

BALERNO HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARENT COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12th MARCH, 2012

Apologies:

Chris Merchant, Sue McLeod, Susan Stride, Ron Cairns, Alistair Paisley

Present:

Helen Purves, Chair	Graeme Sives, Headteacher
Sally Gartside, Minutes	Jim Gladstone, Teacher Rep
Kirsty Mckeown	Marion Milne, Balerno Community Council
Aileen Macleod	Amy Christison, Head Girl
Mike Humphries	Kenneth Wong, Head Boy
Liz Carrie, Treasurer	Ricky Henderson, Councillor
Carol McLeod	Karen Scott, Chair, Balerno HS PTA

Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 January 2012

The minutes of the meeting were approved.

Matters Arising

GS requested that the Council consider an earlier start time for meetings. He hoped to invite teaching colleagues to attend the meetings from time to time, to make presentations to the Council. An earlier start time would facilitate this. It was agreed that henceforth meetings would commence at 6 pm.

School Update – Headteacher

GS reported on events in school since the last meeting:-

- Phase 2 of the citywide management restructuring was now in place across the authority. In BHS the new model had 8 faculty heads and these principal teachers were now in post. The next stage would involve guidance teachers. Given the driver behind the organisational review was to gain efficiency savings GS envisaged that the number of pupil support teachers would be cut.
- GS gave talk to Rotary Club beginning February to promote closer links and share partnership working ideas. RYLA opportunities just announced.
- S4 and S2 Open Evenings took place.
- Cockburn House held a successful ceilidh.
- Gillian Tee, Director of Children & Families and her colleague David Wright visited the school.
- Education Scotland attended the school with 16 visiting Romanian School Inspectors, part of pan European study of Quality Assurance procedures
- Links were established with the Balerno Music Festival and the school will be involved in a couple of lunchtime concerts in St Joseph's and Parish church as part of the festival in October
- A Moral Maze Question Time took place with senior pupils questioning local MSPs.
- The school was considering how good it was at self-evaluation and had engaged the services of Sirius Concepts to advise on software that will enable the school to generate questionnaires for pupils and staff as part of this process. HP and LC suggested that any consultation could also include questionnaires to parents. On a linked matter GS agreed that when the school started to

collect email addresses via the annual census, parents would be asked if they were happy for these addresses to be passed to the Parent Council.

Senior Pupil Update

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

- A “European Perspectives” pupil exchange visit took place. The exchange had a media focus.
- Question Time organised in conjunction with Community colleagues with all political parties: D. McLetchie, Con; S. Boyack, Lab; Paul Edie, LD; G MacDonald, SNP; A. Johnstone, Green
- There was a skiing trip to France for S2.
- Community work - pupils made pancakes in the sheltered housing complex at Larchfield Neuk.
- Girls attended an International Women’s Day event at the City Chambers.
- Two teams were due to represent the school at the Model United Nations at George Watson’s.
- The school was shortly to enter pupils for the Lothian Young Enterprise Awards on 20th March. (These pupils subsequently won seven awards and will represent Lothian at the Young Enterprise Awards Final in June).
- There was a Dance Showcase at Stewart’s Melville College.
- Photos for Eduardo Paolazzi.

Updates

Councillors:- RC advised that there were no unexpected surprises in the Council budget and that some money would be available for fabric repairs. There was a change to the public entertainment licensing legislation that had resulted in certain local arts and community events now needing to be licensed. This was not the intention behind the new legislation and the authority was consulting on amendments to remove these events from the licensing regime.

PTA:- KS said that the PTA had been in discussions with school to see if they could update their own page on the new website. GS confirmed that this would be acceptable. The PTA S6 Fashion Show was to take place on 18th April and tickets would be for sale in the Community Education Office (adults £6, pupils £3). The PTA had provided tea and coffee at the parent evening events.

BCC:- MM reported that the Farmers Market and Tattie Day had taken place. The roundabout outside the Parish Church would be planted for the Jubilee celebrations. There was no news on the proposed army base at Kirknewton. Dean Park Parent Council was pushing for a pedestrian crossing on Bavelaw Road and BCC supported this. The BCC logo was still not finalised because the chosen logo infringed copyright legislation and needed to be altered.

Parent Council Funds

LC advised that there was a balance of £3,064 in the Parent Council account and that a further deposit of £200 for unpaid clerking fees was expected shortly. She proposed that, as in the past, the Council should make a donation to the school although a certain amount of money would need to be retained to cover Parent Council running costs. Following discussion it was agreed that this money should form a Hardship Fund that would support certain pupils to fully experience the opportunities available to them at school (such as the S1 residential trip). A cheque for £2,500 was handed to GS for this purpose.

Curriculum for Excellence

Further to discussions at the last meeting the decision to move to 7 rather than 8 certificated subjects at National 4 and 5 was revisited. GS assured the meeting that BHS was not on a limb nationally and that the rationale for the changes was sound. However, he reported that he was in discussion with the P.E. department to ascertain whether it might be possible for P.E to be certificated for all pupils, which would restore 8 certificated subjects. The benefit of this approach was that pupils would be formally recognised for the 2 hours of P.E. they undertook as required per Government guidelines. However, this would also place a significant administrative burden on the P.E. staff. He anticipated that a decision would be made very shortly on the viability of this proposal. (The decision was subsequently taken to proceed to certificate all pupils in P.E.)

GS was very keen to reassure those parents who, quite naturally, had concerns during this period of change to qualifications. Following discussion it was agreed that a Position Statement should be issued with these minutes setting out again the rationale for change and addressing the questions that had been aired at the S2 Information Evening and since. Ongoing information on the developing position with Curriculum for Excellence and the school's application of the new curriculum would also be posted on the Parent Council website.

Communication

HP suggested the Council should consider reinstating parental surveys of S1 parents as this was a useful exercise.

AOCB

KMc asked about the procedure in school for following up on absent children. GS advised that presently a paper system operated but that the school would shortly move to automated Groupcall following the IT refresh (probably by August).

KMc also asked about the arrangements for S1 and 2 pupils at lunchtime. JG explained that as a health promoting school BHS was keen for pupils to be out in the fresh air at lunchtime. Pupils were advised that they could leave school premises if their parents said so. Otherwise they could play on the tarmac area outside the Riverside Café. This was a more intimate and less intimidating environment than the concourse for younger pupils. The meeting was grateful for this explanation.

Date of next meeting

Monday, 11th June 2012 at **6.00 pm**