

# Balerno High School Parent Council

## Minutes of the Parent Council Meeting held on 16th January, 2012

### Apologies:

Kenneth Wong, Bobby Smith, Carol MacLeod, Liz Carrie, Sally Gartside, Alister Paisley, Marion Milne, Ron Cairns

### Present:

Helen Purves, Chair	Graeme Sives, Headteacher
Sue McLeod, Vice-Chair	Jim Gladstone, Teacher Rep
Kirsty Mckeown	Susan Stride, Teacher Rep
Aileen Macleod	Amy Christison, Head Girl
Mike Humphries	Ross Macnaughton, Dpty Head Boy
Chris Merchant	Ricky Henderson, Councillor
Karen Scott, Chair, Balerno HS PTA	

### Matters arising from previous minutes

It was suggested that the process for agreeing and issuing minutes is longwinded. A more streamlined process should be considered at a future meeting.

### Meeting times

It was agreed that future meetings will start at 7.00 pm

### Items from parents

Helen listed a number of items which had been suggested by parents as potential discussion topics:

2 hours of PE per week

S3/S4 subject choices

Communication

Higher than expected tutor uptake in Maths and English

Calendar of school events being made available in advance

Replacement of teachers who have left

Uniform

SEEMIS

### Inspection

GS delivered a presentation on the findings from last year's inspection. This was not minuted but key points include:

- Conclusions overall were very positive with specific evaluations for each quality indicator as outlined in HMIE letter published 16 December 2011
- Areas for improvement include upgrading school systems (IT and others) and refreshing the School Improvement Plan (with appropriate stakeholder input)
- Focus for the next session will be on the Improvement Plan in response to HMIE findings
- The Standards and Quality section of the plan is from the previous session to allow important information on wider achievement to be captured right up to the end of the session, an even into the summer vacation. It is reported on retrospectively.

In discussion after the presentation CM expressed the view that some pupils in S2 were not being sufficiently stretched. GS indicated that this was not something highlighted by HMIE but that the school might benefit from developing such a policy.

### Pupil Perspective

AC and RM provided an update on activities in the period since the last meeting:

- A successful first year disco was held
- A teachers' karaoke took place
- A 'come to school in fancy dress' day was held
- £915 was raised for Children in Need
- A Christmas Concert and Christmas Gift Service (for less privileged children) took place
- 2 'Business Enterprise' teams won prizes at a The South East Scotland Young Enterprise Trade Fare

#### Looking forward

- A ceilidh will be held on 7<sup>th</sup> February
- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year will go on exam leave shortly

#### Head Teacher's updates

- 250 parents attended the S1 evening in October
- As part of the Chaplaincy Team our Imam and Church of Scotland minister took the seniors through a moving Remembrance ceremony in November
- The school will take part in the Balerno Music Festival later this year for the first time
- Discussion of Curriculum for Excellence is taking place with representatives from other schools
- The Maths Department came third in an 'Enterprising Maths' competition
- A restructure of school management will be announced on 19/01
- The school has developed links with a Microsoft-certified trainer at Saughton Prison and is considering how best to utilise the relationship
- Various members of staff have been made permanent: Jonathan Coulson, Drama; Craig Hamilton, Geography; Vaila Wright, PE; Areti Lympelopoulou

#### New Website

GS demonstrated the new website which is currently being developed by 2 members of staff. He intends to get pupils and staff from all departments involved in maintaining and developing the site. It is expected to launch shortly. The view of the meeting was that it made sense to launch as soon as possible, provided there is sufficient worthwhile content.

#### CCwP / EPCN

Because of time pressure at the meeting, these items will be covered on the PC website.

#### Curriculum for Excellence

- GS emphasised that parents should continue to ask the questions they think are important.
- Parents are directed to the 'mythbuster' section on the SQA website for up-to-date information
- The rationale for Balerno offering 7 rather than 8 subjects to second years was queried, one point of view being that as Balerno needs to attract pupils to maintain its headcount, the school might find itself at a disadvantage vis-a-vis those institutions currently offering 8.
- JG explained this is to allow for the required 2 hrs per week of PE and to allow time for electives which would, in line with CfE philosophy, not narrow the curriculum too early and allow scope for wider achievement at the Broad General Education stage.

#### Councillors

RH noted that next Council budget will be set on 09/02. It is hoped to avoid further impact on school funding this year.

#### Date of next meeting

Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at 7.00 pm