

Minutes of Balerno High School Parent Council meeting 02/02/2015

Present: Tony Foster (TF), Mike Humphries (MH), Marion Milne (MM), Jessica Bryce (JB), Sanjay Kallat (SK), Neil Langhorn (NL), Claire McGlynn (CM)

Apologies: Peter Reekie, Ricky Henderson, Bill Henderson, Denise Scougall, Graeme Sives, Liz Carrie, Dominic Hyslop, Karen Scott

1. Head Teacher's update

Graeme was unable to attend the meeting so TF provided an update on his behalf.

1.1 Comments on previous minutes

- Study space in the school is under pressure because too many students are not taking a sufficient number of courses or are dropping subjects.
- The school has always been active in respect of Fair Trade and was part of the village accreditation last year.
- Communication can be improved by closer working between senior pupils and Year Heads and by more profile and leadership from the Prefect group. Prefects should be a key interface between staff and students.
- The upcoming HMIE visit is a field visit rather than an inspection. Its aim is to provide evidence for a case study in a future paper on broad general education provision.
- £150k was allocated to the school 2 years ago for 'fabric improvements'.
- Alison Kidd (Quality Improvement Officer) has retired and will be replaced by David Leslie as an interim measure. There will be further changes on the back of the proposed move to 'quadrants' across the city.

1.2 Window replacement

£140k will be spent on replacing the windows. Work is due to start on 30/03. There are 'technical challenges' to overcome for some of the windows. North Edinburgh Child Care are aware of plans and will be relocated to the Riverside to allow work to take place. Work to reconfigure LRC and provide social space for S6 will start during the February break.

1.3 Review of Broad General Education

The majority of parents and pupils are happy with proposals to change the structure of the school day in order to accommodate the necessary changes to the school's current curriculum model. There is still some discussion around the timing of breaks. The Parent Council assisted in production of the Q&A.

1.4 Enhanced transition

This subject remains with the Council. A paper on general transition topics is expected - awaiting confirmation of this.

1.5 Pitchfever

£50k has been raised – The Parent Council wish to record their congratulations to the fundraising team on this achievement. The application to Sport Scotland for match funding is progressing with

a decision expected sometime in March.

1.6 CATS

The Council are now running consultations with groups who take lets at the school. Rates have not yet been set for this year. It is likely that money for a series of lets will be required 'up front'.

1.7 Prospective school attendees.

Meetings with 'prospective' new parents from the new housing in Ratho are being held. These students will perhaps go on to Balerno. NL asked whether PC members and/or students could take part in visits to P6/7 classes at Ratho as part of Transition. TF to raise this with Graeme and update at a future meeting.

1.8 Wisepay

The rollout is coming but timescales are not yet clear. It could take over a year.

2. Other reports

2.1 Community Council

Nothing to report.

2.2 Kirknewton primary

- unclear whether a new school will be built at East Calder as there appear to be issues with funding.

- Kirknewton Primary pupils will go to East Calder for a year from August to allow for refurbishment of the Kirknewton school building.

- There is still some unhappiness amongst parents about the quality of Kirknewton buses. Council/VOSA inspections say they are satisfactory. Horsburgh could put on better buses but that would cost more.

2.3 Ratho primary

Ratho numbers will go from 167 to 185 this year with 60 in the nursery.

2.4 SW Neighbourhood

- MM will attend the next meeting

- It is understood that the education budget will be ringfenced this year.

- The council are worried that not many parents are attending neighbourhood meetings. TF view is that there too many meetings requiring too much parent time.

3. Parent voice

- JB asked what steps the school takes to ensure quality of teaching is maintained. TF to ask Graeme to talk about this at a future meeting.

- Some students who wished to attend the trip to Spain were disappointed that they were unable to obtain a place.

- Can more/better information be provided about school clubs and afterschool activities ? The PC will put information on Facebook and Twitter where it can.

Dates of future meetings

30/03/15 at Kirknewton

25/05/15 at Balerno