

Minutes of St Joseph's College Parent Council AGM & Meeting held on 5 October 2021 at 1900 virtually by Zoom.

Present

Mel McGill (Chair), Claire Renton (Vice Chair), Bernadette Jones (Headteacher), Barbara Chierici-Black, Tommy Crombie, Lynn Mitra, Linda Nosratzadeh, Fiona Purdie, and Amanda Brown (Clerk).

Apologies

Fiona Mitchell, Gail Stewart and Keith Walters

In attendance

Jennifer Challinor, Flavia Seton and Rebecca Topping

Minutes of the AGM

Welcome

M McGill welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking them for attending. She then gave a brief outline of the purpose of the AGM stating that in addition to providing a report from the Chair and the Treasurer, its main function was to elect the new Parent Council. She stated that following the AGM there would be a brief ordinary meeting.

Chair's Report

I welcome you all to this year's Parent Council AGM which hopefully marks the end of major disruption to our young people's learning journeys and a period of respite for our ever-toiling teaching and support staff. I can take advantage of today being National Teacher Day to ask Mrs Jones to please pass on to all staff our appreciation of all they do for our young ones.

Over the last year, we've managed to have several Parent Council meetings via Zoom and whilst we may be able to meet in person soon enough, I would hope to keep some element of our work online as it seems to have allowed more engagement from parents and carers that would not otherwise manage to attend meetings.

Challenges still remain for us as parents to remain involved with the life of our young people in school buildings but there have been new opportunities for us to engage with their learning through the many online resources that have been developed and made available to us all as a result of the pandemic – hopefully these will be a lasting legacy that all pupils can continue to benefit from.

As a Parent Council we continue to be available to support the school in any way we can and look forward to being able to be part of any working groups where we can give the parent perspective to

any policies that are due to be developed or reviewed, or in any other area of school life where parents can be of use.

We look forward to welcoming any members of the Pupil Leadership team who would like to join any of these meetings, to make sure that our work also aligns with their aspirations for the school.

I'd be delighted to stay on as Chair for one more year, but I am also more than willing to hand over the baton to new blood and stay nearby to support for as long as needed so don't be shy to speak up when we shout for nominations for roles!

Thank you for your continued support – here's to more settled times!

Treasurer's Report

Since the Parent Council did not elect a Treasurer, M McGill handled the small number of financial transactions in the previous year. She stated that the accounts had been audited and presented to the Authority. As per the Audited accounts the balance at the end of the financial year was £470.27. The funding for this session would be lodged in the account in November, once the formal AGM minutes together with the Audited accounts had been presented to the Authority.

M McGill reported that she had also applied for online banking to make future transactions easier to manage.

Appointment of the Parent Council

M McGill thanked those members who stood down this year for their support during their time on the Parent Council.

Co-opted Members

Church Representative	Fr Donnelly (appointed by the Bishop)
School Representative	F Purdie
Co-Opted Member	To be decided
PFA Representative	L Nosratzadeh

Parent Council Members

- B Chierici-Black
- L Mitra
- F Mitchell
- F Purdie (School Co-opted member)
- F Seton
- G Stewart
- K Walters
- T Crombie
- M McGill
- L Nosratzadeh
- C Renton
- D Stainthorpe
- R Topping

Office Bearers

Chair	M McGill
Vice Chair	C Renton
Treasurer	L Nosratzadeh
Clerk	A Brown

The appointment of Parent Council members and of Office Bearers concluded the AGM.

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

Headteacher's Report

B Jones stated that she had formally passed on the Chair's good wishes to the staff. She thanked the Parent Council for continuing to operate through the past session and help support the school in this recovery period. With reference to the request that School Captains join future meetings she hoped that both would be able to join Parent Council at the next meeting on the 20 January 2022.

Working Groups

B Jones indicated that as a consequence of COVID-19 and the school lockdowns, coupled with the necessary COVID mitigations, working groups within the school had not taken place. She intended however to reinstate these with immediate effect and currently there are groups for Developing the Young Workforce and Equality and Inclusion. She hoped that parents/carers would be willing to participate in these working groups.

Extra-Curricular Activity

B Jones stated that extracurricular activity is now taking place within the school eg Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. The school has 2 Young Enterprise teams working with the Business Education teachers Mrs True and Mrs Plunkett.

Curricular Activity

Curricular related activity is also allowed out with the school building and there will be an Advanced Higher Geography trip shortly for Project Data Collection purposes. This will be a joint trip with pupils from St. Joseph's College and Dumfries High School participating.

There will also be an Advanced Higher Drama trip to on the lake in Keswick.

The school's Autumn Newsletter will be issued at the end of this week. This will be paper copies, but an electronic version will also be available. With regard to future newsletters, a questionnaire is being compiled for parents and carers to complete, to determine whether a paper or online version is preferred by individual families.

S1 reports will also be issued at the end of this week. Since parents/carers evenings are not allowed presently due to COVID-19 restrictions, these reports will contain an additional comment to help parents/carers have a clearer understanding of their children's progress.

COVID-19

With reference to COVID-19 mitigations B Jones reported that wearing of masks, regular hand sanitising and good ventilation in rooms is helping to keep numbers of cases, and pupils having to isolate within the school community, to remain low. Presently there is one staff member absent and approximately 3 to 4 pupils per year group absent with COVID-19. Additionally, there are a few pupils self-isolating. She also stated that there was a very good uptake of COVID vaccination among pupils.

M McGill asked if Lateral Flow Tests could be picked up from the school? B Jones responded by stating that Lateral Flow Tests and also, if needed, PCR tests are available from the School Office. She did indicate that should a PCR test be required, using a COVID Testing Centre was probably more effective as they are able to provide a 24-hour turn around for results, whereas the school's PCR tests are posted off to the Testing Centre and this delays confirmation of results.

Staffing

Congratulations to Mrs Flint who has been appointed to the post of Principal Teacher Pupil Support at Wallace Hall Academy. The post of Biology Teacher is currently being advertised with a closing date of 16 October 2021.

B Jones formally thanked the PFA for their kind and generous contribution to the purchase of a laser cutter for the technical department. Training has taken place and the laser cutter is now being fully used.

M McGill asked if there is any decision made about the S1 Welcome Evening and online events for senior year groups. B Jones informed the Parent Council that currently S1 artwork is available in online presentations. Poetry written by S1 pupils about their initial thoughts on St Joseph's College.

In addition to being placed on the walls in the corridors, they have been made into cards which pupils can take home.

Attainment

B Jones did not feel a presentation video would be beneficial to pupils and instead all pupils from S4 to S6 will have a live Information session. This is in the process of being organised. To help support Parents and Carers, a general information sheet will go out the start of next term. With regard to Prelims, most will take place in the prelim diet commencing on the 14th of January. She stated that there may be some, mainly for practical subjects, taking place before the Christmas break.

Road Safety

PC Currie is currently speaking to pupils about road and car safety to try and reinforce the importance of taking care around the very busy roads, particularly at the end of the day. B Jones asked if the Parent Council could add information to their Facebook page to alert both parents and pupils about the need for caution around the area of the school.

With regards to Aldermanhill Road school car park, B Jones stated that especially at the end of the day, this can be very busy making it a challenge for anyone to get in and out of the car park. Additionally, the car park now has electric charging points in some of the parking spaces. These will be available for general use especially out with the school day.

PFA

There was no PFA report as the PFA have not been able to, or needed to meet since March 2020. With regard to the Carol Service, B Jones stated that further guidance is needed before a decision can be made about whether or not this concert, normally held the last Monday of term, can go ahead.

AOCB

- The School Calendar will be sent out to Parents and carers once it has been confirmed by the Local Authority due to some recent changes.
- The Christmas holiday has been shortened. Staff will now return on Wednesday 5 January and pupils on Friday 7 January 2022. This is to accommodate the long weekend 3-4 June 2022 to celebrate the Queen's 70th year on the throne.
- M McGill asked if minutes could be placed on the school's website as had been done previously. A Brown agreed to ensure this was done.
- In response to a question by M McGill about Aspirational Grades on senior pupil reports, A Brown confirmed that this grade will be included in the full reports issued in February following the prelims.

- With regard to exams, B Jones stated that it was being planned that pupils would sit formal exams this session. She stated that SQA have contingency plans and have three possible models that can be considered. They will agree the one most appropriate model for assessment, dependent on the COVID-19 situation as we move closer to the examination period. Staff have been informed that they must make sure they are collecting evidence in case we have to move to an Alternative Certification Model again this session.

M McGill also thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution. There was no other business and the meeting closed at 2005.

The AGM and next meeting will be held on Thursday 20 January 2022 at 1900 via Zoom.