

# **The Gordon Schools Parent Council**

**Thursday 25 April 2013**

**The Library, The Gordon Schools**

## ***MINUTE***

**PRESENT:** Fiona Alderson, Chair, Tracy Brook, Lynne Driver, Pat Emslie, Alisanne Ennis, Isobel Maughan, Career Academies, Carol Mearns, Clerk, Lee Menzies, Acting Rector, Uschi Mitchell, Sybille McLeod, Dorothy Young, Stewart Chalmers, Stewart McLauchlan, Acting Depute Rector, Cuthred Shepherd, S6 Pupil

**APOLOGIES:** Tracy Buckley, Councillor Sheena Lonchay, Carol Small, Councillor Joanna Strathdee

Introductions were made round the table

### **1. *Welcome and Apologies***

Fiona welcomed all to the meeting and accepted apologies.

### **2. *Presentation by Cuthred Shepherd, National Science & Engineering Fair***

Cuthred gave an in depth and informative presentation on his trip to the National Science & Engineering Competition – The Big Bang UK Young Scientists & Engineering Fair in London. Cuthred made special mention of Mrs Susan Shand, Teacher of Biology who helped him achieve this great opportunity.

Members of the group asked Cuthred questions regarding his experience.

Fiona thanked Cuthred and wished him well in his forthcoming SQA exams and in his future career.

Cuthred then left the meeting.

### **3. *Pupils Contribution***

There was no pupil contribution at this meeting. Lee advised however that a vending machine had been installed beside the P.E. department and that 2 flat screen T.V's were waiting to be installed, one in the milk bar and one in the foyer. Fiona asked about the possibility of linking these to Aberdeenshire Live and Lee will look into this.

### **4. *Isobel Maughan, Career Academies Programme***

Isobel Maughan, Regional Manager, Career Academies outlined that Career Academies is an external organisation with 8 years experience working with education and business, the main focus being in the gas and oil sector being fully supported by B.P. Five schools in the north east have opted into this scheme.

The programme requires 10 pupils from S5 & S6. The scheme will last 2 years and links pupils with the business community, targeting pupils in the 2/3 higher grade bracket.

Isobel informed the group that the programme offers a 5 week paid internship which will be paid by the companies the pupils will be working with. This requires a huge commitment from both pupils and parents. Pupils must be willing to travel to meet with their mentors every 4-6 weeks.

She reported that applications and interviews will take place in August when pupils will be matched with mentors from the business community.

Lee stated that pupils will be made aware of this programme at the S5/6 induction days. Parents will be made aware via newsletter, Parent Council FaceBook and possibly the Huntly Express.

It was also suggested that the Career Academies should attend the Careers Convention at The Gordon Schools. This event takes place every 2 years.

Isobel thanked the Parent Council for their time and left the meeting.

## **5. 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 Uschi Mitchell and seconded by Alisanne Ennis

### **Matters Arising**

Lottery – 100/200 Club

All members agreed that this should now be delayed until the start of the new term in August

Curriculum for Excellence Group

Lee reported that no meeting had taken place to date, however there will be a meeting in the next few weeks. Lee agreed to contact Parent Council members, who attend the meeting, when the date has been decided. **ACTION LM**

Meeting with Colin Fleetham, CSN Support Services Co-Ordinator.

Uschi stated that an urgent meeting is required with Colin Fleetham regarding the school website. Concern was raised by Uschi that there are no active links on the site. Lee advised that Colin is very happy to set up this meeting. Question was raised as to whether pupils could be involved in updating the website.

School Uniform Policy Update

Lee reported to the group that 3 surveys on school dress code are ready to be distributed to pupils parents and staff. Returns are required from staff by 10 May and from parents by the end of May.

## **6. Accounts/Treasurers Report**

Alisanne advised that Elaine Rough, new treasurer had been in contact with Ken Hamilton. Question was raised as to the balance in the Parent Council bank account. Carol agreed to get an up to date balance in time for the next meeting. **ACTION CM**

## **7. Rectors Report**

Due to the shortage of time it was agreed that Lee would e mail her up to date report to members

**ACTION LM**

## **8. Sub-Group Information**

### **Fund Raising Group Report**

Come as you please day

Dorothy reported that due to the quiz night being postponed it had been decided to use the Easter eggs (which had been donated for the quiz night) at the Come as you please day at the end of term. Pupils paid £1.00 at registration and were then given a raffle ticket. The raffle was held at the end of the day and all winners received an easter egg. Total raised for the day was £486.58

Comic Relief

Comic Relief day went very well. A staff v pupils unihoc match had taken place.

Hampers

The hampers at Parents' Evenings are an on going success. In the region of £60-£100 being raised at each Parents' Evening

Parent Council Coffee Morning – Saturday 22 June 2013

Dorothy advised that more home bakes than last year were needed, also bottles for bottle stall etc. This will be promoted on the website and via Facebook, and the PC to consider using the Huntly Express as a promotional and communication resource.

It was agreed that a text would be sent to parents to ask for raffle prize donations nearer the time  
**ACTION LM/CM**

Hi-Five

This will take place on Thursday 4 July

Duck Race

Sybille and Dorothy agreed that they would work on this together and report back to the group

### **Communications Group Report**

There was nothing new to report. Meeting with Colin Fleetham already discussed under item 5 in the minutes

### **C for E Report & Queries**

In addition to the papers sent out with the Agenda (and attached here for information), Stewart advised that the Inverurie meeting revealed that the thinking of many of the top performing schools is to have the majority of their pupils undertake combined N5/Highers across S4 and S5, coming out with 5 or 6 highers which Universities confirm they will regard as "first attempt". There will be no sitting of N5s at the end of S4.

This confirms that CfE in these schools is a radical departure from the past, with able pupils choosing their Highers at the end of S3. There are still a few questions such as what happens if they fail the higher? do they resit the Higher only (1 year)? Do they get a complimentary N5? These questions as yet remain unanswered and as information becomes available updates will be provided.

Subject Choices

Lee stated that all subject choices are now in the system and that the new timetable was now in progress. A question was posed regarding how pupils choosing a subject in S4, and which they did not study in S3, will catch up. Information on this will be provided once it is available.

### **9. *Format of May Meeting***

All members were in agreement that the May meeting should just be an ordinary meeting when a larger part of the meeting could be devoted to Curriculum for Excellence. This will allow the PC to be advised of progress on the S4 timetable including any challenges faced in putting together the timetable; informed as to how pupils taking a new subject in S4 will catch up with those who took the subject in S3; and how the 'wider experience' element of the timetable will work i.e. volunteering placements or the potential to use this time to catch up on new subjects.

Links to the P7 parents will take place at the P7 parents information evening. The PC will have a stall there and will be able to promote the work of the PC as well as highlighting Aberdeenshire Parental Involvement Group. Fiona will be included in the information element of the evening and will talk briefly about the role of the PC.

### **10. *A.O.B.***

## Easter Revision

Lee advised that the Easter Revision had taken place on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> April. The revision course had been successful. There appeared to be more pupils attended on day one rather than day two. It was agreed that a breakdown of costs would be available for the next meeting. **ACTION LM/CM**

Letter from Mr Stewart Stevenson MSP – from Uschi Mitchell (attached with minutes)

Copy of letter received from Mr Stewart Stevenson, MSP regarding safety measures on school buses (attached with this minute)

## **11. TGS 175<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary – Huntly Cultural Fund**

A draft bid to Huntly Cultural Fund was attached to the agenda for members consideration. All members were in agreement that a bid of £2000 should be submitted. Alisanne agreed to submit all relevant information to Huntly Cultural Fund. Pat advised that she still had information relating to the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and would be happy to include this in any activity which may take place.

## **12. Date & Time of Next Meeting**

Then next meeting will take place on Thursday 23 May at 7pm in the School Library.