

Minutes of the Parent Council Meeting held on 8 January 2019 in the Library of St Joseph's College

Present

Mel McGill (Chair), Bernadette Jones (Headteacher), Angela Douglas, Tracey Graham, Alyson Hair, Shauna Hiddleston, John Knox, Lyn Mitra, Thalakuntne Muniraju, Linda Nosratzadeh, Fiona Purdie, Ranjit Thomas and Amanda Brown (Clerk).

Apologies

Barbara Chierici-Black, Thomas Crombie, Margo Donachie, Kelly Green, Fiona Grubb, Claire Starr

Welcome and Prayer

M McGill welcomed Parent Council Members to the meeting and wished them a Happy New Year. B Jones offered a prayer.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

These were accepted as an accurate record. It was agreed that they would be made available on Facebook and Twitter as well as on the school's website so that a wider number of parents could have access to them. A Brown agreed to arrange this.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

P7 Transition

With reference to the P7 Transition Evening, the following comments were made about the event:

- The Children who spoke at the event were good and it was agreed this was a positive element of the evening.
- Parents did not have an opportunity to speak directly to Headteachers, which they would have welcomed.
- F Purdie stated that as a teacher, she did not believe it was a suitable way to inform parents and pupils about their secondary school experience. She also stated, in her opinion, the set up was poor from an organisational perspective. There had been a

lack of coordination with regard to what was expected by those teachers providing an input at the event and this issue was further compounded by the varying sizes of the groups of pupils; making it difficult to undertake the intended activities.

- L Nosratzadeh stated that as parent although this year's event was an improvement on the previous year, she was not convinced that the children who had attended would have benefitted from their experience given that only 15 minutes was allocated to hands-on experience of the secondary curriculum. Furthermore each child was only given the opportunity to visit one curricular area. L Nosratzadeh did not believe this approach helped either pupils or parents to gain a real impression of Secondary Education.
- There was general agreement that a Further Education College, as a venue was not appropriate for the transition from primary school to secondary school.
- Emphasis at the event seemed to be centred on the purpose and activities available at 'the bridge' and since this new facility is geared towards older students, this seemed inappropriate for this particular event.
- Most parents have indicated they would still prefer to visit the schools.

B Jones stated that to gauge parental views more fully it had been intended that a parental survey would be distributed. M McGill agreed it would be beneficial to have this feedback to help prevent a repetition of the transition approaches adopted this year and last. She also stated that given the concerns raised at this meeting it was clear that the current approach is not ideal.

J Knox asked the Authority's view of the current P7 Transition arrangements. B Jones explained that Authority was aware of concerns regarding the evening and these had been discussed at a Burgh Headteachers meeting. There was general agreement that a better format was necessary in light of the concerns raised by parents. The current approach is not ideal in meeting either the children or their parents' needs at this crucial transition point. Most parents would prefer to be able to walk around the schools to help them and their children gain a better perspective of the new environment they hope to attend. The large number of appointments that have been made by parents to

visit St Joseph's College back this view. B Jones stated that while visits are time consuming they do give parents and children an opportunity to see around the school and talk to teachers. This can help put them at ease about moving to this next step in their education.

B Jones also stated that with reference to likely uptake of S1 places, parents have until 15 January 2019 to make a school placement request and therefore after this date she is likely to have a good indication of the new S1 intake numbers. She is confident that the school will have a large number of S1 pupils starting in August 2019. B Jones also stated that the school remains popular across all year groups and recently it has received a number of requests from pupils in the S2-S6 year groups to join the school and some year groups are near to their maximum capacity as the current timetable stands. In response to a question about being able to accommodate all S1 placement requests, B Jones confirmed that there should be places for requests as there is a large S6 cohort leaving.

The Ranch

This has been demolished and the wall restored. As yet there has been no decision about what will happen with the land. B Jones has requested it be added to the school grounds to provide additional social space for the growing number of pupils.

Astro Turf Pitch

This is now well used at weekends and in evenings by Heston Rovers. However Let Agreements have yet to be made to enable the Players to use the school's changing facilities. Parent Council members whose children play for Heston Rovers agreed to take this up with the club.

The Learning Town Update

Although 'the Bridge' facility will open soon courses are not expected to be run there until next session.

Wi-Fi in schools should go live soon. The Authority Policy on technology is in the process of being updated to include Wi-Fi usage and once this has been agreed with the Legal

Department it will be passed to Headteachers for their consideration and thereafter the school should be able to make use of its Wi-Fi.

Headteacher's Report

Achievement

- The school's Newsletter was distributed at the Christmas Holiday.
- S6 pupil - Jamie Thomson has been selected to play for the Scotland - under 18 team which is a massive achievement.
- S5 pupil - James Knox is the winner of local Rotary Young Musician of the Year competition and will progress to the next round on 14 January 2019 in Annan.

Staffing

- Fiona Reilly has been appointed to the PT HE and PE post.
- Rory MacKay has been appointed the PT Social Subjects.
- Alan Kinley (Skills development Scotland) is the school's new Careers Adviser.

B Jones reported that resulting from the concerns about the NWCC building the Authority is sending in a team of Council inspectors to confirm that St Joseph's College meets all the necessary building standards.

Treasurer's Report

The current account balance is £422 and that there are sufficient funds to support the Parent Council financial needs. M McGill stated that the PFA had agreed to reimburse the Parent Council for the Connect Insurance membership at £140. This will be lodged in Parent Council accounts shortly.

PFA

- Other than agreeing to pay the insurance - see above, there was no other report from the PFA. B Jones requested support from the PFA at the forthcoming Parents' Evenings for tea and coffee. She stated that the senior pupils could provide this but an adult helper would be required. L Nosratzadeh and L Mitra agreed to provide this support. B Jones stated she would liaise with D McGee (DHT) to organise pupils.

- M McGill reported that Houston's Bus service had provided a voucher for the raffle. The winner had donated this to the school to support any forthcoming trips. This was very much appreciated by the school.
- The Kindles provide to the school through PFA funds have been set up and pupils are making good use of this new resource.

AOCB

L Nosratzadeh stated that to reduce the costs of purchasing Kindle books for pupils could download the Borrowbox App and through their Young Scot Card they can access books free of charge from the Library Service.

M McGill would like to create a Parent Council Newsletter to be distributed after each meeting via email. This would also be shared in the school's Social Media sites and in the Pupil Bulletin too. B Jones asked that anything sent out prior to formal meeting approval was just 'sound bites' of what has been discussed at the meeting. Since the full minutes are not available until after they are approved at the next meeting it was agreed the summary Newsletter would be of benefit. A Brown agreed to forward her notes to M McGill to facilitate this.

B Jones informed the Parent Council that the School's handbook is currently being updated by D McGee. Once it is completed it will be passed to M McGill so that she can check the Parent Council section.

The meeting closed at 20.57. M McGill thanked everyone for attending and for their contribution at the meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 12 March 2019 at 7pm in the school Library.