



Minutes of 28th Stranraer Academy Parent Council Meeting Thursday 11th February 2010

PRESENT: -

Parent Members: Robert Downie, Christine Fowles, Emma Sutherland, Nicola Kane, Kay Armitage, Sheena Rogers, Lesley McColm, Jo Cochrane, Rod Baxter, Fiona Spicer, James McQuistin

Co-opted Member: Richard Little

Student Rep: Blair Campbell, John Kennedy

Head Teacher: Norman Dawson

Teacher Rep: Helen-Marie Bradley, Susan Boyd, Stuart Binnie

Clerk: Lorraine Heron

Council Member: Councillor W Scobie

Attending: Ann Fiddleton, Angela Mooney, Father Mark Kelly

1.	WELCOME & APOLOGIES
	Vice-Chairman Robert Downie opened the meeting. Apologies were put forward on behalf Neale McQuistin.
2.	MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (14th Jan)
	The Minutes of the last Meeting were proposed as accurate by Jo Cochrane and seconded by Nicola Kane.
3.	MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING
	Item 11 MUGA – Councillor Scobie advised the members that his position in respect of the siting of a MUGA has not changed in that he would like the facility to come to Stranraer. The possibility of it being sited at Stranraer Academy is still being considered, although this will not now be under PPP. Swimming Pool – Stuart Binnie informed the members that the swimming pool has now been repaired and is back in use.
4.	STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT
	Blair Campbell advised the members that the Pupil Council have asked for a re-cycling facility for plastic bottles, perhaps placing bins outside the dining hall. They would also like to continue with the paper re-cycling. Susan Boyd advised that the school would once again be re-cycling telephone directories. When asked about the pupils feedback about the new building, both Blair and John said that overall the students appeared to be pleased with the new school and a lot of positive comments had been made. There had been concern previously about the size of the new canteen but the pupils seem to be happy with it. The only concern they had was that the bell was not audible throughout the whole building. However, Mr Dawson advised that this had now been adjusted.
5.	CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE
	Mr Dawson outlined the proposals for Curriculum For Excellence. It is hoped to have 8 register groups in each year and pupils will be in these classes for both Registration and PSD, with the PSD programme being delivered by the registration teacher. Advantages of this would be that all the pupils would be going to PSD at the same time. This would allow extraction of same-sex groups for talks from visiting speakers. It will also provide the students with some continuity as it is hoped that that pupils will have the same teacher during their subsequent years. It is also proposed to add an extra 5 minutes on to the registration class. This would allow teachers to carry out a formal monitoring programme involving Uniform, homework diaries, target setting etc., in line with Health & Wellbeing recommendations. It would also be advantageous as assemblies often overrun, especially if there are guest speakers. Another proposal is to introduce two periods of 'choices', for S1, offering pupils the chance to take part in activities which are currently not available to them. This could be things like, playing games, a second language, photography, debating society, choir group. Currently some of these things are available as extra-curricular activities, but some pupils can't stay after school for various reasons. This would open up the same opportunities to all the children. These proposals were discussed by the members at great length. The members felt that adding an extra 5 minutes to registration was not a good idea as pupils could just see it as an opportunity to arrive 5 minutes late. It was suggested that in order to solve the problem of assemblies overrunning, speakers could be invited in to the PSE classes, or have assemblies taken out of a period on a rotational basis. Another concern was that the 'choices' were being introduced to S1 pupils. It was felt that the first year students required guidance rather than choice. As there were only examples of what subjects/choices were available Mr Dawson agreed to consult the staff and provide an accurate list of what would be available at the next meeting.
	Action N Dawson

6.	ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK
	<p>It was suggested that the Parent Council try to get feedback from parents as to how they felt the school was performing. It was decided that a questionnaire could be made up, in a simple form, so it was quick to complete and possibly be distributed to the parents. It was hoped that rather than send them home with pupils some of the members could talk direct to parents, either at parent's evenings or out in the community. Kay suggested making a display of at Stranraer Library using their information boards. Jo, Lesley, Fiona and Robert formed a sub-committee to produce a sample questionnaire for the next meeting. They asked that the other members consider what type of questions should be asked and let them know by email. Councillor Scobie agreed that this was a good idea as this was something that had been flagged up by the HMIE in their report. Action: Jo, Fiona, Lesley, Robert</p>
7.	HEAD TEACHERS REPORT
	<p>Mr Dawson reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing – Sandra Dutton to start a phased return to work next week. Rob Lockwood will continue as PT Social Subjects and Neil Hyslop will remain in the Social Subjects department. Callum Scott will be off for at least 4 weeks with a broken ankle. The predicted roll for next session is about 30 less than at present. This will mean losing 2 staff. In addition as a result of budget cuts the school will need to lose about another 2 staff. Some of that can be done through retirements and requests from staff to cut hours. However, we will still be over by 1.8 FTE next session. This will be charged to the school budget if staff cannot be transferred. Ideally we would have liked another Physics teacher to allow us to run all the classes we usually do – but because we are over staffed that cannot be done. Instead some S3 & S5/6 classes will not run. • Exclusions – 10 pupils have been excluded since the last meeting: one for violent conduct resulting in Mr Benson having to attend his Doctor/Chiropractor as a result of his injuries, one for racist remarks and four for damaging a bicycle belonging to another pupil. Three pupils have been excluded twice in one month. There was also the incident which was reported in the Free Press involving some of our pupils (and parents) which took place in the town centre. The main instigator was excluded from the school at the time and has not returned. • PPP - The move to the new building went quite successfully. There are still some teething problems. We had 2 fire alarms before the pupils moved in caused by a heat sensor in the canteen area. There have been a further two alarms – caused by workmen testing the system. Fire Evacuation procedures have been successful. There is still some furniture missing which we hope to receive next week. In addition a substantial number of items were received damaged and will have to be repaired. The final signing off of the building should happen next week. • Rhins Education Trust – The original trustees have met and a further meeting will take place in 25th Feb. They are looking for an Honorary Secretary. • Reporting – S2 reports have been delayed, partly due to down time in ICT systems and photocopiers during the move, but also due to issues with the pilot software which have now been addressed. • PPP Playing Field – Neale has correspondence about the playing fields. Alex Haswell has agreed to attend the next meeting with a progress report. • Dates for Diary – Mon 15th Feb, holiday; Tues and Wed 16th/17th, In-service days; Thurs 18th Feb, S2 Information Evening; Tues 23rd Feb, S2 Parents Evening; Wed 24th Feb, Quiz; Thurs 25th Feb, Rhins Education Trust Meeting; Wed 3rd March, Duke of Edinburgh Presentations; Tues 9th March, Careers Evening; Thurs 11th March Parent Council Meeting. • S1 Class Allocation – Along with Helen-Marie Bradley and Alex Hughes, I am meeting with Ann Appleford and Mary Thomson to discuss allocation of P7 pupils to S1 classes. • S4 Mentoring – This process has started again for 30 S4 pupils. • Easter Services – These will take place on Thursday 25th March with the Chaplaincy team.
8.	TEACHERS REPORT
	<p>Helen-Marie Bradley advised the members that the children who had asked for new National Entitlement cards had now received them and said that anyone still wanting a new card could still get apply. They can offer good benefits and will be useful if the school introduces a loyalty scheme. She also advised that as part of the induction for S5/S6 pupils they will attend a programme called 'Drive Alive' at the Ryan Centre on 8th June. This is to make students aware of the dangers of driving. Some of the production will be on the screen and part of it will be actors on stage. They will play the parts of Paramedics and Police in what is a very powerful production.</p>
9.	TREASURERS REPORT
	<p>The bank balances were as follows: Treasurers account £621.78 and Fundraising account £1246.63.</p>
10.	FUNDRAISING
	<p>James distributed posters for the Quiz night which will be held on Wednesday 24th Feb at 7pm in the new assembly hall. Final preparations were in place for the B block party on Fri 12th.</p>
11.	CORRESPONDENCE
	<p>Robert read out a letter from Jacqueline Wilson, office manager at Stranraer Academy, requesting funding towards uniform blouses for the office staff. This was discussed by the members and the decision was made not to make a donation at this time. Lorraine to reply by letter to Mrs Wilson. Action L Heron The only other correspondence was the SPTC newsletter.</p>

12.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Canteen – Mrs Mooney attended the meeting to highlight a problem her daughter was experiencing in the new canteen. The queues were extremely long and there were no seats available for her daughter when she had used the canteen earlier in the week. Mrs Mooney is now collecting her daughter and taking her home at lunchtimes. Mr Dawson advised that the canteen had been extremely busy when it first opened, but day by day it had quietened down. The situation now was that the uptake of school meals was pretty much the same as before. The problem may be that with the style of seating senior pupils may already be at a table and the younger pupils may not be confident enough to join them. Various suggestions were made in order to solve this, such as staggered lunchtimes giving S1 a head start, designated tables for younger pupils or perhaps a common room for senior pupils. Helen-Marie Bradley advised that they were currently looking at the introduction of Prefects as part of the induction for senior pupils. This would maybe help things run more smoothly. Mr Scobie highlighted that mixed messages were being received as the Student Council reps had said earlier in the meeting that the pupils were happy with the new canteen, but we now had parents who clearly were not. It was decided that the registration teachers could carry out a survey to find out how many children were using the canteen and the reasons why some choose not to. Nicola advised that the new menus had now been introduced and the feedback had been good. • Police Presence in School – There had been a number of rumours circulating in the town following the disturbance which had taken place in the town centre. Some of the members asked if perhaps the school should have contacted the parents to dispel these rumours. However, as there were no problems within the school it was felt that this was not necessary. There was a police presence in the school in the days following the incident and some members felt that a group call to the parents to reassure them that this was just a precaution might have been helpful. • PPP – Robert asked if there had been an interest in the furniture from B and C block following a feature in the Free Press offering it free to any groups or organisations needing it. Mr Dawson advised most of it was gone with a lot of primary schools taking some as well as Dumfries High School and Douglas Ewart. • Playing Fields – Stuart Binnie advised the members that the school uses the playing fields up until 6pm but other organisations were leaving it in an untidy state. The bins had previously been removed and have not yet been replaced despite numerous phone calls. He asked for help finding out who is actually responsible for providing the bins as he is getting nowhere. Jo said she would find out and let Mr Binnie know. Action Jo Cochrane • Chaplaincy Team – Father Mark Kelly informed the members that the chaplaincy team were still very much involved with the school and offered support to the whole community. He said that he was pleased there had been good feedback from the school. • Budget - W Scobie advised that there had been cuts in the Education Budget today, and most importantly there had been cuts in the Secondary Sector. As Norman had said in his report this will be a hurdle next session as some departments will be overstaffed, which will in turn prevent him from recruiting staff in departments where needed. • Parent Council Area Forum – Kay advised that when she and other members had attended the Parent Council Area Forum they were disappointed that the Agenda was not followed. She had hoped to have the opportunity to discuss various issues with the senior members of Schools Services staff and share opinions and ideas with other parent council representatives. She felt that the whole evening was spent discussing Curriculum for Excellence and this left no opportunity to discuss anything else. It was agreed that Lorraine would send a letter to the Liaison Officer letting them know that those who attended were disappointed. Action L Heron
13.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
	The next meeting will be on Thursday 11 th March at 7pm.