

Minutes of the Parent Council Meeting held on 12 March 2019 in the Library of St Joseph's College

Present

Mel McGill (Chair), Bernadette Jones (Headteacher), Barbara Chierici-Black, Thomas Crombie, Angela Douglas, Tracey Graham, Alyson Hair, Shauna Hiddleston, John Knox, , Linda Nosratzadeh, Fiona Purdie, Ranjit Thomas and Amanda Brown (Clerk).

Apologies

Margo Donachie, Kelly Green, Fiona Grubb, Lyn Mitra, Thalakuntne Muniraju and Claire Starr.

In attendance – Sandra McCaughey

Welcome and Prayer

M McGill welcomed Parent Council Members to the meeting. B Jones offered the prayer that had been used at School Assemblies for British Science Week.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

These were accepted as an accurate record. These would be placed onto the website together with the Parent Council Newsletter. A copy of the Newsletter was distributed to the Parent Council members. Minutes will also be available on the School's Facebook page.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Bridge

B Jones stated that The Bridge is now operational and catering for a number of events. Pupils from the Hospitality class participated in and won a recent competition run by Dumfries and Galloway College's Hospitality Department in conjunction with local businesses.

Currently Senior Management teams from the DLT schools are considering the subjects that will be taught at The Bridge next session. It is likely that in some subject areas

where there is small uptake within each school, classes will be amalgamated to make it viable to run the class at The Bridge and in doing so provide choice for pupils.

Impact of Budget on Staffing

M McGill asked if the possibility of classes be amalgamated would have an impact on the school's staffing budget. In response B Jones explained that with a projected roll of 760; an increase approximately of 40 pupils, the staffing budget will increase to accommodate this. However this figure takes into consideration an 1.8 FTE efficiency saving as part of Council budget cuts. In addition there has been a further reduction in the school's staffing to help fund The Bridge's staffing requirement. Staffing will therefore continue to be very tight. The cut in staffing is likely to arise through redeployment of staff and possibly retirement. B Jones stated there have been a few expressions of interests in early retirement from staff.

She went on to explain that in recent years the school had made efficiency savings by increasing class sizes and where possible having a number of classes running at the maximum size. In the Authority that the maximum class size is currently 20 for practical subjects. She also stated the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) maximum for non-practical classes is 33 but in our Authority the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) maximum is 30.

In response to a question about the impact of the reduction in the number of subjects a pupils could take, B Jones stated that the drop in subjects had the uptake in affected some departments. Teachers are investigating alternative forms of delivery; such as Open University self-study units to help enable breadth of choice.

Posts have been advertised in Biology, Physics and Technical. Interviews will take place during the second half of March. It can be difficult attract to staff from out with the Authority and to retain them. M McGill asked if teachers from England are able to teach in Scotland as this might be another source for staffing. B Jones confirmed that teachers from out with Scotland can seek GTCS registration and teach in Scotland. M McGill also asked about the staffing complement in terms of their contract. B Jones explained that there was a mix of both permanent full-time and part time staff employed to work in the

school. She indicated that while the teachers employed prior to the DLT agreement have their contracts with St Joseph's College, new contracts are for the DLT and therefore staff can be moved to work in any of the DLT locations. She did point out that if a school has surplus staff they can be redeployed within the Authority.

B Cherici-Black raised a concern about some of the financial choices made by the Authority, particularly in relation to buying supplies; stating that it was often cheaper to source locally than use the PECOS approved supplier. She suggested by widening the range of approved suppliers, savings could be made. Other potential savings were also discussed. Following this general discussion concern was raised among the Parent Council members that the budget cuts to education and staffing could impact negatively on learning and teaching within the school. M McGill agreed to write to the Authority, on behalf of the Parent Council, expressing these concerns.

WIFI

B Jones reported that the WIFI has not been activated and there is no definite date for it to become available. This matter will be raised next week at a HT Meeting where the main focus will be looking at ways of managing resources within the context of budget.

The Learning Town Update

This was included in Matters Arising.

Headteacher's Report

Participation

- Pupils from the school were part of the Dumfries and Galloway band which won the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Competition.
- The Curling Team from St Joseph's College were runners up in the Scottish Schools Curling Championship. Thanks were noted to the Holywood Trust who provided £600 towards their expenses for the 3-days of competition.
- The Under 16 football team are through to the Semi-final of the Hunters Shield

- Four pupils from the school are part of the highly successful Solway Sk8ting Club who recently competed in and won medals at both the the Scottish and British Championships.

Achievement

- The school continues to use PEF funding to help bring about improvement in both literacy and numeracy.
- Easter School will run for two days on 8 and 9 April 2019. The number of days has been reduced because a number of teachers currently provide weekly after school and lunch time classes and therefore the demand for Easter school is lower than in previous years.
- The P7 - S1 Transition Science Fair will take place tomorrow evening – 13 March 2019.
- Prof John Lockhart is the Guest Speaker in Assemblies this week where he is informing pupils about his current research into COPD particularly in the West of Scotland.
- St Joseph's afternoon celebrations will take place on Friday 15 March. A Mass will be held on St Joseph's Day (19 March) followed by a lunch in the Oratory.
- Also on 15 March a group of pupils will participate in a Maths Challenge in Carlisle.
- On 28 March there will be an Expressive Arts Evening showcasing pupils' work in Drama, Music, Art and Photography.
- In addition there is considerable fund raising being done on behalf of SCIAF including raffles, a bake sale, football matches at lunchtime and quizzes.

M McGill asks if the school was aware of the Bang goes DYW an Authority Stem that will be held on 8 May in Easterbrook Hall. B Jones stated that the school was aware and this would be open to S1-S3 since the SQA examination diet will have started.

B Jones also spoke about the need to try and ensure that all pupils who are entitled to free meals apply for this since PEF funding at £1200per pupil is based on this and it can provided an additional source of funding. There was discussion about possible ways to

help support those entitled to claim but who do not do this. These included: putting a sample of an application form into the Newsletter, offering a range of support to parents to help encourage completion of more applications.

Treasurer Report

The cheque from the PFA to cover the cost of the Connect Insurance has been lodged. The current account balance is £563.27 and there remains sufficient funds to support the Parent Council's financial needs at present.

PFA

M McGill stated that a meeting the previous Wednesday (6 March 2019) it had been agreed to provide a donation of £400 to the Youth for Lourdes Team. She also stated that refreshment support will be required for the Parents Evenings in May and also for the School Show in June.

With regard to the PFA bank balance M McGill indicated that there is approximately £8000 in the main PFA account, which will be used to support the school. B Jones stated that a Laser Cutter has been requested by Craft and Design Technology and support towards this purchase would be gratefully received. M McGill suggested that the Princes Trust might also be able to provide additional funding support and invited written requests for funding to the PFA.

AOCB

In response to a question about the use of the playing fields B Jones explained that the plan is that these would be available after the summer holiday allowing for mature growth of the grass.

The meeting closed at 9pm. M McGill thanks everyone for the attendance and contribution.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 15 May 2019 at 7pm in the school Library.