

NOTE OF PARENT COUNCIL - MINUTES

Meeting of: Portobello High School Parent Council

Held at: Portobello High School - Library

Date: Monday 6th November 2017

Time: 7.00pm

Present:

Ruth Mackay (Headteacher), Michael McTernan (Chair), Sandy MacDonald (Vice Chair), Tricia Edington (Fundraising), Jacquie Robertson (Treasurer), Vicky Gardiner (Secretary), Marie Swinney, Jane Marriott, Lesley Muirhead, Maddy Maley, Sue Hardman, Isabelle McGeehan, Ann Stewart-Kmicha, Sharon Caneron, Beverley Klein, Margaret Williamson, Tom Ballantine, Neil Hardie, Tracey Cruickshank, Callum Laidlaw, Carole Fisher, Susan McVie, Hazel Bett, Helen Mansbridge, Mary Campbell, Maureen Child.

Beth Ballantine - Head Girl

Stefan Ormsby-Peacock - Head Boy

Apologies:

Katherine Taylor, Thea J McMillan, Kate Campbell, Deborah Holloway. and Donald McGregor.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed as a fair and accurate record in the meeting. It was noted that there is a new process in place which should hopefully speed up the circulation of the minutes following the meetings.

2. Matters Arising

The following actions were noted:

Finances - grants made available to the school and Parent Council charitable status - discussed later in the meeting.

Class Charts - privacy impact assessment currently taking place on the app and Ruth will provide more detail on progress.

3. Parent Council Fundraising

Tricia provided an update on the two recent events.

Singalonga Grease on Friday 29th September which raised £28.80

The Autumn Fair on Saturday 4th November which raised £665.81. Overall £774.00 was raised on the day with £108.82 for outgoings on the Public Liability upgrade, the PVC banner, promotional boosts on Facebook, refreshments and raffle tickets.

Thanks go to Carole, Marie, Hazel and Heather who are the members of the fundraising committee and also to the volunteers who helped out on the day.

Upcoming Events:

Christmas Concert - Thursday 7th December 2017

Porty Does Strictly - Friday 15th December 2017

TBC Porty Fashion Show - 2018

If you have any interest in helping out at any of these events then please do let Tricia know directly.

4. Parent Council Finances

Balance currently stands at £8589.28 (not including the Autumn fair) and a request had been made to the school to provide a wishlist of items which would be of benefit to the school.

It was noted that the inclusion fund for the suspended timetable was agreed at the last meeting at £2000 and that this would be a requirement each year due to an increasing uptake.

The parent council agreed on the following items:

Sewing Machines at £1750	- Yes
Edible Printer at £140	- Yes
Portable Music Player £295	- Yes
Art Hanging System £500	- Yes
English Books	- review at a later meeting
Inclusion fund £2000	- Yes
Water Bottles £400	- Yes
Outdoor Furniture £2000	- Yes

Ruth and Jacquie will clarify the final figure at £7085 and agree the transfer of funds. An update will be provided at the next meeting and it was agreed that we should communicate that these items have been funded by money raised through the parent council.

5. Chairmans Update - Objectives and Goals

Michael provided an overview of the themes from the discussions that had taken place at the AGM and a copy of his presentation is attached.

The main themes being:

Internal

1. Involve student representative in the Parent Council

Noted as achieved with the presence of the Head Boy and Head Girl but further thought required for:

- Should representatives from other year groups attend?
- Should they come to the whole meeting or just attend certain topics?
- Link the Parent Council and pupil voice meetings?
- More involvement with pupils in agenda settings?
- Scope for more involvement with pupils in the Parent Council school fair and other events.

It was agreed that further thought is required and this will be discussed at the committee members next meeting.

2. Parent Council led talks like Teenage Brain Development, Mindfulness and Bullying...

It was agreed that if a talk is worth considering then yes. The school would provide help and guidance where required but this would need to be led and arranged by the Parent Council.

Action for Sandy and Michael to take this forwards and ascertain what is of interest to the wider audience, how to identify topics and how to actively engage the parents and the broader community.

3. Consider single issue forum meetings

It was agreed that this would be worthwhile if required and would be reviewed at future Parent Council meetings.

4. Give more time to parent issues on agenda

It was agreed that housekeeping will be reintroduced to the agenda for each meeting and any requests for issues to be added to the agenda should be made directly to Vicky and Michael.

A further discussion was then held on how the Parent Council could talk to parents not attending the meetings. Reference was also made towards carrying out a Parent Council health check. (See AOB)

Action for Sandy to review a different form of engagement and a possible survey.

External

1. Improve the website pages and keep them updated

It was noted that all the previous agendas and minutes had now been updated via the school. Ruth outlined that the future plan is to overhaul the website and events and meetings can be added to the front page within the latest news section.

It was noted that a review should be taken of the information currently housed within the Parent Council section with a view for this to be updated where necessary.

2. Clarify lines of communication, perhaps a simple Parent Council handbook

A parent handbook was discussed and reference to whether this could be housed within an overall parents guide to secondary school.

3. Raise profile of Parent Council and explore new channels of communication

For both of the above a review should be made of the communications we currently do and what we should be doing more of. The Parent Council should also attend any of the cluster schools events and at parent evenings to raise our profile.

4. Consult with the school community on how we use the money we raise

We have a great opportunity here to communicate how the funds raised by the Parent Council are used to benefit the school.

Action for Neil Hardie to set up a sub committee with Beverley Klein to address the above communication elements. Update will be provided at the next meeting and this should be a continuing agenda item.

Reference was also made again to the parent council health check. (See AOB)

Charitable Status

It was agreed that a separate sub committee would be set up to understand and come back with recommendations about how a charitable status could be achieved. It was noted that this had been achieved by Kevin Brack for Duddingston Primary School and contact should be made with him to understand more. It was also noted by Ruth that Preston Lodge High School also have charitable status and would also be useful to be contacted.

Action for Michael to progress and for any Parent Council members to contact Michael directly if they wish to be involved.

6. Head Teachers Update

School Improvement Plan

Ruth provided an overview from the meeting held at the school on the 2nd November 2017 and positive feedback had been provided from parents who had attended. It was noted that the short 2 page report generated by the inspectors is what progress will be measured against and the school improvement plan has been drawn up in response to this.

This information can be reviewed via the following link:

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/edinburgh-city/5533538>

Tom Ballantine requested a view from one of the teachers regarding the 'consistency of teaching' and this was agreed to be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Curriculum

An update provided from Mr Cotter via Ruth outlined that options were currently being explored with staff and that work had been undertaken across Edinburgh Council schools via a survey. 22 schools were contacted and 18 schools responded providing PHS with information on subjects, their curriculum and experience of their own models. More targeted questions were being developed from this and responses will be collated shortly.

The next stage will be pupils perception of the current curriculum through focus groups where issues will be discussed in more depth. This will lead up to a curriculum review event with parents, the draft date being Monday 27th November. A structured questionnaire will be provided for those who cannot attend.

Building Concerns

Ruth outlined that we had now come to the end of the 1st year within the new building and also the end of the contractors liability period. The process of outstanding defects and the contractors obligations is being progressed.

Reference was made to the continuing vandalism and anti social behaviour taking place within the school perimeter out of school hours. Consultation is taking place with Edinburgh Council for the securing the perimeter of the school and it was noted that the school remains open at the front of the building with no locked gates or CCTV.

Michael took an action to communicate with the elected members of the council to add more weight behind security with particular reference to CCTV.

Ruth also outlined the ongoing problems with malicious fire alarms from which CCTV would assist in deterring and monitoring.

Staffing

In the previous meeting Ruth had shared the difficulty in recruiting for Maths and Business Education teachers and how recruitment is now an issue for various subjects within PHS and is now an issue across Edinburgh City and also Scotland.

It was requested that the elected members of Edinburgh Council raise concerns and escalate the issue further.

It was also requested how staffing issues could be assessed before students make their choices in subjects.

Update to be provided at next meeting.

AOB

Request was made by Marie Swinney to carry out PHS Parent Council health check exercise.

Action for the Parent Council committee members to take this forwards.