

Balerno High School Parent Council (PC)

Minutes of meeting held on 03/06/13 in Balerno High School

Present

Helen Purves (HP)
Aileen Macleod (AMcl)
Liz Carrie (LC)

- minutes

Kirsty McKeown (KMck)
Mike Humphries (MH)
Sally Gartside (SG)
Marion Milne (MM)
Lindsay Fullarton (LF)

Chair
Vice-Chair
Treasurer

Parent member
Parent member
Parent member
Co - opted member
Staff member

In attendance

Graeme Sives (GS)
Ros Brown
Susan Stride

Apologies

Ruth Douglas
Ishbel Smith
Ricky Henderson

Headteacher
Parent
Principal Teacher,
Maths

Staff member
Dean Park PC Chair
Local Councillor

It was agreed to alter the running order of the meeting as GS had to leave at 6.45pm. LC took the minute.

Presentation - new maths website – Susan Stride

The **new maths site**, accessible via the school website, will provide information and support for pupils and parents. PC invited to give feedback and circulate a questionnaire among parents. 2 maths classes have been using website for a year and parental feedback has been good, want to extend it to all classes and levels. Homework has been posted which parents have found helpful.

MH asked if this could be rolled out for all departments. GS replied that this is the aspiration but staffing levels restrict time available to post information. MH commented that if departments are restricted, starting with just homework on-line would be useful. GS responded that this is part of an on-going homework review. LF advised that Khan Academy for which there is a link on this maths website, has YouTube clips on all subject areas, which are helpful.

Ms Stride then outlined the **Pentland Savers Credit Union** which is being set up and will be run by pupils. Aim is to teach pupils to save and give financial education. Open to pupils, parents and staff. Run in conjunction with Capital Credit Union. Credit Unions are regulated bodies. Any profits are distributed among members.

PC felt these were positive initiatives.

School report - GS

The PC had asked for updates on the following areas-

CfE and new exams

Information evening for S4 parents to be held on August 19th (this has subsequently been changed to Thursday 22 August).

School has been held back by lack of information from national bodies. The meeting will explain timelines and presentation levels for the new exams.

Agreed that parents should be notified of meeting before and after summer holiday.

SG reiterated how unfortunate it was that CfE update from school had not been received by many parents prior to the issuing of the timetables. GS recognised the orientation level information in the timetable had caused anxiety but that it was unavoidable due to SEEMIS. GS stated that presentation level decisions will continue to be made as late as possible. The new curriculum gives more opportunities for bi-level classes which could allow flexibility of presentation level.

GS stressed that presentation level will be based on previous performance and must be appropriate for the individual pupil.

Income from lets

BHS is making its income target of £250,000. This money does not come to the school. Of this money 52% is generated by adult education, 26% from lets, 18% from the holiday programme and 2% from recreation. This demonstrates that BHS is serving the local community well. More income could be generated but

several concessionaire community groups use the facilities. Proposed centralised management of High School community facilities could be detrimental to these groups.

MM recalled similar proposals in the past and sought clarification as to whether or not this is once again a live issue. The review of Community Access to Schools (CATS Review) report, submitted on 21 May, is available on the City Edinburgh Council (CEC) website.

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2984/education_children_and_families_committee_item_7.3

Wisepay pilot

Pilot ends in August 2013. GS thinks it will be extended. Not yet fully functional (e.g. cannot yet be used to pay for cashless catering). Has saved office staff time with on-line payments for CDT and Home Ec.

Infrastructure improvements

Riverside Cafe – improvements proposed by CEC at beginning of session have not progressed.

Departments have been moved to have Faculty members together.

Drama studio £8000 spent to repair/ renew lighting.

PE £3000 on IT.

Education Scotland Inspection Oct 2011 - follow up review by CEC

No date set, expected in Autumn term 2013

Community library

No further developments.

Hardship funds

Monies mostly used to support S1 Residential.

HT surgeries

HT of Dean Park Primary has been holding surgeries in BHS. GS thought he might participate in these.

GS has also been visiting associated primaries PC meetings.

Plans afoot to consult all P6 parents on what they want from P7 – S1 Transition. MH observed that this must be done equally for all primaries. GS confirmed that the recognised associated primaries Ratho, Kirknewton and Dean Park are all included.

S6 Activity Agreements

These are part of the 16+ positive destinations scheme. HP requested a statement that explained this for parents as this was on the S6 course form.

GS will ask Ms Forbes to produce a list of examples for clarification.

Proposed housing development in Balerno

GS asked that the PC consider supporting the proposed housing development as a potential way to maintain the school's full roll (800) and to safeguard its future.

He explained that currently about 80 pupils transfer from the 3 associated primaries. If that continues for 4/5 years the school roll could, (without attracting students from outwith our catchment) fall below 500 pupils. As budget for staffing is related to roll, staffing levels would reduce, hence restricting the number of courses on offer.

While it is testament to the school's reputation that it attracts an additional 40/50 pupils each year from further afield, these numbers change and cannot be used for planning purposes. Action must be taken to support the school by increasing the roll.

GS also said that he believes that CEC need to do more to support BHS getting more pupils. Catchment reviews are no longer relevant but designating another primary as an associated school could help. Can dialogue be opened with CEC to explore getting more pupils?

The cap on S1 intake at Dean Park is now lifted which is positive.

MH commented that he could not support building on green belt land. Also, any benefits from additional housing could take 10 years to have an effect.

GS responded that not supporting building will have consequences for the school. Projections for the next 3 years show 71 pupils coming from associated primaries. School needs support with roll.

LC asked if PC could support school in discussions with CEC.

GS replied that lobbying local Councillors could be helpful.

LC wondered if Dean Park PC might support BHS PC with this.

SG not comfortable with speaking for Parent Forum on this issue but comfortable with lobbying Councillors re additional support for school.

HP concluded that the topic should remain on agenda for further discussion as consultation and situation evolves.

MM will explain school situation at BCC meeting on Thursday this week.

GS and SS left the meeting at this point.

Minutes of previous meeting

MH noted that some text had been added to the minutes which had not been said at the meeting. Whilst modifying minutes is ok they must be an accurate reflection of what was said.

All agreed that a comment stating that further information was added (in this case for clarification) is satisfactory.

Matters arising

Challenge Week-Big Breakfast

Mr McKinney has asked for £150. Agreed that PC will provide cutlery, plates etc. LC volunteered to purchase these.

Parental involvement welcome, marshalling at sponsored stroll for example. HP to invite parents via PC distribution list.

Communication Position Paper and Survey and Draft Mobile Phone Usage Policy* - update

Paper on mobile phone usage has been referred to IT review group. Responsible usage of phone comes under IT umbrella. Guidance coming from CEC.

Communication Position Paper ratified by SMT and published on website.

Communication Survey received 40 responses both positive and negative. Jim Gladstone (JG) and HP met to discuss findings last week. HP requested that specific suggestions for website improvements be immediately referred to Website group, comprising 2 teachers and one member of admin staff, who are meeting this week.

JG setting up a short life working group to discuss further and review in Autumn term. HP will invite parents to join.

Supporting teenagers' mental health and well being - programme development.

Following the success of a parenting 0-12 course, CEC are developing a course for parents on supporting teenagers' mental health and well being. Any interested parents can contribute to the development of this programme. HP will distribute information to parents as above.

PC business/admin

New S1 parents info evening 20 June

HP sought feedback on PC presentation.

SG suggested using an example of something the PC had been involved in.

LC suggested mentioning that parental involvement in the school is increasing and PC supports this.

Meeting Dates

Lets booked for: 09/09/13; 28/10/13; 09/12/13; 03/02/14; 31/03/14 and 26/05/14

LC asked that meetings be rotated between Balerno HS, Ratho and Kirknewton PSs routinely.

Also, that dates of our meeting do not clash with associated primary PC meetings, so that reps can attend each others. MH reported that Ratho PC are likely to meet on Tuesdays. HP has requested dates from Dean Park and Kirknewton.

Start time will remain 6pm.

AGM is 9th September. Parent members to meet prior to this.

Draft parental engagement strategy*

CEC have put ratification back until Autumn for further scrutiny.

MH commented document needed to be tightened up a little.

LC questioned validity of consultation given small number of people consulted.

Neighbourhood and CCwP

AMcI represents BHS PC at the South West (SW) Neighbourhood meetings, she reported they were useful source of information on CEC matters and to feed in BHS view.

AMcI also attended CCwP on behalf of schools in SW and advised that these meetings are worthwhile and recommends BHS PC continues to be represented.

HP thanked Aileen for attending on behalf of local schools.

Clerk

HPs commented that the chair role has included a lot of additional admin tasks and that in her opinion the support of a paid Clerk would improve the functioning of the PC. Clerk duties attached.

MH raised recruitment issues and the need to be fair. Some discussion followed re possible recruitment of a S6 pupil for the role or a modern apprentice. Agreed that further information required. LC to contact parental engagement unit for advice and HP find out what other schools do. SG and LC support idea of paid clerk.

Parent Voice

New S4 CfE updates

School information evening to be held on 22nd August.

SG asked if any explanation had been forthcoming on why not all pupils got the CfE update. Discussion followed. Some pupils did receive the letter, not clear why others did not. SG noted a text as well as handout would have alerted parents to look out for update.

Text use by school is increasing which is thought to be useful.

MH wondered why more use not made of email. Discussion highlighted problems including not all parents having access to PC, not all parents have activated their Wisepay accounts which requires an email, parents frequently do not update email addresses and SEEMIS is very cumbersome.

KMcK asked if paper could be saved by not duplicating letters when there is more than 1 child in school. Again, SEEMIS does not facilitate this.

Local updates

MM noted that no meeting of BCC had been held since last PC meeting.

AOCB

KMcK asked LF about staffing in English. LF responded that plans are in place to request an acting internal PT of English. A probationer is also coming. Further recruitment will be necessary.

KMcK raised ongoing difficulties with Kirknewton buses. Although Councillors have been contacted there have only been sporadic improvements. MH reported problems with Ratho buses too.

HP to write to both Councils.

LC to look for bus complaint form which used to be available in Ratho and Kirknewton post offices for parents to record incidents and send to school and PC. LC added that it is very disappointing that the same problems keep recurring with the school buses. LF commented that the school reports problems to the Councils who hold the contracts with the bus companies.

LF pleased to report that the new S3 will get a Project Dream type experience, by agreement with the Lyceum Theatre.

LF also described a successful science event for P3 and P6 pupils from the associated primaries held at BHS. Hoped that this will develop as a transition event.

Date of next meeting

AGM on 9th Sept.

Current PC parent members to meet prior to this.

*Documents available on PC website: www.balernohighschoolparentcouncil.org

Clerk info

The Clerk plays an important role in supporting communication between Parent Council Members and between the Parent Forum and Parent Council. It is important that members of the Parent Forum know they can get in touch with the Clerk and that these arrangements are well publicised so that all parents know how to make contact. If the clerk is **not** a member of the Parent Council they can be paid £40 per meeting, up to six in any financial year (This figure is subject to change).

Some of the duties of the Clerk are:

- Make arrangements for meetings and prepare an agenda in consultation with the Chairperson and Head Teacher.
- Send a notice of the meeting, venue and agenda to all Parent Council members so that they will receive them in good time for the meeting. Agendas should be sent out for all meetings even if they are held at the same time and place each month.
- Keep a record of everyone attending the meeting and any apologies for absence.
- Let Parent Council members know about all correspondence received and report any action taken since the last meeting.
- Take a minute of meetings, recording decisions and action to be taken and by whom.
- Circulate minutes to Parent Council members, Head Teacher, local Councillors, Parental Involvement Unit, school notice board and local library.
- Update the Parental Involvement Unit of any changes eg change of office bearers or addresses. This should be recorded on a Parent Council Membership form available from wendy.gray@edinburgh.gov.uk
- The Clerk should be able to advise the Chair and parent Council on procedural and statutory matters and should have a working knowledge of the constitution.