



Minutes of 37th Stranraer Academy Parent Council Meeting Thursday 13th January 2011

PRESENT: -

Parent Members: Jo Cochrane, Neale McQuistin, John Crawford, James McQuisitn, Lesley McColm, Rod Baxter, Lesley McSkimming and Anne Boyd.

Co-opted Member: Robert Downie

Student Rep: Michael McClorey

Head Teacher: Norman Dawson

Teacher Rep: Mike Warren, Susan Boyd and Mark Cameron

Clerk: Lorraine Heron

1.	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
	Jo welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the New Year and apologies were put forward on behalf of Helen-marie Bradley, Neil Fyfe, Lyn Mawson and Christine Fowles.
2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
	Councillor Dick had contacted the clerk and requested that further details regarding the discussion of the 3G pitch be included in the minutes. The following was added: <i>Councillor Dick advised that it is currently about 11th on the Capital Development block with no indication when the money will be available. He also advised that he is raising the issue at every opportunity.</i> With this amendment the minutes of the previous meeting were proposed as accurate by Norman Dawson and seconded by Anne Boyd.
3.	MATTERS ARISING
	<p>Classroom access and key strategy – Lorraine advised the members that a letter had been sent to Larann Foss asking for an update on progress and to find out if we were nearing a solution. However, Jo Cochrane advised that the provision of keys has already been authorised by Colin Grant and he is just waiting on the school getting back to him with confirmation of the number required. Mr Dawson advised that he was not aware that this had been authorised and will arrange for Mr Grant to be contacted as soon as possible with the relevant information. Action N Dawson</p> <p>3G Pitch – James told the members he had been advised by Stephen Jack that Rhona Wells, Dumfries and Galloway Council, is submitting a report to the Education Committee regarding the 3G MUGA. Mr Jack will report back to James at the end of the month.</p>
4.	TRACKING AND TARGETING REPORTS
	<p>Mr Warren attended the meeting to explain and discuss the Tracking and Targeting reports which are sent out to parents throughout year. This was discussed at great length. The members of the Parent Council feel that the report is confusing and causes unnecessary worry to parents as they simply cannot understand the different grades detailed on the report. Mr Warren explained that the issuing of these reports is intended to give the parents more information on their child's progress but the system also allows teachers to pick up on an area where a pupil may be experiencing difficulties and intervene if necessary. He is aware that there are some concerns with the format of the report and the teachers themselves are still experiencing issues with the input of the information, but he is grateful for any feedback the Parent Council give. One area of confusion for some members is the mix of different exams, Intermediate 1 and 2 and Standard grades etc. Intermediate exams are actually graded A, B and C but appear on the report as a number. Another point raised was the fact that it was not made clear that the grades can only be based on the course work the pupils have completed so far. Mr Warren agreed that the layout of the report could be altered to include this information and make the report easier to read. He is also going to look at the possibility of introducing a 'traffic light' system rather than excellent/good/inconsistent etc., as the members felt that the use of the word 'excellent' implied that there was no room for improvement and detracted from the actual grades being given. It was suggested that a working group could be formed to help improve the information sent out and hopefully some parents could be included in this group. This Tracking and Targeting system is in use by a number of schools across Scotland, but it has not been rolled out to all schools yet. The schools that are using the system have the opportunity to give feedback and Mr Warren is happy to convey our concerns and comments at the next meeting. It was also agreed that Lorraine would write to Mrs Martin in the Education department and make the views of the Parent Council known. The members thanked Mr Warren for coming to the meeting and were keen to point out although there were some changes needed; the reports were overall a positive thing. Action L Heron</p> <p>Mr Cameron added he felt we should encourage the use of the pupil's homework diaries as another means of communicating with the parents.</p>
	STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT
	Michael McClorey reported that the Student Council had nothing to raise at this meeting.

6.	HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing/Absence – Gemma Dalrymple has joined us as a temporary Science teacher covering some of Carrie White's classes. Jane Law is still absent following a knee operation – Des Dillon covering. Carolyn Taylor has taken up post as Primary PE specialist. Charlotte Law is covering classes until mid Feb by which time the permanent position should be advertised. The post of PT Social Subjects has also been advertised internally as Sandra Dutton will retire around Easter. After a period of absence Vaughan Jenkins has returned to the Technical department. Andy Taylor (temp Business Studies) will take up a permanent post in Kirkcudbright later this month. James Henderson is on Paternity leave. Also there are a number of absences at the moment with flu. • Exclusions – 4 since the last meeting – 2 for assault, 1 for persistent disobedience and 1 for verbal abuse of staff. Figures for the session so far show 9 less exclusions than the equivalent period last session with 42 less days lost. • Hairspray – The show was on for three nights and was a great success. Thanks to all staff, pupils and other helpers who made it possible. • RSE – Allan Little – This was also very successful. A video of the afternoon talk is available on the RSE website. The evening event was well attended attracting over 100 people, some of whom had never been in the School nor have any connection with anyone in the school. • End of Term Services – 5 services were held by the Chaplaincy team on the last Friday before the Christmas holidays. • End of Term Carols – Three carol concerts were held on the last day of term. Thanks to all participants especially the Brass Band. • School Improvement Plan – Copies of the School Improvement Plan were distributed to the members for discussion at the next meeting. • Cluster Working – We are working with Jo Kopela (NHS) on developing peer teaching between some of our S1 and P7. We are also hoping to appoint a transition teacher to aid the smooth transition of primary pupils to the Academy. • House System – Mr Butler has started an inter-house competition since we returned after Christmas. Events have included Dodgeball, 5 a-side football and a Wii challenge.
7.	TEACHER'S REPORT
	<p>Mr Cameron, Acting PT in Science asked the members if they would consider funding the purchase of Periodic tables to be hung up in the Science rooms. This was agreed. The cost is approx £250 for the ten required.</p> <p>Susan Boyd reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco-Schools – The Green Flag inspection which was to take place on December was cancelled due to the bad weather and has been rescheduled for 10th Feb. • Xmas Fayre – This took place on 20th December and raised £416. The Eco-schools group have decided to donate this to charity rather than back in to the group. Various options are being considered including a named charity, sponsor a child, rain forest and UNICEF. • Fair Trade Group – The Fair Trade Group are currently working hard to get Fair Trade status. Of the five conditions required they have already achieved three. The seniors are selling products at a Tuck shop in the school canteen. • Amnesty Group – The Amnesty group are organising a gig in order to raise funds.
8.	TREASURER'S REPORT
	Bank balances are as follows: Treasurer's account £714.93 and fundraising account £2350.48.
9.	CORRESPONDENCE
	No Correspondence had been received this month.
10.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	<p>Fundraising – The Quiz will be held on 1st March and James McQuisitin will once again do the questions. Teams will be made up of 4 people with at least one member being a pupil (either primary or secondary.) Anne Boyd and Lesley McSkimming agreed to join the existing fundraising group who will meet shortly. It is hoped to hold another sing along event, possibly Mama Mia.</p> <p>Rhins Education Trust – Norman Dawson advised that the members that the accounts were now done. He will be contacting Alex Haswell by email to see how things are progressing. Action N Dawson</p> <p>Award Ceremony – Discussion took place regarding a speaker for the Awards Ceremony. It is hoped that General D McDowall will be able to attend but so far members have been unable to contact him. James has agreed to try and get in touch with him and will report back at the next meeting. Action J McQuisitin</p> <p>Website – Niel Fyfe had sent an email asking if someone could get the School Website updated. There is quite a lot of information on it which is out of date for example: the section on Curriculum Guides is over 3 years out of date and the section on extracurricular activities is 2 years old. Mr Warren agreed to get this updated as soon as possible. Action M Warren</p> <p>Annual Health Check Form – It was decided to distribute this at the S3 parents evening on Tues 18th. Some members felt the questions were not really suited to S1 parents as their Parents evening is too early in the year. It was agreed a separate form be compiled for S1 parents.</p> <p>P7 Visits – Mr Dawson advised that the Primary schools will once again be bringing P7 pupils to spend the day in the School with their own teacher. It is expected they will come for more than one day this year and more Primaries have indicated they will attend.</p>
11.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING – The next meeting will be held on Thurs Feb 10th

