

Minutes of Balerno High School Parent Council AGM and meeting 02/09/2014

Present; Tony Foster (TF), Mike Humphries (MH), Liz Carrie (LC), Marion Milne (MM), Jessica Bryce (JB), Lindsey Middleton (LM), Graeme Sives (GS), Rehana Shanks (RS), Rhona Baird (RB), Sue McLeod (SMcL), Richard McLeod (RMcL), Karen Gilhooley (KG), Lisa Sweeney (LS), Karen Craig (KC), Denise Scougall (DS), Sanjay Kallat (SK), Peter Reekie (PR).

AGM

TF opened the AGM and thanked all parents and staff for their contributions over the past year. Congratulations were offered to the whole team at the school for another successful year.

Accounts Passed

Election of Office Bearers

TF, MH and LC agreed to continue in their roles as there were no other candidates for election. TF stressed that if parents would like to become an office bearer at any time they should just come forward. Useful also to have successors in place.

Minutes of previous AGM Passed

Parent Council Meeting

Headteacher's Report

Exam results

Proper analysis and comparison of the S4 exam results is not yet possible as the new tool has not yet arrived from Scottish Government. Rough figures from the school using the old method would suggest that 50% of S4 pupils gained 5 or more National 5 qualifications. Full information will be available at the next meeting.

S5 results are spectacular. 73% of pupils gained 1 or more Higher putting Balerno in the top decile for results. This is the best outcome since 2002 (when electronic records began). 48% gained 3 or more Highers which is the best ever result. 24% gained 5 or more Highers, results which are amongst the best ever.

S6 performed to expectations.

It is important to note that S5 and 6 figures are the percentage of the number of pupils in the original S4 cohort.

Further information will be available showing Balerno's performance relative to our comparator schools. The school will also now analyse how individual departments have performed. Early results show that English, Maths, PE and Music have performed very well with this being a 5 year upward trend for English and PE.

TF congratulated GS and all the staff on the exam results. The staff had a very difficult year implementing the new National qualifications and the PC is grateful for their efforts.

Community Access to Schools (CATS)

Despite the objections and alternative models put forward by GS, the PC and Balerno Community Council the City of Edinburgh implemented their plan for CATS. The community functions will now be run by Community Learning and Development (CLD). There will be 1 coordinator plus 2 project workers, operating out of an as yet unknown hub, for all the schools and community centres in the South West area from September 15th. GS no longer has full operational control and problems cannot be dealt with by the school.

Budgetary implications of this change are not good. The full community budget moves to CLD after April though some has already been removed. By careful budgeting using community and school

budgets GS was able to finally put the school back in the black financially. There is now no budget for any extras such as early use of central heating. This tight financial position makes it even more important that the school roll goes up. Every additional 14 pupils is equivalent to 1 full time teacher. TF added that he had been very disappointed by the quality of the City of Edinburgh report into CATS that had been passed by the budget committee and that papers promised to the PC were never received. David Bruce of the City of Edinburgh Council has assured us that nothing will change for the community users so if there are issues please feedback to our Local Councillors. TF thanked all the Headteachers and BCC for their efforts to protect the community function as it was.

Building Update

The all weather pitch is finally being built. The job should take 14 weeks.

A question was raised asking if a hockey surface would be available in Balerno. School and Councillors asked that existing ash pitch be resurfaced but budget not available. Hockey Club let arrangements also raised. Payments are necessary because the let of Currie is a community let and would be the same at Balerno.

The windows have still not been replaced. 2 years ago school was promised replacement of the 30 year old, single-glazed windows. Priority of the City of Edinburgh Council is now to try and make the building wind and water tight. Currently, the janitorial staff tape up the windows in the October holidays!

Bag Drop

S1 and S2 pupils can now use the concourse. Packed lunches now have to be eaten in the concourse (due to increased uptake of the much improved meals at the Riverside). This meant that there was no longer space for all the bags which were a health and safety hazard. A trial system of pupils putting bags in their period 5 classroom has been established.

YoungScot

Problems experienced by Kirknewton pupils not getting the cards in time for start of term. This a West Lothian Council issue which might be best addressed by Kirknewton PC.

Wisepay

Run by SEEMIS and is out with school control. All present thought it is good system. Still a pilot. City of Edinburgh will look for best cost provider.

Local Development Plan (LDP)

The LDP would require additional school places. The proposal is to build 5 extra classrooms at Currie Primary School because the housing will all be in Currie catchment including the Newmills Road site. This site falls within the geographical boundary of Balerno but not the school catchment. The PC has tried several times to have the school catchment brought into line with the geographical boundary in order to support the school role. LC to attend public meeting on 3/9/14. Balerno High School needs more pupils and the cap at Dean Park has meant that the number of pupils coming is fixed. Increasing capacity at Dean Park would help secure the future of Balerno High School.

Enhanced Transition

No further updates from the City of Edinburgh Council have been received. Additional staff were required and none have been forthcoming. The High School now has more important priorities and will not jeopardise existing pupils.

Rights Respecting School

Working group will be established to work towards Level 2. Parental input will be welcome

SQA post-results service

Appeals have gone. There is now a clerical check and/ or marking review. Neither take additional evidence.

Improvement Plan

Focus on attainment, learning and teaching and self-evaluation.

Curriculum for Excellence

Inspectors are coming back to look at implementation.

Staff Appointments

Parent input into staff appointments maybe possible. Our QIO can give training to interested PC members.

Balerno Community Council update Marion Milne

Music festival is coming up.

RBS branch has closed, it is hoped that the Post Office can increase the number and type of transactions it can carry out.

There has been a problem with vandalism at the reservoir. Fires have also been lit. this is obviously antisocial. Swimming in the reservoir can be extremely dangerous.

PC business

TF requested that anyone wishing to submit an agenda item do so 2 weeks in advance.

Members to take turns at minute taking.

Require volunteers to attend additional meetings such as the South West neighbourhood Group and the CCWP. Dates are available.

The National Parent Forum is looking for a Depute.

TF reminded parents that the PC is not a forum for issues relating to individual children. Any urgent, serious matters can be taken directly to GS. Other matters to Guidance or the Year Head.

Meetings will continue to rotate between Balerno, Ratho and Kirknewton

LC to attend PTA meeting

Agenda at next meeting will include S4 results and discussion.

Dates of Meetings

03/11/14 at Balerno High School

02/02/15 at Ratho Primary School

30/03/15 at Kirknewton Primary School

25/05/15 at Balerno