

Minutes of Balerno High School Parent Council 02/11/2015

1. Attendance

1.1 Attendees

Tony Foster (TF) Chair
Liz Carrie (LC)
Mike Humphries (MH)
Lauchie Scougall (LS) Treasurer
Marion Milne (MM) BCC Rep
Paula Miller (PMi)
Peter Maclean (PMa)
Jessica Bryce (JB)
Sally Gartside (SG)
Andrea Brewster (AB)
Neil Greer (NG)

1.2 In Attendance

Graeme Sives (GS) Head Teacher
Annabelle MacDonald (AM) Head Girl
Sandy Buchan (SB) Head Boy

1.3 Apologies

Sanjay Kallat (SK) Deputy Chair
Dominic Hislop
Ricky Henderson
Bill Henderson (BH)

2. Minutes

2.1 Minutes of previous meeting were approved.

2.2 Decision to re-iterate invitation to local councillors.

ACTION TF

3. Head Teacher's Report

3.1 S4 Parents evening, P7 evening and Awards evening have taken place since last meeting, TF expressed congratulations to Awards winners.

3.2 Also three development afternoons for staff, subject Attainment meetings, inset day by subject with emphasis on Advanced Higher.

3.3 Departments are now preparing for Unit 1 Assessments.

3.4 GS has finished Nat 5 Prelim timetable ready for beginning of December.

3.5 No dire budget implications foreseen for BHS but the impact is felt for new courses or any other subject requiring new text books, where BHS makes up the deficit as only £2000 available in funding. Science now has fewer taught periods and as a result funding has been reduced but again BHS makes up the deficit. 'Protected budget' is a slight myth as there are ~£70k 'embedded savings' for BHS.

3.6 TF suggested Parent Council should encourage parents & carers to read and feed back on National Improvement Framework & Budget proposals.

ACTION ALL PC

4. Head Girl & Head Boy report

4.1 Prom & Hoodies booked.

4.2 Prefects are proving effective and it is anticipated that their status will be higher this year.

4.3 SG commented that S6s who helped with P7 transition were excellent.

4.4 Possible end-of-year BBQ for S6s & teachers, date tbc.

- 4.5 Original plan for Balloween fundraiser was not able to be carried out. The process has highlighted how much forward planning and reminding is required in planning events.
- 4.6 SB and AM meeting with House Teams and SMT for 10 minutes each day, they and GS are finding this very useful for communication.
- 4.7 LS asked AM and SB for feedback about the new format school day:
- The S6 experience had been different, with more timetable holes opened up
 - The transition had been a gradual process because of staff changes
 - 3 periods before morning break allows pupils to cover more topics, with an improved work rate
 - Absence of Tutor Group felt as it was useful for filtering down information; but still early days.
- 4.8 TF asked if there had been any feedback regarding new structure, GS confirmed there had and as a result Personal Support was now different for junior and senior pupils.
- 4.9 GS clarified that Bulletin info is sent to first & last period teachers to pass on to pupils.
- 4.10 AB asked if old Tutor Group period offered any pastoral content, GS confirmed it did not.

Head Boy and Head Girl left the meeting.

5. Maths Meeting Update

- 5.1 Meeting with Susan Stride took place on Wednesday 28th October with 7 Parent Council in attendance: TF, LC, MH, JB, AB, PMi, SG; plus GS / Lindsay Fullerton.
- 5.2 Summary from Susan who acknowledged there had been a problem but did not anticipate a recurrence with the new Nat 5 year group due to this being a stronger cohort in terms of their Maths ability
- 5.3 47% pupils habitually attained old Credit with similar achievement in comparable schools; for the group in question 38% achieved Nat 5 A-C. This drop was not seen in comparable schools.
- 5.4 Those re-sitting Nat 5 this year are in a large class of about 40 taught by one BHS Maths teacher with support from another teacher.
- 5.5 Extra help is available to pupils at Thursday lunchtimes.
- 5.6 There will now be earlier interventions if pupils appear to be struggling.
- 5.7 The Maths department already has some resources online but staff can only post content from home due to network restrictions. Another excellent Maths resource is KHAN ACADEMY.
- 5.8 There will be a staff visits to Broughton to look at their teaching approaches and leadership of faculty.
- 5.9 St. Thomas' has twice the As and half the no-awards. Leadership and impact noted here too.
- 5.10 Some schools are now considering not streaming classes for Maths.
- 5.11 Parent Council attendees asked for a structured plan of action to be prepared by January.

5.12 Back in the Parent Council meeting, members expressed ongoing concern and the need for clear leadership from SS going forward.

ACTION SS

5.13 GS explained that a plan in January will be too late for any pupils struggling now and about to sit Unit 1 Assessments, also that there has to be sufficient time between Assessments and re-sits in order for pupils to pass re-sits.

5.14 Agreement that there should be a progress update meeting with Susan Stride in early December.

5.15 GS plans to contact other schools to bridge gaps in statistical analysis between new and old reporting systems.

ACTION GS

5.16 General feeling amongst Parent Council that even ~47% attainment is not acceptable.

6. Catchment Review

- 6.1 A review was requested by Dean Park regarding Gillespie crossroads up to BHS.
- 6.2 Another official feeder school could secure BHS roll / funding / choices.
- 6.3 BHS can accommodate 860/900.

7. Pitch Fever

- 7.1 LC and BH had a positive meeting with leader of Council.
- 7.2 Andy Gray (Head of Schools) did not see the necessity for a 2G pitch and there will be no match funding from Sports Scotland due to proximity of 3G.
- 7.3 Contractors have estimated £53k for a 2G sand-filled surface with no shock pad. A shock pad reduces impact on joints and would cost an additional £18k.
- 7.4 The £10k postcode lottery grant will have to be refunded if not procured by December 2015.
- 7.5 Another £10k donation may also have to be refunded.
- 7.6 Write to Gillian Tee. **ACTION TF/LC?**

8. Website

- 8.1 Hosting of old site ended on 16th Oct.
- 8.2 MH hopes to direct users to fb / Twitter until new site is up. **ACTION MH**
- 8.3 Martin Bleck (technician) intends launching new site by end of year with department content added during December.
- 8.4 Parent Council should be able to add content independently.
- 8.5 Wi-fi access for non-school devices has now been rescinded in line with Council directive.

9. AOCB

- 9.1 MH reported that one of the Ratho buses today was too small and as a result a child had to sit on another's lap which poses a safety risk. GS will follow up. **ACTION GS**
- 9.2 MM reported no update on Janitor's house (Village Trust had hoped to acquire but the request was denied).
- 9.3 Also no update on Newmills assault.
- 9.4 LS suggested a closer relationship with PTA in order to utilise funds raised. Merging would lose the PTA's charitable status. Invite PTA representation at Parent Council. **ACTION LS**

Date of next meeting 11/01/16 in Ratho (time & venue tbc)