

The Gordon Schools Parent Council

Wednesday 28 May 2014

The Library, The Gordon Schools

Minute

PRESENT: Fiona Alderson, Chair, Tracy Buckley, Catriona Duncan, Lynne Driver, Pat Emslie, Alisanne Ennis, Sybille McLeod, Carol Mearns, Minute Taker, Elaine Rough, Carol Taylor, Ruth Taylor Stewart Chalmers, Zander Hall, Rector

APOLOGIES: Lara Bestwick, Carole Small, Councillor Moira Ingleby

1. Welcome and Apologies

Fiona welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Minutes of Meeting on 24 April and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved in the proposal of Sybille McLeod and seconded by Stewart Chalmers

Matters Arising

National 4 & 5 Added Value Unit (not included in Minute 24 April 2014)

The Gordon Schools Website

Colin Fleetham, CSN Support Services Co-Ordinator was unable to attend the meeting tonight. It was agreed at the last meeting that Mr Fleetham would make enquiries and provide an overview, to this meeting, of the website which is being offered to schools by Aberdeenshire Council. Mr Fleetham is to be invited to attend the next meeting and to provide (possibly with a member of the I.T. Team) a demonstration of the type of website available from Aberdeenshire Council. This to be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting.

Concern was raised by some members regarding the statement "parents' first point of contact with the school is a member of the Guidance Team". It was stated that this in fact is not the case – the first point of contact is a member of the office staff. If it is not possible to pass the call to a Guidance teacher at this stage, a message will be taken and Mr Hall reassured members that the Guidance staff would return the call as soon as possible.

3. Pupil Report

There was no pupil representation at the meeting

4. Treasurer's Report

Elaine Rough, Treasurer reported that the balance in the account ear marked for 175th Anniversary celebrations is £8700, with spend to date of £5500.

5. Rector's Report - To follow

6. Fundraising – to include Coffee Morning

Coffee Morning

- Lynne Driver made an urgent plea for volunteers and donations for the Parent Council Coffee morning on 21 June in the Stewarts Hall.
- Information will be conveyed to parents regarding this by text and school notices.
- It was agreed that donations for the bottle stall and raffle should be handed in to the school office by Thursday 19 June. Donations for the cake and candy stall should be handed in to the school office by Friday 20 June or alternatively handed in to the Stewarts Hall on the morning of the event.
- Price for tickets will be £1.50 for adults and £1.00 for children, raffles will be £1.00 a strip, bottle stall will be 5 for £1.00.
- Ann Gray, Technical Assistant, will make up posters for the Coffee Morning.
- Fiona asked for any volunteers from Parent Council members – Pat Emslie agreed to be a hostess; Fiona and her daughter will be there; Uschi will help out with stalls.

Uschi stated that a stall had become available at the Farmers Market on Saturday 7 June. It was agreed that the Parent Council would take a stall at the market. Discussion took place and it was decided to sell ducks for the duck race.

Following the meeting the PC were advised that the Farmers Market had already allocated the Charities / Community Groups Stall and that they could not after all offer up a space to us. Uschi has agreed to book a stall for later in the year (Nov / Dec).

Future fundraising items:

Quiz Night. Questions to be compiled by Kevin McIntosh. Looking at obtaining a licence to sell alcohol.

The Duck Race will take place during the Huntly Hairst in September and ducks will be sold on various occasions between now and then.

It was decided to put The Gordon School Lottery on the agenda for the August meeting - there have been ongoing issues with the Bank in trying to set up an account and it is hoped that these will have been resolved by the next meeting.

Action FA

7. 175th Anniversary Update

Alisanne reported that the Vintage Night will be held in the Assembly Hall on Thursday 12 June. Tea, coffee and cakes will be served on the night. Pupils from Grease and sarock dancers will be performing. There will also be vintage stalls, raffles etc.

Alisanne informed the group that she had enough helpers and enough raffles but she did ask if teachers could attend and is hoping for approx. 140 guests.

School Photography Competition (Judged by Deveron Arts)

Joint Winners – Hazel Gardner and Ciara Ennis

Art Competition (Judged by Professor Ian Hunter)

Over 18's – Ken Davies – Picture of the Deveron

14-18 – No Entries

Under 14 – 1st Leah Morrison, 2nd Mina Brennan, 3rd Oona McLeary

Photography Competition (Judged by Jamie Barclay)

Over 18's - Kate Friday & Derek Coull

14-18 – Ciara Ennis

Under 14 – Lucas McIntosh

The Linden Tree will showcase the winning entries during the month of June.

8. Sub- Group Updates

Curriculum for Excellence

Stewart reported that there has been no meeting date set so far but he is hopeful that a meeting will take place in the near future. Fiona advised that she asked if this group was still active and that she had been informed that it was and that although no meetings had taken place for a while, a meeting should be set up early in the new school year to look at the results of the first round of exams in respect of the new national qualifications.

Stewart suggested that it may be a good idea for a future PC meeting to have a debriefing, looking back on how the first year for S4's had gone. Following discussion it was agreed that this should be open to all parents of pupils from that year group (as well as for parents of the new S4 year group) since it would be helpful for parents and carers to have an indication as to how pupils performed with the new qualifications - both locally and across Scotland. Mr Hall agreed to the proposal and would hope to have identified a date by the next meeting. Additionally the PC would focus on CfE and the exam results at a meeting in the new academic year.

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Communications Group

As mentioned previously (under Gordon Schools Website above) parents will be advised that they should always approach, in the first instance, the Guidance Team with any concerns around their child(ren). Parents should be advised that calls will be answered by reception and either passed through to Guidance staff or, if Guidance staff are unavailable, a message will be taken and passed on. Guidance staff will respond as soon as possible.

Mr Hall was asked if a newsletter would be available before the end of term - the last one having come out in October 2013 and the PC having previously been told, during the earlier part of this year that a newsletter would be available before the summer. Mr Hall advised that it would not be possible for a newsletter to be produced before the end of term - however the publication of a regular newsletter was planned for the new school year.

Concerns were raised about a lack of acknowledgement to emails sent in to the school by parents and community groups - Mr Hall agreed to look into this and to ensure that emails were acknowledged and responded to in a timely fashion.

It was agreed that Communications would be put on the Agenda for the next meeting.

9. P7 Transition

The P7 transition days will be 17th, 18th and 19th June. The P7 Parents' evening will take place on the evening of 17th June.

A bridging group, led by Kaye Simpson, Pupil Support Worker has been running for a few weeks now. This group was set up for P7 pupils who are lacking in confidence and have concerns over moving from primary to secondary school. It has been a success and all gone to plan.

10. TGS PC Citizenship Award

Concerns had been raised by members of staff that the Awards had not been publicised - and the PC noted that information had gone out in the Huntly Express (starting last August and again in February / March); on the school website; in school notices; and on Facebook.

Fiona advised that there were fewer nominations from the school than she had anticipated, however several pupils had been nominated through community groups and organisations. Fiona re-iterated that nominations could come from parents, staff, pupils, and from members of the wider community.

A group of volunteers from the PC met recently to decide on the winners of the award - this group also included a member of the senior management team and Mr Richard Hammock, Chairman of Huntly Development Trust. A scoring matrix was used to decide the winners and Mr Hammock suggested that, since the matrix seemed to work well, it be retained for future use. The Award winners were:

Junior – Becca Cooper

Senior – Annabelle McLeod

There were very few points between all nominees and the group agreed that the standard of nominations was very high and that the families and school should be extremely proud of the achievements of the pupils nominated.

11. School Uniform

It was felt by members that the standard of school dress had been lapsing of late. Zander reported that the school dress code group had met recently and it had been a very positive meeting and the group was very pleased with the standard of dress in the school. The group will meet in the new term and review the situation.

12. Liaison with School

No discussion took place on this item, concerns around communication as noted under Sub-group, Communications.

13. AOB

Youth Philanthropy Initiative

A letter from Mrs Marbeth Ritchie, Teacher RMPS was read out - inviting a member of The Parent Council to be on the judging panel for the above. Elaine Rough agreed to be a judge at the event on 4 June. Members of the PC are welcome to attend.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 26 August 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Library. Items identified above for the next Agenda are as follows:

The Gordon Schools Website - Colin Fleetham

National 5 Update - Proposed Parents Evening - Zander Hall

Gordon Schools Lottery / Quiz Night / Duck Race

Dates of Meetings 2014 / 2015

AGM - Fiona suggested that pupils from the YPI, Ryla Camp and Career Academies could be invited to do a presentation at the AGM meeting in September. Carol agreed to contact the staff involved and to ask if they thought this was feasible.

ACTION: C.M.