

Minutes of the Grantown Grammar School Parent Council AGM which was held in the school on Tuesday 14th September 2010 at 7.30pm

1. Welcome by Chairman

Mr McCook welcomed everyone to the third AGM of the Grantown Grammar School Parent Council.

Mrs Young proposed the adoption of the minutes of the last AGM and Mrs Amphlett seconded the proposal. The minutes were duly adopted.

2. Apologies

Mrs Susan McLaren

Cllr Jaci Douglas

Mrs Annie Forwood

Mrs Morag Dunbar

Mrs Ruth Bruce

Mrs Sharon Kerr

Mrs Marion McCook

McLain Carter S6 School Captain, Revack house

Ananda Hummel S6 School Captain, Roy house

3. Headteacher's comments

Mrs Carson noted the different start to this school year compared to last year when there were three maths classes in the hall until the new STEM building could be used in October. She thanked the Parent Council Policy & Planning Group for their contribution to the provision of this accommodation.

There has been a positive start to this session with a school roll of 430 and new staff settling in well.

There is a lot of pressure facing schools at this time and the support of parents and the Parent Council is very important. With budget cuts and a new managed IT service fundraising is more important than ever. Mrs Carson acknowledged the significant work of the Fundraising Group.

This session sees the first year of a full engagement to the Curriculum for Excellence. Grantown Grammar school has, in fact, been working on this since 2007 and our work has been recognised to be good practice at a national level. A Learning and Teaching Scotland visitor who was in school today was really impressed at the work being done across the curriculum.

The curriculum is changing and pupils' experiences will be very different

from those of the parents. One of the priorities for the Parent Council is to work out how to inform parents about this. Last year an S2 Open Day was organised. Perhaps there could be something similar again. The Policy and Planning Group will face some big decisions about the curriculum structure over the next few years.

There has been some concern over the vulnerability of many of our pupils, particularly in the S2/3 age group. An evening event is being planned in partnership with Police and local doctors to alert parents to the real dangers that their children could be facing at a very young age. It is often difficult to persuade parents along to events like this – most parents think it does not apply to their children until it's too late. Mrs Carson would welcome ideas on how to overcome this problem.

Parents who would like more information about any aspect of the school, such as exam results, are encouraged to join the Parent Council Policy & Planning Group.

If you can give a bit of time to support school events and/or fundraising, then the Fundraising Group is keen to hear from you.

Mrs Carson stressed that your input as parents, in whatever capacity, makes a real difference to what the school can offer your children.

4. Policy and Planning report

Mr McCook said it was good to hear that external agencies are using Grantown Grammar as an exemplar and are looking favourably at the school. He acknowledged the number of staff who have given presentations on the work being done in school.

Last year has not seemed as busy but the Parent Council is now a Registered Charity. This will make a difference to the income. For example, money raised by the sponsored walk can now be gift aid. This would have increased the amount raised at the last sponsored walk by £600 so will make a significant difference to fundraising.

We are not completely content with the STEM building. There are still issues to be resolved but the Parent Council will not step in unless it becomes necessary.

The web-shop has recently raised £70 and Mr McCook encouraged anyone who would normally buy online to do so through the GGS Parent Council website.

At the Parent Council meeting last week a representative from the

Highland Council attended a discussion about proposals for the Strathspey Thistle football club to erect a 2.4m high solid fence. Concern was expressed for the safety of pupils. The Parent Council had a fair hearing.

Mr McCook was asked what percentage the Parent Council received from the webshop. This varies depending on the company you are buying from.

5. Fundraising report

Mrs Tucker expressed her thanks to Mrs Helen Tague who has run the Lucky Number draw for many years. At present there are 55 Lucky Numbers. It is hoped this will increase. A note will go on the newsletter informing parents that they should ask if they wish to know their Lucky Number.

There have been more offers of help with fifteen people volunteering to help at discos. This means the same people will not be asked every time. Five people will help at the sponsored walk.

Mrs Tucker thanked Mrs Young for her support and work as Treasurer over the past few years.

The Fundraising Group is now in need of someone to take charge of the Lucky Number draw and a Fundraising Co-ordinator, since Mrs Tucker will be retiring from the post at the end of the school year.

At this point Mrs Carson stressed that it is a particularly important time for parents to be involved, with the introduction of the new curriculum structure.

6. Treasurer's report

Mrs Young distributed and explained the Treasurer's report. Although the balance is still healthy there is a deficit this year. This is partly due to money being held back for work in refurbished classrooms in the new building and to the fact that we had no big fundraiser, such as the sponsored walk, last year.

Mrs Carson noted since there is a new ICT managed service, many of the present pcs will not go on the new network. If the school wants more than the minimum number of pcs we will have to pay extra to include the service charge. The embargo on buying hardware is to continue until October.

Mrs Young said the accounts, which have been examined by VABS, need to be approved for OSCR. This was proposed by Mr Giles Baker and seconded by Mrs Catherine McAuly-Brand.

To mark the occasion of Mrs Young's retiral as Treasurer and in appreciation of all the hard work she has done Mr McCook presented her with a bouquet of flowers and a framed painting by a pupil.

Mr McCook formally invited Mrs Wharton to take over the position as Treasurer. This was seconded by Mrs McAuly-Brand.

7. Introduction to Parent Council Groups

All the parents and staff who attended the meeting already go to the Parent Council meetings so an introduction was not necessary.

8. AOB

Disappointment was expressed at how few parents attended the meeting. It was suggested that S1 pupils invite their parents or pupils do presentations. Perhaps meetings could be held in other villages. Although all parents are invited to the meetings it is thought some may be reluctant because they think they will be "roped in" to do other things. The problem needs to be addressed.

Mr McCook proposed positions of Policy and Planning Chairman, Fundraising Chairman, Communications Chairman and Clerk would continue to be held by Mr McCook, Mrs Tucker, Mr Liggat and Mrs Buxton respectively unless there were any objections. There were none.

Mr McCook explained the Policy & Planning Group and the Fundraising Group have merged in order to have a larger quorum for fundraising decisions. There were no objections to this.

The date of the next Parent Council meeting will be Tuesday 16th November at 7.30pm.

Please note, Mrs Carson has requested a change of date for the next meeting.

The meeting was closed at 8.30pm and refreshments were provided.

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