



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KELSO HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER 2014

Apologies: Simon Mountford (Councillor), Alastair Martin, Fiona James

Present: Chris Mowat (Chair), Kerry Innes (Treasurer), Ruth McKay (Headteacher), Gillian McFadyen (Parent Rep for SBC Meetings), Kay Burton, John Bassett, Tom Weatherston (Councillor), Alec Nicol, Diana Blaylock, Barbara Thomson, Nicola Purves, Morag Thomson, Andrew McEwan, Richard Armitage, Colin Henderson

Minutes of last meeting: Approved

CM started off the meeting by stating that rather than spending time discussing the same things, he will move the discussion along and if anything needs to be discussed further it can be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

1. Chairman's Report:

CM expressed congratulations from the Parent Council to all those pupils who achieved SQA awards.

GMcF and the Equestrian Team qualified to compete in an event down south. There is a huge cost involved in being able to attend this event and the Parent Council have been asked to help fund the membership. As there was a tight deadline this was all dealt with via email, approval given and cheque for £256 given to the Equestrian Team. The Equestrian Team have also been doing their own fundraising and a recent race night brought in over £3000. They now have the required amount for the trip.

CM confirmed that as the PC was no longer required to assist with funding new Higher textbooks that there is money available for other things. Further Funding from the Scottish Government was sent to schools and this has covered the resource requirements for the new Higher courses.

CM asked about the asymmetric week and how everyone felt it was going. General feedback felt it is going well, although it is a longer morning for the pupils. Query raised regarding the availability of food on Fridays. RM has monitored and felt there was no continued concern though there may have been some initial teething issues. There is a low uptake on the 'grab n go' option that is available - food is preordered and is ready at the start of the break. CM stated that it is good to see lots of sport activities taking place on a Friday afternoon. CH asked what was all going on / organised and is it audited. CM was unsure and RM suggested David Ferguson from BSLT may be able to provide an overview. It was noted that Michelle Douglas' Dance School are providing additional classes / activities for children. Some sports matches are being played on a Friday afternoon - where available and appropriate. Friday afternoon activity to be added to the next agenda.

There is a Parent Council Forum meeting on Friday 25th September at 6.00pm at SBC that CM will be attending, others are welcome and there is video conferencing available if required.

Parent Council Training Events - CM to forward via email details of events from Oct to March. RM suggested that this is added to the weekly update.

CM mentioned that Rev Tom McDonald is unwell. It was suggested that the PC get him something and it was felt he would appreciate a donation to a favoured charity.

2. Treasurer's Report:

Report since 02/06/14

Main Account - Incomings:

Summer Leavers Concert taking plus raffle - £156.50

Easy Fundraising - £113.53

Michael Scott-Watson Donation - £80

SBC Annual Parent Council Grant - £425

Main Account - Outgoings:

Cheque to Barbara Thomson for refreshment expenses - £89.26

Cheque to Gail Watson (Border Blooms) for Leavers Evening flowers - £96

Cheque to NSEA on behalf of G McFadyen - £256

Balance as of 14/09/14 is £2835.76 (subject to banks statement confirmation)

3 Ball Lottery Account

Activity since last meeting:

Cheque for April's draw now cleared - £309

Cheque for £3000 issued to High School for book purchased has now cleared

No winner since April, prize fund for September will be approx £700

Balance as of 01/08/14 is £1996.86

There has been no uptake on the 3 ball lottery. It was suggested that it is put in the weekly update each month. RM stated that we try to keep the update to a minimum to make sure people read it through and don't feel that it is the same every week. Agreed that details of prizes won could be publicised in the update, this should be the last Friday in the month.

There have been no winners since April. Information regarding Easy Fundraising also to be added to the weekly update. It was suggested that the PC have a stall at every Parents' Evening to show a presence and also push both the lottery and Easy Fundraising. It was suggested that the information is posted on the PC Facebook page.

3. Headteacher's Report:

Staffing Changes:

Dr Guy Warner is the new Computing Teacher following Mr Ian King's retiral at the end of last session.

Mr Matthew Eggington is the new Chemistry Teacher replacing Mr Peter Macklin who has moved to a PT post at Jedburgh Grammar School.

Mr Ray Baxter is the new Biology Teacher replacing Dr Kirstie Carvalho who has also moved to Jedburgh Grammar School

NQT Miss Rebecca Young has joined our Social Subjects Department and will be teaching Geography and Modern Studies.

NQT Mr Max Gordon has joined our PE Department replacing Mr Mark Ralph who left to teach overseas.

Miss Lynsey Walker has also joined our PE Department on a part time temporary basis until the October break.

Mr Tom Angus has been confirmed as PT Pastoral (Kale) on a permanent basis, a role which he has been undertaking on a temporary basis for the last two years.

Mrs Ali Wilson has been confirmed as DHT Pupil Support on a permanent basis, a role which she has been undertaking on a temporary basis for the last two years.

Mrs Catherine Thomson will be acting up into the post of DHT, following Mrs Judy Brotherton's retirement in June. The permanent post of DHT will be re-advertised in the next few weeks.

There is currently a gap within the Music Department, as we are currently awaiting PVG checks for a specialist supply teacher. We have a Music specialist in covering Mr John Borthwick's absence.

School Improvement Plan 2014/15:

RM provided everyone with a copy of the School Improvement Plan to review and discussed the 4 priorities in more detail. RM advised the group about her 5 a day programme, which involves her speaking to a group of 5 pupils a day regarding their learning and experiences in KHS. This information is anonymised and shared with teachers to assist self evaluation. RM will also be looking at how easy it is for parents to give feedback on their experience of the school and investigating ways of being more proactive regarding gathering of parent feedback.

DB gave feedback regarding her experience contacting the school office first thing in the morning; the member of office staff was very polite and helpful. This will be fed back to all office staff.

Asymmetric Week:

The implementation of this has went as smoothly as possible, pupils and staff have taken time to get used to it but on balance people are favouring the shorter afternoon - 2 periods Mon to Thurs. The early finish on a Friday has also had positive feedback which will benefit the pupils further when we move into the winter months as they will have some daylight hours for other activities.

Statutory Expectation - School Handbook:

Schools are required by law to produce a School Handbook annually and this should be available by 15th December 2014. Following a revision of the regulations we have now been asked to involve parents in the process. It was suggested that something is added to the weekly update asking parents if they would be interested in helping. Decisions need to be made regarding what information is required and what is not. A suggestion was made to use survey monkey for parental feedback.

There will be a survey on transition from P7 coming out in due course to parents of S1 pupils.

4. SQA Exams

This is not usually an item however CM felt it made sense to add in as there has been so many changes and new course etc. CM said he would like the schools opinion of how the exams went? How did National 5 go? Are we on the way to the new Highers?

RM stated that the results for National 3/4/5, Intermediate and Higher were broadly in line with expectations and we continued to see a steady positive trend. All of our usual self evaluation processes are continuing. As always, there is lots of activity happening in relation to analysing results. As usual, RM is meeting with all the PTs individually and there is discussion at all levels.

In response to the new exams, SBC published data on their website of results on a school to school basis. Schools were not informed of this in advance and the information has since been removed. The information was presented in a 'league table' which resulted in some negative press towards individual schools. RM emphasised that comparisons between individual schools are dangerous and do not take account of significant factors such as differences in presentation policies etc. Schools are focusing on a cumulative look at attainment to give a truer picture of what is going on and what pupils have been able to attain. KHS adopted a policy that borderline N4/5 pupils were able to sit the exam for N5, if they had passed the units. This is in line with the principles of CfE – it's the whole journey that counts, not the stages along the way. If pupils do not attain N5 then in most cases KHS will be able to retrospectively provide evidence that will allow pupils to attain a N4 award via SQA if pupils do not continue with the particular subject. RM clarified a D is a course award but not a pass.

GMcF asked about Earlston pupils being able to choose 8 subjects and does this put them ahead? RM confirmed pupils in Earlston are currently taking 8 subjects and stated that she has been informed that this will be the last year that this will be the case. RM confirmed that there has been some fluctuation in course choices following the results but no more than in previous years. As is the case for all schools, the approach KHS have taken will be refined moving forward but it is not anticipated that this will involve drastic changes.

5. Fundraising:

How does PC raise funds?

How does PC manage funds?

PC has received funding requests for new resources and Equestrian Team recently. A sub committee for fundraising was set up 2 years ago but has not met. PC mainly depends on funds coming in from the lottery, Easy Fundraising and refreshments at various events. CM is happy with people having to apply for funding from PC.

GMcF stated that high school are very different from primary schools in terms of fundraising, you do not get the same support from parents. It was felt that if there is a specific aim for fundraising then there is more support, if the benefit to their children can be seen. It would be hard to fundraise with no goal.

What do we want to raise money for? There is always ongoing fundraising for hockey / rugby etc but what about the pupils that are not involved in these? What about doing something for the whole school? RM suggested a promise action / talent auction e.g. dog walks / 10 hours of gardening. Similar event in another secondary raised £1700.

RM highlighted the Battlefields Experience which has been running for 14 years and every pupil in S3 is now given the opportunity to go. KHS offer financial assistance if required. The 2015 trip is already being organised but as it is the centenary accommodation prices have gone up and there is a new carbon tax on ferries which have resulted in the cost of the trip going up as well. The cost to pupils this year is £460, increased from £400 last year. KHS pay the tour operator £435 per child and the rest of the money is spent on hoodies, snacks, drinks etc whilst they are away. This cost also includes an additional adult to ensure unexpected events, illness etc can be covered.

There is a government grant of £2000 available and KHS will apply for this again, we did not get this grant for this year's trip. By using the PC money we could offer a £30 reduction for all pupils to £430. Fundraising may be able to allow this amount to be reduced further payments. Direct fundraising for this event - need to get parents and children involved, to be raised at the parental information evening. TW suggested piggybacking onto a bigger organisation such as breast cancer to raise money. It was noted that the PC would not be able to give £3000 every year and would need to look at other ways to bring in funds. CH highlighted that money comes in from CBAH annually and RM explained that this is used for a variety of purposes.

Other suggestions - a bag pack at Sainsbury's (approx £700) or a bake sale (£200). Bag packs get booked up months in advance.

Generally agreed that parents need to be educated more regarding what the PC does and what it pays for. PC agreed they would like to look into the introduction of tablet/iPad technology into the school or cinema quality projection facilities for the new school. This would give the opportunity to have film events and raise more money in a sustainable way for school events etc.

Fundraising committee to be decided at the next meeting. CM to circulate email regarding discussion about fundraising.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 28th October at 7.00pm