VERA scheme. He cited the example of the science department at Balerno HS reducing from 3 to 1 curricular leader. All of these changes are, understandably, having a negative effect on staff morale

13. AOB

Volunteers needed for sign up of email at S1 pupil information evening. LC and CA agreed to be there.

14. Date of next meeting

AGM 12th Sept 2011 – 7.30 pm.
PC Meeting to follow at 8pm