

Balerno High School Parent Council

Minutes of Meeting of Monday 9 September 2013

PRESENT: Helen Purves (Chair), Liz Carrie (Treasurer), Ruth Douglas (staff rep), Sally Gartside (parent), Bill Henderson (councillor), Mike Humphries (parent), Aileen Macleod (Minutes), Marion Milne (community rep), Karen Scott (PSA), Rhona Baird (parent), Richard Braggins (parent), Jessica Bryce (parent), Tony Foster (parent), Karen Gilhooley (parent), Mandy Irvine (parent), Lindsey Middleton (parent), Jane Muir (parent), Fiona Shaw (parent), Richard Shaw (parent), Nathalie Van Ee (parent).

APOLOGIES: Graeme Sives (headteacher), Lindsay Fullarton (staff rep), Sandy Waller (headboy), Kirsty McKeown (parent), Dominic Heslop (councillor), Jane Mole (parent), Jane Goulding (parent), Sarah Fleming (parent)

PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

On Page 2 "S1 intake" should read "P1 intake". The Minutes were approved.

PC ANNUAL REPORT

Helen Purves introduced the annual report. She noted that the early start time of meetings has meant that staff have been able to attend to give the council information about proposed projects and initiatives.

Project Dream was discussed. This has had much positive feedback. The plan this coming year is to do Project Scrooge. The school was congratulated for it being such an inclusive project and for agreeing to participate in it again this year.

The format of challenge week was explained which took place in the last week of term before the summer break. Ruth Douglas said it was a successful and far more productive use of time than before.

Helen explained how one of the main priorities of the Parent Council this year has been to engage more with the parent body and in order to achieve this, one of the initiatives was to hold Parent Council meeting in our associated primary schools in the outlying villages of Ratho and Kirknewton. This was very successful and well attended. The Parent Council also took part in the S1 focus evening.

Some of the fabric repairs which have been done this year were detailed including window repairs and the progress of the all weather pitch. A plan of the proposed pitch was circulated. Helen thanked Bill Henderson for the extensive work he has done to make this happen.

Helen explained how the CCWP (Consultative Committee with Parents) is a city initiative to consult with parents. The Parent Council has been represented this year by Aileen Macleod and will be asking for a new representative from the Parent Council this year. Liz Carrie has been involved in the parental engagement strategy and will continue with this this year.

The Parent Council website had been developed this year by former Parent Council members John Thomas and Sue McLeod posting updates and information for parents on this.

Liz Carrie presented the Parent Council accounts. She explained that we have donated money to the hardship fund and the council can decide whether to have a clerk in the coming year or not. Liz proposed that £2000 be donated for the same purpose this year. This was accepted.

Helen outlined the structure of the Parent Council for new parents present at the meeting and explained that the plan is to continue meeting on Mondays at 6pm.

HEAD TEACHER REPORT

Ruth Douglas, staff representative, presented this report.

The S4 exam results are at their highest level since 2002. S5 exam results are back in line with 2011 results.

There is a new quality assurance framework which includes feedback from pupils and working with depute heads.

Pupil monitoring and tracking will be done monthly and parents informed if a problem is noted.

The introduction of the school uniform is being well received and there has been good feedback from pupils, parents and the wider community.

Graeme attended the Head Teachers network meeting and he and Rehana Shanks (Dean Park Head Teacher) will be holding a joint head teachers' surgery on 10 October.

A UCAS information evening took place for senior school parents.

An S4 information evening took place regarding National exams.

There will be an academic awards ceremony on 19 September.

Ruth was asked about the monthly tracking system. She responded that pupils in S4 should be aware of what level they are working at and that the system is flexible as presentations will not be completed until November.

There are discussions taking place about changes to the timetable for next academic year. This will only involve changes within the existing start and end times of the school day.

Mike pointed out that the website has not been updated recently.

SENIOR PUPIL PERSPECTIVE

Helen introduced our new Head Girl, Hannah. Sandy Waller, Head Boy had sent his apologies to the meeting.

Hannah reported that the S6 year group were working well together and developing as a group.

There had been a positive response to their new initiative of a notice board for S6 which was being well used and keeping pupils informed of upcoming events and ideas.

There had been a proposal for S6 to coordinate entering a float in next year's gala and involving other year groups in this.

Progress was being made with the prom and yearbook committees.

Progress is also being made with the mentoring and buddy system.

Hannah said that there was still some uncertainty about the S6 area. Helen asked for this to be noted and that it is hoped that the S6 year group will be informed about what the arrangements will be.

The school charities this year are "The Butterfly Trust" and "Jean for genes".

Sally asked Hannah to clarify the head of house system. Hannah explained that each of the house teams is working on events to raise money for the school charities and that the prefects are involved in signing in latecomers and doing lunch duty.

Hannah said that the school uniform is very popular amongst pupils.

The school pupil council has not been formed yet.

PARENT VOICE

There was a query about the Pentland Saver Scheme. It was agreed that it would have been helpful for a letter with more explanation sent from the school.

It was also mentioned that a letter with more information about the decision to introduce blazers to the whole school would have been welcome. There were also problems with blazers not being ready in time and issues with sizing. It was agreed that the Parent Council should ask the school to contact Aitken and Niven to resolve this and ensure it does not happen in future.

A query was raised about how parents find out how their children can access music tuition and that this information had been difficult to find. It was also noted that parents are not well informed about clubs and activities that take place in the school and that if they were it would give parents the opportunity to encourage their children to get involved in these.

It was pointed out that Dean Park have a website and a facebook account where parents can get information and that this might be a good idea for the high school. Hannah pointed out that the pupils receive this information via the school bulletin.

It was agreed that the text service is working well.

Tony suggested that some of the Parent Council funds could be put towards work on the website and Liz proposed that the hardship fund should be maintained and perhaps the funds could be split. Tony said he would look into Kirknewton Development Trust offering assistance in some way.

It was agreed that communication should stay on our agenda and be pushed forward this year.

LOCAL UPDATES

There was a meeting to discuss the Greenbelt Development issue. Concern had been expressed about the high school supporting this development and it was noted that at the last Parent Council meeting Graeme Sives had outlined his reasons for supporting the development for the long term security of the school roll.

Upcoming events are the farmers' market this weekend, the music festival in October. The Hydro project is up and running and there is a community council election coming up. Marion said she would be happy to stay on as a representative on the Parent Council and this was agreed. Helen thanked Marion for her valued contribution to the Parent Council.

PTA

Karen stated that the PTA usually donated about £2000 to the school each year. The money is typically used for projects such as Holiday Headstart. The 500 club is still running. The PTA also attends parent consultation evenings to provide refreshments and also raise the profile of the PTA. Upcoming events are a quiz night in November, Christmas Carol Concert where the PTA provide mulled wine and mince pies, and the fashion show for S6 at Easter.

ELECTION OF PARENT COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR 2013/2014

Helen began the AGM by stating that she is resigning as Chair and a new one needs to be appointed as well as new parent members. Four new members volunteered (listed below) and Tony agreed to be Chair. Sally thanked Helen for her work as Chair and Aileen also thanked Helen for the work she had put into it the Parent Council during the last two years

which was acknowledged by all other members. Helen thanked the Parent Council and those present and said she had enjoyed her time on the council.

Parent Members 2013/2014

Name	New Members
Tony Foster	✓ Chair
Jessica Bryce	✓
Lindsey Middleton	✓
Karen Gilhooley	✓
Helen Purves	
Liz Carrie	
Mike Humphries	
Sally Gartside	
Kirsty McKeown	

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 28th October 2013, Room F10, 18:00