

Minutes of the Parent Council meeting held in the Grantown Grammar School staffroom at 7.30pm on Wednesday 6th April 2011.

1. Welcome

Mr McCook opened the meeting and apologised for changing the date of the last meeting at short notice, due to work commitments.

Present

Mr Sandy McCook	Convenor
Mrs Cath Buxton	Clerk
Mrs Heather Tucker	Chair Fundraising Group
Mrs Hayley Muir	
Mr Giles Baker	
Mrs Claire Thom	
Mrs Irene Carson	Headteacher
Mrs Liz Amphlett	
Mrs Tracy Wharton	Treasurer
Mrs Ene-Karmen Forsyth	
Mr Andy Liggat	Chair Communications Group
Mrs Catherine McAuly-Brand	
Mr Dugal McCrow	
Mr Chris Bremner	
Miss Hannah McCook	School Captain, Revoan
Mr McLain Carter	School Captain, Revack

2. Apologies

Mr Robert Brown
Mrs Susan McLaren
Miss Kendal Delaney
Mrs Ann Sullivan
Mrs Sharon Kerr

3. Minutes of last meeting

Mrs Wharton proposed the adoption of the minutes of the last meeting and Mr Liggat seconded the proposal. The minutes were duly adopted.

4. Matters arising

The computer refresh is due to start. We are still awaiting the survey report. There is no information about the new print contract. Mrs Carson is due to go to a meeting on Friday to discuss the ICT position. The school has been allocated 77 computers in addition to the number shown by Mr Smith at the last meeting.

There has been positive feedback from the recent Open Days.

Added item to agenda

McLain Carter has been looking into a uniform for senior pupils, who have requested the re-introduction of the blazer. McLain and Hannah McCook modeled samples from Highland Schoolwear. The costs were £35 for the boys' basic blazer and £29 for the girls' Piping and House Colours had been

discussed but these could make quite a difference to the price. The blazers would likely be worn by S5 pupils too. The blazers shown were black but S5 pupils would like to choose a colour instead. Highland Schoolwear already do GGS uniforms and are very flexible. They would visit and allow pupils to try the blazers on. It was suggested this could be done on the Senior Induction Day, the 7th June. It is possible they could offer a discount. There is no minimum number required when ordering. The school is unable to stock uniform items due to pressures on storage and office staffing. Mrs McAuly-Brand asked if the seniors had looked at local outlets, such as Zippy. Mrs Thom also suggested consultation with S4 pupils who would be seniors at the change of timetable. The 26th April was suggested as a time to do this. There will be around 46 S6 pupils and 100 pupils including S5. Mrs Muir agreed to visit Highland Schoolwear to ask them if they could come to school on the 7th June.

5. Treasurer's report

Mrs Wharton distributed copies of the report and explained the details. She added that the Royal Bank of Scotland has decided there will be no interest credit from June this year.

6. Fundraising

Due to lack of time and other commitments, Heather Tucker stood down as Chair of the Fundraising committee. She said that the Lucky Numbers are up to date and a Silent Auction has been discussed. Mr McCook asked if anyone present at the meeting would be willing to take on the role. It would be easier if someone else was in charge of the Lucky Numbers. Reminders for next year's Lucky Numbers are due to go out in June. There were no volunteers. Mr McCook asked to be informed if anyone knows someone willing to take on either of the jobs. An email about the two posts will be sent out to all on the Parent Council email list. These are vital roles in providing funds to the school, on which the school depends. It will also be mentioned in the Newsletter. Mrs Carson thanked Mrs Tucker for all her hard work over the past four years.

On behalf of Miss Delaney, Mrs Buxton reminded everyone about the Summer Ceilidh which has been organized for Saturday June 25th.

Six S2 pupils will be holding a quiz on the 28th April to fundraise for Mary's Meals. There will be baking from the Home Ec department and a raffle, endorsed by the Parent council.

7. Communications

Newsletters on the website stopped 7 months ago. Mrs Tucker will copy the ones since then to Mr Liggat. Mr Liggat asked for any newsletter information to be sent to him as soon as it arises rather than all at the last minute. He suggested that newsletters can also be used as an advertising medium.

8. Any other business

There was no other business

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9. Policy and Planning Group meeting to discuss the following:

(i) The Curriculum for Excellence – Curriculum Architecture – Senior Phase Proposals

Mr McCrow explained some of the changes in the CfE. Pupils will receive a broad general education up to and including S3. The current S1 will not do their options at the end of S2. By the end of S3 a significant number of pupils should be working at Level 4, which is the National 4 (N4) and is equivalent to the present Standard Grade General level.

Mrs Carson is planning how to integrate the new courses. New Highers will be introduced in the year 2014/15, the same year as the final Intermediate 1, 2, Highers and Advanced Highers will be sat. Under the new system an able pupil could move into a Higher course from S3 introducing the possibility of more qualifications earlier. There will be more scope in courses offered to S4. S6 year pupils. Currently there are 5 columns of 5 periods. Many schools are moving to a 33 period week.

Mr McCrow explained that the building blocks will be put in place in S1-3. There will be more flexibility and courses should flow into each other. The level N4 will be assessed as a pass or fail internally by the school. There will be no exam diet: the evidence will be provided by the pupil.

In the level, N5, there will be two compulsory modules and a Value Added Project. Art is looking at a written paper at N5 to replace the essay. Literacy, numeracy, health and well-being, plus the four capacities will all be built in and assessed within the units.

In the present format, different levels of subjects have a different content. The form of the new structure will make it easier for pupils to move up or down levels

Parents of pupils at the younger end of the school are encouraged to join the Curriculum for Architecture meetings. SQA definitions and rationales etc are available online.

Mr Bremner pointed out that the new structure seems quite complicated and could be difficult to put across to parents. The SQA has produced parent information booklets. Mrs Carson expects these to be issued to schools in the near future.

(ii) Headteacher's report – including curriculum, staffing update

2.6% of the budget cuts will have to come from staffing. This will, inevitably, lead to a cut in the curriculum. A number of staff have expressed interest in taking early retirement. Three teachers, from Geography, Maths and Computing, will be retiring. We are expecting a teacher from Charleston Academy to do Computing and Maths on a 0.8 timetable and have plans in place to address the Geography vacancy. Acting Principal Teacher posts will be advertised internally.

Mrs Carson has looked at the uptake for Third year options and, as a result,

Administration, Computing and PC Passport will not be running in the next school year. Higher Computing will not be offered but will be offered the following year when higher numbers interested will make it more viable. Universities offering Computing courses don't stipulate Higher Computing as a necessary entry qualification.

In the Language department German will be run at Higher level in S6 but won't be offered to S5 pupils this year. When the new level N4/5 French is running the German Higher will be offered and vice versa. This will strengthen the Modern Language department.

Budget . The school is in a position to buy new carpets, new heaters in Home Economics, plus a new dishwasher, tumble dryer and basic essentials.

The S6 show . Tutti Frutti . was excellent. It wasn't a good time for S6 pupils, with exams approaching but they provided an excellent show. Well done to Miss Galloway who directed it.

All School Librarian posts (and equivalent level Public Librarian posts) have been deleted and a new structure is being put in place. There has been no consultation with Headteachers. Mrs Carson is to attend a Headteachers meeting on Friday afternoon where the lack of consultation will be discussed. Mrs Buxton will receive a 90 day redundancy notice and will be given the opportunity to apply for one of the new posts in this time. There will be a post based at Grantown Grammar School.

Mrs Muir asked if the school could give parents more information about university requirements. Mrs Carson said there is some advice in the Course booklets which all pupils receive before making their course choices. Guidance Teachers give Careers Education and the Careers Service come to school regularly. However, the Careers Service has been cut back recently. Careers advisers have been working with S2 pupils to encourage them to reflect on their own skills. The school is planning a showcase event for the 1st June, in the evening. There is an invitation to parents and employers to encourage more involvement. A panel would answer questions on what we are trying to achieve. Some employers are not so aware of the changes taking place and need to be updated by the school.

(iii) School Improvement Plan

The Highland Council requirements for School Improvement Plans are now more streamlined.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 24th May 2011 at 7.30pm.

Mr McCook thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.40pm.

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