

The Gordon Schools Parent Council

Thursday 23 May 2013

The Library, The Gordon Schools

MINUTE

PRESENT: Fiona Alderson, Chair, Alisanne Ennis, Pat Emslie, Struan Gardner, Carol Mearns, Clerk, Lee Menzies, Acting Rector, Uschi Mitchell, Sybille McLeod, Elaine Rough, Treasurer, Carol Small,

APOLOGIES: Mary Anderson, Depute Rector, Lara Bestwick, Tracy Brook, James Davidson, Acting Depute Rector, Catriona Duncan, Carol Grant, Depute Rector, Councillor Moira Ingleby, Stewart McLauchlan, Acting Depute Rector

Introductions were made round the table

1. *Welcome and Apologies*

Fiona welcomed all to the meeting and accepted apologies.

2. *Pupils Contribution*

There was no pupil representation at the meeting. Miss Menzies reported that there will be a social area created in the milk bar of the canteen for seniors. Two flat screen T.V's has been purchased and the school are waiting for these to be installed, one in the milk bar and one in the foyer. Question was raised as to how this area would be furnished. This may be something that would require a contribution of funds from the Parent Council.

3. *Minutes of the last Meeting and Matters Arising*

Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved on the proposal of Dorothy Young and seconded by Pat Emslie.

Matters Arising/Action Sheet

Lottery 100/200 Club

All members agreed that this should be delayed until the start of the new term in August. Alisanne to update the Parent Council at the August meeting. **ACTION A.E.**

Meeting with Colin Fleetham and Communications Group

Fiona advised that a meeting had taken place with Colin Fleetham, CSN Support Services Co-Ordinator, Mike Davies, Website Designer and the Communications Group. It is hoped that the

problems experience with regards to the PC pages have been resolved and Fiona asked that appreciation should go to Colin and Mike for all their help with this. The PC really appreciate the fact that Colin offered to cover the costs involved in sorting out the problems and thank him for his generosity.

Travel Expenses for Casual Users

Fiona reported that the Inland Revenue rate for travel expenses for casual users is 0.45p per mile. All members agreed that any member of the group travelling to meetings etc. on behalf of the Parent Council should be paid this rate. The PC agreed that this should apply only to meetings attended elsewhere are not to PC meetings, or other meetings, which take place at TGS. An expenses claim form has been designed and is available for members to complete.

175th Birthday Celebrations – Funding Application

Alisanne has submitted an application to Huntly Development Trust and is waiting to hear back. Fiona thanked Alisanne for thinking of the PC and coming up with the concept for the application.

P7 Transition Meeting

The P7 transition evening will take place on Wednesday, 12 June. The Parent Council will have a stall on the evening and from it will be able to promote the Parent Council. Volunteers will be required to man the stall. Fiona will be included in presentation/information part of the evening.

Bus Safety (Bendy Buses)

Marjorie Temperley from Parental Involvement has advised that she will try and organise a public meeting early in the new school year. The focus of the meeting will be school transport and representatives from Stagecoach and the PTU will be invited to attend to address local concerns. Huntly Community Council would be keen to come along as would the Development Trust and other local groups. The PC are aware that although the main concerns are linked to bus transport concerns also relate to cars mounting the pavement when parents drop children off for either the primary or secondary school.

Parental concerns:

- Most mentioned problem was bendy buses mounting the pavement
- Buses breaking down and running late
- Double deckers would not be an alternative to bendy buses

The Parent Council have been in contact with the Police – PC James Stewart.

- PC Stewart talked to the PTU – they assured him that the bendy buses will stop in future but could not determine when this would be
- Possibility of having the pupils dropped off at Market Muir. PTU considers that this would be too unsafe.
- Witnessed incident with bendy bus mounting the pavement. From a police point of view this is unacceptable safety-wise.
- Lollipop people – they had witnessed many dangerous situations, especially at Castle Street.

Parents who drop off their children are contributing to the dangerous situations by displaying impatient behaviour.

4. Accounts/Treasurers Report

Elaine Rough has been appointed as the new treasurer for the Parent Council. The balance in the Parent Council account as of May 2013 is £2885.94. Fiona thanked Elaine for coming onboard as Treasurer.

5. Rectors Report

Global Citizenship - Scottish Education Awards – The Gordon Schools has reached the finals of the Scottish Education Awards. The final will take place on 10 June. Miss Menzies, Miss Booth, Mrs McGowan, Lucas Brooks-Rooney and Cait Lennox will travel to Glasgow to represent The Gordon Schools.

Fair Trade Status – Work is ongoing at the moment to achieve this status

School Dress Code – Results are being analysed at the moment from the School Dress Code survey.

Three members of staff are working hard on this. At first glance, black seems to be the most popular choice. The school tie will remain as will the school badge. Information will be sent out to parents before the summer holidays.

School Sports – The School Sports will take place on Wednesday 29 May during the morning, weather permitting.

Newsletter – The newsletter is in process at the moment. Miss Menzies stated that the school will try and get one out every term

Improvement Planning – The Improvement plan is in the process of being written at the moment

Easter Revision - This has been another success. This year, Miss Menzies reported had been subject specific. Eleven subjects were covered, 70 pupils had attended on the Tuesday and 55 had attended on the Wednesday.

Internet Safety Evening – An Internet Safety evening has been arranged by the school for the second last week of term. This evening is aimed at all parents.

S5/6 Parents' Evening - Dorothy expressed her concerns regarding Guidance staff being in the canteen and not in their own offices. Miss Menzies agreed to bring this issue to Mrs Grant's attention.

6. Sub-Group Information

Fund Raising Group Report

Duck Race – Dorothy Young has managed to source ducks from Inch Golf Club which means there are 1500 tickets to sell. A Fundraising meeting has been arranged for 24 May, discussions will take

place as to how these tickets will be sold. The Duck Race will take place on 30 June, all necessary permission and fishing rights etc have been cleared. Donations for prizes are required. Sybille has been able to obtain nets. The plan is that the ducks will be thrown over the bridge at Gibston at the start of the race and will finish at the beach part of the Deveron.

High Five Day – The High Five day will take the same format as last year. The total raised at last years event was around £2500. New S6 pupils will run the stalls and challenges and the remainder of the pupils will take part in house groups

Wrist Bands – 500 wrist bands will be sold for £1.00 at registration next week. The wrist bands are in house group colours. The fundraising group are hopeful that these will be popular.

Coffee Morning – Tickets and posters are being printed for the Coffee morning. Tickets will be priced at £1.50 for adults and £1.00 for children and o.a.p's. It was agreed that all parents will be sent a text as a reminder and also encouraging them to donate raffles, baking etc. Fiona agreed to be at the door and Alisanne will organise the entertainment. Dorothy asked for authorisation to advertise the coffee morning in the Huntly Express. All members were in agreement with this.

The fund-raising group are looking for ideas for future fund-raising events and PC members are invited to submit any ideas they may have. Fiona suggested a 'Take a Teacher to Town' competition and a couple of other ideas and has forwarded details of these to the fund-raising group for their consideration.

Communications Group Report

Fraserburgh Parental Involvement Event

Report by Uschi Mitchell on behalf of the Communications Group

“**CFE Group** – was very confusing and none of my questions received a satisfactory answer. The one thing that still puzzles me is that apparently pupils can redo/resit parts or all of their N4 and N5 qualification as often as is needed to succeed.

Aberdeenshire Council has currently also no plans to engage with employers in regards to pupils who will leave school in the near future with the new qualifications.

The Parent Involvement Workshop – We identified various areas of how parents can get involved, i.e. communicate with school. Especially in secondary schools, it was felt, it is difficult to get the right information at the right time. Parents' evenings do take place too late and not frequently enough. Parents with an acute aversion against schools should have ways of communicating with schools without having to physically go into the school. Parents' evenings do not allow for enough confidentiality simply through the proximity of how teachers are placed to each other so that one can be overheard. To remedy some of the problems one probably needs to look at the resources.

Those were some of the things that were mentioned. Marjorie will give a complete report later. The bottom line was that everything and anything that improves communication between school and parents is feeding into constructive parent involvement.

The bit I really would like to look closer at, and perhaps copy if we can, is that in banchory the schools puts all their homework onto the website so that parents can check what homework their

offspring has.”

7. A.O.B

Parent Council Prize for Good Citizenship

It was decided by members that this prize would be in 2 parts – senior and junior for good citizenship. Following discussion it was agreed that a shield with the pupils names would be awarded to be retained in school and that individual pupil prizes should also be awarded. It was further agreed that the individual prizes should not be monetary and that Fiona should liaise with Mrs Anderson on what form the prize should take. Fiona and Mrs Anderson to agree the prize and Fiona to report back with costs etc. These prizes will be launched at the start of the next school term and awarded for the first time at the Prize-giving ceremony in 2014.

Thank You's

- Thank you to Uschi for helping out in the Modern Language Department
- Thank you to Dorothy who has done a huge amount of work over the last six years on behalf of the Parent Council

8. *Date and Time of Next Meeting*

The next meeting will be Thursday 29 August 2013 at 7.00 pm in the School Library.