

## **Minutes of Balerno Community High School (BCHS) Parent Council (PC) meeting on 11/12/13 held at Ratho Primary School (RPS)**

### **Present**

Tony Foster (chair), Mike Humphries (vice-chair), Liz Carrie (treasurer), Sally Gartside (parent member), Helen Purves (parent member), Jessica Bryce (parent member), Marion Milne (co-opted member and liaison with Balerno Community Council), Hannah Fisher (head girl), John McKay (acting head boy), Graeme Sives (headteacher Balerno Community High School), Rehanna Shanks (headteacher Dean Park Primary School), Claire McGlynn (headteacher Ratho Primary School), Bill Henderson (Local Councillor), Lauchie Scougall (Dean Park Primary School rep), Shona Johnstone (parent).

### **Apologies**

Dominic Hyslop (local councillor), Ricky Henderson (Local Councillor), Kirsty McKeown (parent member), Karon Gilhooley (parent member) Rhona Baird (parent member), Lindsey Middleton (parent member), Ruth Douglas (staff member), Lindsay Fullerton (staff member), Neil Langhorn (chair Ratho Primary Parent Council), Sally Cavers (Dean Park Primary rep), Yolanda Montero, Sandy Waller (head boy).

Meeting agreed to hear Headteacher report first as Graeme had to return to school.

Graeme commented on the following:

### **HMIe review**

Final report not yet received. Initial verbal feedback is that the school has made significant progress. Improvement has been made in all 5 areas of assessment, going from 1 very good, 3 good and 1 satisfactory to 3 very good and 2 good. Aim is to have all excellent or very good. Work still to be done on changing the period structure of the timetable and increasing work with associate primaries. The new period structure will not be implemented in 2014.

Graeme will summarise final report and, following consultation with Tony, the information will be given to parents.

### **Young Enterprise**

5 companies from Balerno entered. 4 of the 5 won an award. Branching Out was the overall winner. The Parent Council was very impressed with all the merchandise on display. Tony congratulated all the teams.

### **Project Scrooge**

School very busy with Project Scrooge which promises to be as successful as last year's award winning Project Dream.

### **Review of community access to schools**

Changes ie loss of community school status will be implemented in 2014 as City of Edinburgh Council look to save £300 000.

Initial suggestion was of local flexibility following consultation with Headteachers and all stakeholders. Consultation data is not available, Graeme has not been consulted. Now appears a 1 size fits all model will be adopted with no scope for local management.

Graeme has made suggestions regarding the Balerno situation. All of these are either cost neutral or savings. Balerno already operates without a community manager. Revenue generated by the community functions has played a large part in reducing the budget deficit under Graeme's management. There will be no discussion re new management of community function, this deemed an internal matter for the Children and Families department.

Tony has questioned level of consultation with Headteachers. No answer. Will re-ask the question. Action Tony.

Tony, Mike and Liz to meet Graeme to gain better understanding of consequences of loss of community school status.

### **Budget Consultation**

Budget consultation open until 20th December. (See matters arising).

Graeme then left the meeting.

### **Matters arising**

City of Edinburgh Council budget consultation

Consultation open to all. Online form is not user friendly. Major areas of concern shared by Balerno Community High School, Dean Park Primary School and Ratho Primary School are: reduction in management time for Headteachers in smaller primaries; reduction in budget for Additional Support for Learning; removal of funding to maintain S1 and 2 Maths and English at 20 pupils per class; sharing of school librarians. Bill informed meeting that this proposal has been dropped.

Meeting agreed a united position will be taken with Dean Park and Ratho primary schools re our opposition to cuts in spending in these 3 areas plus the potential loss of community school status.

Tony asked Hannah and John to share senior pupil views on budget cuts. Action Hannah and John.

Tony to contact Neil Langhorn. Action Tony.

## Website

Helen asked for someone to take over running website. Mike volunteered to take this on.

## School Meals

Uptake of school meals has apparently dropped since implementation of Wisepay. Only 1 email has been sent regarding paying for meals via Wisepay. System not fully embedded and parents may still be giving pupils cash.

Helen and Tony commented that Wisepay is not obvious on school website. Some parents may have difficulty accessing it.

Tony has asked Ricky Henderson about £200 000 that was allocated to improve catering facilities as no work has been done.

Jessica reported being told that waste is very high. Lauchie wondered if a ore-ordering system could be implemented.

## Communication

Communication team will be joined by 2 members of staff next term.

## Senior Pupil Report

### Model UN

Trip to Copenhagen enjoyed by all. Our students were only native English speakers present.

### Comenius project

Cultural exchange to Stuttgart a success. Pupils visited the young people's parliament.

### Malleny Variety Show

£400 raised.

### Carol Concert rehearsals

All musicians and singers involved in an intensive week of rehearsals. A considerable amount of class time can be missed particularly if a pupil is a singer as well as a musician. Hannah's experience is that most class teachers are helpful. The music department makes level of commitment very clear at outset. Pupils are responsible for catching up on missed class work. Claire observed that the rehearsal process is a positive learning experience in itself.

## Parent Voice

Liz asked if the Parent Council would be represented at future parent consultation evenings. Helen had instigated a policy of 2 members of the

Parent Council being available at these evenings to encourage interest in and communication with the Parent Council.

Dates and volunteers needed for future meetings.

Helen commented that the Parent Council had successfully used generic emails to remind parents of events such as Parent Council meetings. Helped increase attendance.

## **Local Updates**

Balerno Community Council Marion Milne

Planning application for site at Cockburn Crescent has been refused. A second application has been lodged for a nearby site.

The police station in Balerno has been closed. Police will now hold a surgery in the library on Wednesdays from 6-7pm. 10 community police officers will now be based in Balerno.

Balerno Community Council is looking forward to Saturday's Christmas tree festival. Pupils from Balerno Community High School and Dean Park Primary are participating.

Local Councillor Report Bill Henderson

Balerno vision

Proposal to sell the janitors house, move the library into the High School and relocate the after school club is ongoing.

All weather pitch

An announcement will be made on Monday 16th December that an all weather pitch will be built in Malleny Park. Planned completion date is May 2014. Cost will be in the region of £600 000. All present expressed their pleasure at this news.

Liz asked if any funds are available to resurface the existing ash pitch while the contractors are on site. This is not in the budget.

Sally reported that the school floodlights seem to be going off and on all weekend. Tony will follow this up. Action Tony.

## **Role of Parent Council**

Description of role has been circulated.

Tony has asked Graeme to alert him if several parents raise the same issue with the school.

**Date of next meeting**

03/02/2014 in Balerno Community High School.

Tony thanked everyone for attending and wished everyone a happy Christmas.