

# **Balerno High School Parent Council**

## **Minutes of Meeting of Monday 3 February 2014**

### **PRESENT**

Office Bearers: Tony Foster, Mike Humphries, Liz Carrie,

Parents: Sally Gartside, Lindsey Middleton, Helen Purves, Jessica Bryce, Karon Gilhooley, Kirsty McKeown, Lesley Cameron, , Nikki Temple,

Associate Primary Head Teacher: Rehana Shanks (Dean Park)

Co-opted member - Balerno Community Council: Marion Milne

### **APOLOGIES**

Staff rep: Lindsay Fullarton

Councillor: Bill Henderson

Head Girl: Hannah Fisher

Associate Primary Parent Council rep: Lauchie Scougal (Dean Park),

Advisor to PC: Graeme Sives sent late apologies as he had been asked to attend a CATS review meeting at Drummond High School at the same time (see below).

### **COMMUNITY ACCESS TO SCHOOLS (CATS) REVIEW**

This item was brought forward as some present had to leave early.

Balerno High School is mentioned in this review as being a pilot site for proposed new arrangements, whereby the current allocation of approximately £16,000 budget for our Head Teacher to run the community education department of the school on behalf of community users will be taken away. A new management structure for community access to the schools' resources with a centralised booking system has been proposed. We can find no evidence of consultation with our community over this, contrary for example, to recommendations set out in The Commission on Future Delivery of Public Services (The Christie Report). Concern was expressed that as we are in a rural setting the formula which is being set for the rest of the City of Edinburgh is not appropriate to meet this community's needs (see The Draft Bill, Creating a Fairer Scotland: Community Empowerment Bill which asks for proper consultation with communities about how services in their area should be designed). Tony has been in correspondence with David Bruce trying to ascertain the exact situation. David Bruce will attend the CCWP South West Neighbourhood meeting at Currie High School next Wednesday evening. Gordon MacDonald MSP has written to Richard Lewis, Chair of the CATS review to try to gain clarity on the situation.

It was suggested that the following could be contacted as well as an email to the wider Parent Forum:

Mike Russell, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

Alistair Darling, MP for South West Edinburgh

Balerno Village Trust – Alison Whittaker, Lynne Mollinson, Richard Henderson

Parents would like to understand what the pros and cons of such a proposal are.

Tony will prepare a briefing document for Balerno Community Council.

### **MATTERS ARISING**

Mike will meet with Helen to find out how to update the Parent Council Website and our pages on the school website.

## SCHOOL REPORT

There were no school representatives present to give report, or answer questions.

Tony shared some items from his monthly discussion with Graeme.

- Changes in management structure and turnover of staff
- Self-evaluation system, recommended as area for development in Inspection, continues to be implemented
- Monitoring and Tracking of pupil progress being embedded
- Two members of staff will be put forward to conduct the Communication with Parents review for which we have volunteer parents

## SENIOR PUPIL REPORT

- Many seniors are involved in the school show 'Chicago' - this involves not only the music and drama departments but also CDT, Art as well as teachers from English and Business. The performances are 7:30pm on Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 February and a matinee on Friday 14 February and everyone is working very hard to repeat the success of last year's show (West Side Story)
- Senior pupils are preparing for upcoming prelims which will take place the first week back after the February break
- All of S6 took part in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative finals last week and all teams did extremely well in their presentations and a very worthy local charity (Muirhouse Youth Development Group) was picked to receive the donation of £3000. YPI encourages participants to investigate local charities and to make contact with them, with the aim of raising awareness of local charities and volunteering opportunities, with the presentation best fitting the criteria winning £3000 for the group's charity.

Those who applied through UCAS for universities are now starting to receive offers

## PARENT VOICE

- Mike expressed his disappointment that there were no representatives from the school present. It was suggested a written report from school beforehand would be helpful and save time at meeting to ask and answer questions.
- **National 5s** - EIS has put out a statement to say that teachers are stressed and struggling with the implementation of National 5s. Some parents said they had heard as such via their children as class teachers were sharing they were finding it difficult. It was acknowledged that with change always comes disquiet, but as parents we are not able to tell if the pressures are unacceptable or not.  
Question for Head Teacher: Is this the situation at BHS? What can we do as a Parent Council to help the school with implementation?
- **Prelim timetable** –concern expressed about how close together prelim exams are. Sometimes multiple subjects on the same day and over consecutive days. This did not seem to leave much, if any, time for adequate preparation.
- **Subject choice** – Jessica expressed disappointment at the restrictive nature of column choices.

- **School Show: Chicago** - Is the timing not getting in the way of pupils revising for prelims?  
Why has such timing been chosen?

**LOCAL UPDATES**

BCC - More proposals have been made for new housing at Ravelrig Road.  
The All Weather Pitch has been given the go ahead.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 31 March, Balerno High School, Room F10, 18:00