

NOTE OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING OF: Portobello High School Parent Council

HELD AT: Portobello High School – Library

DATE: 11 January 2016

TIME: 7:00 pm

PRESENT: Tom Ballantine (Chair), Ruth McKay (Head Teacher), Lynn Myles, Maureen Child, Sue Davidson, Emma Wood, Michael McTernan, Donald McGregor, Jacquie Robertson, Diane Drummond, Katherine Taylor, Carole Tracey, Charles Marriott, Hazel Bett, Heather Tubb, Helen Shoemark, Alison Anderson, Sean Watters, Gica Loening **Apologies:** Catherine Abbot

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Minutes of meeting held on 30 November 2015 were approved as correct. Discussion took place about agenda item 8 (AOB) - mindfulness in schools. MM reported that an educational psychologist contact of his would be happy to speak to the parent body about this topic. MM to liaise with Alison Fotheringham to explore ways of presenting it – either as part of a bigger parent event or to the Parent Council.

Action:

MM

2. Report from Ruth McKay

- Christmas concert was very successful and extremely well attended.
- S6 Christmas prom was well received.
- The PE department have begun preparations for the delivery of the national target of 2 periods of gym per week per pupil which will take effect after the move to the new school. The appointment of Lauren Hastings into a full time PE teaching post utilised a pupil panel as part of the recruitment process and was found to deliver useful feedback.
- Two long-serving janitors retired at Christmas: Graham Peacock and Eric Classon. Supply janitors are now in place.
- The school noted the sad death of Ian Bell, well known journalist and former PHS pupil.
- The gym hall floor has been condemned. Work has begun to resurface it.
- Positive feedback was received from a recent visit by Education Scotland in which a random selection of schools were visited to obtain feedback on the Curriculum for Excellence. Productive discussions took place with the leadership team, English department, Maths department and learner voices. These will be anonymously incorporated into a report.

3. Update on new school plans

• New school transition plan

RM reported that at a recent in-service day staff had been thinking about the vision for the new school and its underpinning values. These will help to articulate clearly what is important and how this will be reflected in day to day behaviours and culture. Learners, parents and partner

agencies also need to engage in a similar process in order to distil all the feedback into a shared statement of vision and values for the whole school community. EW to meet RM to discuss ways of inviting response from parents.

RM/EW

Plans are underway to incorporate the school into the Edinburgh 'Open Doors' day in September 2016. RM to ask Gillian Kennedy to contact TB to arrange an opportunity for the PC to visit the new school.

RM

- **Plans to mark move to new school**

No further movement.

- **Travel to the new school**

DM reported that the Sustrans database has revealed that currently 80% of PHS pupils walk to school which is well above the city and national average and needs to be maintained in the new school. DM has produced a map of active travel to school within the catchment which may be useful for future discussions. It was suggested that Sustrans may help to promote cycling to school but further discussion is required about safe cycle routes. RM to organise a pupil survey on anticipated means and routes of travel to school and potential concerns.

RM

AA reported on a meeting with the facilities manager of Edinburgh College. They do not anticipate any need for additional bus services but would support an increased frequency of existing services.

4. **Fundraising for 2015-2016**

- Fashion show – HB volunteered to coordinate an organising team and to liaise with Nicola Todd for a date.
- Cabaret will take place in the next academic year after the move to the new school.
- Need to analyse fundraising events and income from these at a future meeting.

HB

5. **Finances**

JR reported £429.98 current balance; £148.50 cash in hand

6. **Update on review of website**

MM presented his review of the Parent Council portal of the school website to the meeting which was followed by discussions on engaging the wider parent community. MM, TB, GL, and EW volunteered to meet to further 'brainstorm' this subject and MM will draw up a communication plan for the remainder of the academic year.

EW, TB,
GL, MM

7. **Response to proposed EDC budget cuts**

The first stage of the 2016/2017 budget consultation process, which attracted a high level of public engagement, closed on 17 December 2015. The council budget meeting on 21 January 2016 will elect which items to further explore and there will be a full consultation on these when appropriate to do so. Parent Council to discuss further once detailed proposals are available. TB to meet with Maureen Child to discuss the budgeting process for CEC.

TB, MC

8. **Possible 'Housekeeping' topics**

- Regular updates on CEC budget proposals (from CEC website)
- School lottery (TB to check that the annual licence has been received from CEC)
- Use of school-issued iPads

TB

9. AOB

- HB enquired whether 'Porty Does Strictly' could be run on 2 evenings to accommodate the huge demand for tickets. This will be considered after the move to the new school, the layout of which may be able to accommodate more seats in any case.
- EW noted that at a recent visit to school at the end of term, classes were working in an industrious fashion and not 'just watching films', contrary to popular student myth!
- RM reported that the current curriculum structure will remain for the forthcoming academic year and will be subject to review thereafter.
- There has been a spend of £3,000 on iPad screen repair to date. A letter has been sent out to pupils and parents clarifying that a contribution to repair is expected.

10. Dates of next meetings

7 March 2016; 16 May 2016