



Email: balernoahspsc@gmail.com

Minutes of Meeting of Balerno High School Parent Council 30th October 2017 at Balerno High School at 6.30pm

PC members

Parent members

Andrea Brewster (AB) (Chair), Peter Reekie (PR) (Treasurer), Mandy Irvine (MI), Christine Paterson (CP), Fiona McDougall (FM), Alastair MacLennan (AM), Caroline Anderson (CA), Blanca Nieto (BN), Utibe Udoh (UU), Paula Miller (PM)

Co-opted Community member

Marion Milne (MM)

Staff members

Neil McCallum (NM) (Head Teacher), Michelle May (MM) (PTC English, Media & Drama), Lisa Coffey (Deputy Head Teacher)

School staff

Simon May (PTC, Health & Wellbeing); Vaila Wright (Leader, Support for Pupil)

Senior pupils

Annie Bowes (Head Girl), Duncan Cameron (Deputy Head Boy)

Councillors

None

Parents

Elaine McMaster (EM)

Apologies

Susan Webber (Councillor); Graeme Bruce (Councillor); Sanjay Kallat (PC); Jessica Bryce (PC); Ben Wilson (Head Boy)

Introduction and Welcome

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

Minutes and Matters Arising

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were proposed (PR) and seconded (AM).

2.2 Parent Council members agreed that appointment of Vice Chair should be made at a future date to allow new members the chance to understand what the role involved.

Head Teacher report

3.1 Mr McCallum gave his report (see separate attachment, HT report_30 October 2017)

Head Boy / Head Girl report

Fundraisers

4.1 Balerno Village Screen's viewing of 'Sing Street' (part of the Balerno Music Festival) was an excellent night with live music by Nathan Collins, raising a total of £300 for the pupils' chosen charity, Teenage Cancer Trust (TCT).

4.2 Bavelaw House organised their 'Balloween' dress-down day on Friday 27th October which raised a further £552 for TCT.

4.3 Holly Orr in S2 had also raised £195 to date for TCT from having her hair cut off. She is sending her hair to Little Princess Trust (a charity to provide real hair wigs for children who have lost their hair due to cancer treatment).

School Service

4.4 The S6 pupils involved in the 'Cool, Calm and Connected' scheme to support mental health have had their first training day and first lesson-planning session.

4.5 The S6 Mentoring for Violence Prevention (MVP) team have planned all their lessons and have presented their first introductory lesson.

4.6 Paired Reading is well underway.

Committees

4.7 Prom is booked.

4.8 Leavers Hoodies are booked.

4.9 Yearbook provider has been selected.

4.10 Pupil Council has been discussing the possibility of healthy vending in the school and also a survey about learning/teaching styles, perceptions about the senior pupil leadership team (e.g. "Where do you think the Prefects are") and about how useful they feel their weekly Pupil Support Period (PSP) is. They intend sending this survey out to pupils.

Upcoming

4.11 Annie and Duncan asked if there were any other suggestions for the pupil survey. PR suggested looking back at the parent survey that was sent out before Mr McCallum's appointment, to see if there were any questions that could be useful. EM suggested expanding the question about PSP to ask pupils what they think PSP is and what it is for. AB suggested any further suggestions could be emailed in by the end of the week.

4.12 Malleny Variety Show will be making a fabulous comeback in mid/late December.

4.13 Malleny will also be selling Trick or Treat bags of sweets on 31st October to raise further funds for TCT.

4.14 Head Team and House Teams are involved with organising the decorating of a Christmas Tree by each House, as part of the local Christmas Tree Festival. Decorations will be made by S1 and S2 pupils.

Other Reports

5.1 MM reported that Balerno Community Council would be meeting on Thursday 2nd November and would be discussing local planning applications and catchment review.

5.2 South West Locality Group (SWLG) will meet on 22nd November at WHEC and AB hopes to attend. Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP) is due to meet on 7th December (usually at City Chambers).

5.3 AB clarified that SWLG discusses what happens at local and citywide level e.g. PEF funding. CCwP deals with issues at a citywide and National level and is usually attended by 2 reps from SWLG. See City of Edinburgh Council website for further details: Schools and learning > Parental engagement.

5.4 MM pointed out that there is a Parent Council member from another Edinburgh school who serves on the Children and Families Committee, Alex Ramage; his email address is: parentrep.edin@gmail.com

5.5 There was no BHS PTA report. Kirsty Armsworth who shared the Chair with Karen Murray has retired from PTA.

5.6 No reports from feeder primaries. Kirknewton PS PC have recently had their AGM and the existing chair has retired – AB to make contact with new chair.

5.7 Unusually no Councillors were able to attend so no report.

Health and Wellbeing – Special Presentation

6.1 Vailla Wright, Pupil Support Leader and Simon May, Principal Teacher (Curriculum) HWB gave presentations on this important part of the curriculum. Please see separate attachments ('HWB & pupil support' and 'HWB & the curriculum') for excellent content.

6.2 Miss Wright highlighted that pupils are taught to speak to whichever teacher they trust the most, recognising that every pupil will relate to staff members differently.

6.3 Mr May confirmed that pupils who are not involved in sport other than in school PE lessons are encouraged to explore various options in order to maintain an active lifestyle. He also pointed out that the school can offer a degree of flexibility to those who play sport at an advanced level, in order to balance time demands.

6.4 EM commented on the breadth of extra-curricular sporting activities offered (see separate attachment, 'BHS Sports Clubs Draft') and it was confirmed that these are supported by a variety of teachers, paid coaches and volunteers.

6.5 AB asked if the JASS (Junior Award Scheme Scotland) is still offered as this has 'Get Active, Stay Active' as one of its categories. Staff confirmed that this is still the case, with pupils completing JASS by S1/S2. Pupils would be eligible for the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme in S4/S5.

6.6 Simon May commented that the agency Sportscotland would need to engage with the parent body and confirmed that parents would be able to contribute.

6.7 MI asked if all lunchtime activities relied on teachers' free time (see separate attachment, 'BHS Clubs') and staff confirmed that this was the case. AB requested that thanks should be conveyed to all staff involved on behalf of parents.

Pupil Support Period (PSP) – potential changes for 2018-19

7.1 Lisa Coffey explained the ethos behind PSP which was intended to fulfil the criteria for pupil entitlement to a Key Adult, who can support them in their education in an informed way. However, it has proved difficult to achieve the one-to-one time necessary for this within a whole-class setting. Mr McCallum commented that all other schools that adopted a similar PSP approach either have changed or are changing from the current format.

7.2 BHS Staff are discussing an alternate approach whereby they would have half an hour per week protected time in which to perform one-to-one meetings. The goal would be to have a minimum of 2 one-to-one meetings with each pupil per year. Additionally, the existing PSP time allocation would be re-used in some format in order to perform traditional tutor time activities and also focus on topics like assemblies, literacy, numeracy, target setting, Pupil Voice, Health and Wellbeing, Rights Respecting School, school charity, school events. This extended regular time is considered valuable as it allows teachers to have regular contact with their pupils and build relationship.

7.3 The additional half hour per week protected time in effect means that teachers would not be available to provide emergency cover for classes during this time and Mrs Coffey clarified that during peak activity this could result in buying in cover.

Financial Update

8.1 Despite receiving a statement correctly addressed with his name, PR discovered he has still not been set up as a signatory by RBS so is escalating the matter with them, again. Therefore Parent Council has been unable to make any financial contributions to BHS so far this year.

ParentPay Update

9.1 AB voiced concerns from a parent about the amount of personal information required on the mygovscot and ParentPay sites. PR offered to submit a Freedom of Information request to CEC as he did not hear back from Parent Council's previous questions and concerns about ParentPay that he put to CEC on our behalf before the summer break. Parent Council decided to pose questions one more time before pursuing that course of action.

9.2 Mr McCallum has tried and will continue to try to arrange a visit to Portobello High School which was an early adopter of the full ParentPay system.

9.3 CA recapped that before the summer we had decided to give parents the choice about whether their child would use the biometric option (fingerprint encryption) or a 6-digit PIN as their identifier in the Riverside Café.

9.4 Mr McCallum commented that Friday break time can be quite busy and slow in the Riverside Café but that otherwise queues are manageable.

Follow-up to Questions raised at the AGM

10.1 Please see separate attachment ('Parent Council Q&A 30th October 2017') for questions and Mr McCallum's responses.

Lanark Road Catchment Review

11.1 We have received no new news about the Catchment Review. Parents will have an opportunity to feed in comments until December – dates and method tbc.

11.2 Mr McCallum will endeavour to engage with the West Lothian consultation which could affect some of our feeder primary schools.

Parent Council presence and involvement at BHS Parents' Evenings

12.1 MM and AB will be present at S4 parents' evening on Thursday 2nd November

12.2 Other members to let AB know if they can attend on 28th November (S1 parents' evening) or on 25th January (S3 parents' evening / S3 and S4/5 coursing info evening).

AOCB

13.1 Work is in hand to bring the amount of information available the same for each subject on the school website.

13.2 AB outlined that there would be a short term focus group of parents with children going through Broad General Education phase, followed by a similar process for those with children in the Senior phase.

13.3 AB invited any further questions by email.

Date / Time of next meeting

4th December 2017, 6:30pm, Balerno High School.