

Minutes of the Parent Council meeting held in the Grantown Grammar School staffroom at 7.30pm on Wednesday 17th November 2010.

1. Welcome

Mr McCook opened the meeting with a welcome to all present.

Present

Mr Sandy McCook	Convenor
Mrs Cath Buxton	Clerk
Mrs Heather Tucker	Chair Fundraising Group
Mr Malcolm Smith	
Mrs Hayley Muir	
Mr Robert Brown	
Mrs Claire Thom	
Mrs Irene Carson	Headteacher
Mr Giles Baker	
Mrs Liz Amphlett	
Mrs Tracy Wharton	Treasurer
Mrs Ene-Karmen Forsyth	
Mrs Ruth Bruce	
Miss Hannah Mccook	School Captain, Revoan
Miss Ananda Hummel	School Captain, Roy
Mr McLain Carter	School Captain, Revack

2. Apologies

Mrs Ann Sullivan	
Mr Chris Bremner	
Mr Andy Liggat	Chair Communications Group
Cllr Jaci Douglas	
Miss Kendal Delaney	
Mrs Catherine McAuly-Brand	
Mrs Annie Forwood	

3. Minutes of last meeting

It was pointed out that in item number 9 of the minutes the final amount raised at the Try-Tri was £100.

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

4. Matters arising

Mr McCook has not heard from Conan Farningham, who was at the last meeting, but subsequent papers have been produced in favour of the planning proposals. Mr McCook has written to confirm the Parent Council's continued opposition to the proposals and that the passageway has to go back to the agreed width of three metres. At a council meeting Councillor Fallows proposed that a decision should only be decided following a site visit and this was carried.

At a recent Area Forum the problems of school clearing last winter were discussed. Mrs Carson said schools felt under pressure to open but there was a

problem with the clearing of playgrounds and pavements. Schools can now deal directly with the contractor and this will still be funded centrally. Early morning information on road conditions was difficult to obtain. Last year the internet line couldn't cope with the large number of users so Fujitsu is trying a different approach this year. Grantown Grammar School has agreed to pilot this. Mrs Carson requested parents try it out when it is up and running.

5. Parental Consultation on school handbooks (Additional item)

There will be an item in the next newsletter with regards to the online questionnaire. This asks what information the parents would like the school to include in the prospectus.

6. Lockers

Work is needed on pupil lockers. The combination numbers have run out and there are not enough per person. Mr Smith has been in charge since they were purchased by the School Association. The School Captains would like to get them up and running again. Ananda Hummel explained that a one-off payment has been required but then the lockers are not often used. Payment could be on an annual basis. She suggested senior pupils have the first offer and then this can be carried on down the school. Location of the locker can be a problem but this is a difficult issue to resolve. Ananda suggested buying smaller lockers. The Parent Council delegated the matter to School Captains to gauge pupil need and find a system that works, returning to the Parent council with prices and numbers. There could be a rolling programme of replacement.

7. Parents' Evening

The Art Department has requested to use the Art rooms during Parents' Evenings so they can display pupils' work. Mrs Carson asked if there would be an issue with this. The Art rooms are on the top floor. There is a lift to this floor. Everyone agreed there would be no problem with this request.

It was suggested that the school has more Open Evenings but this would be over and above the hours teachers are required to work. Contractually, teachers should work a 35 hour week. 5 hours are set aside for one Parents' Evening. At the last P7 open evening only Heads of Departments were asked to attend. Mrs Kerr said the S2 open day worked well last year, when S2 pupils acted as guides on a tour of the school. This was organized completely by the S2 pupils who thought up the idea.

Some pupils didn't take the appointment slip home for the Parents' Evening. It was suggested a parent's signature could be requested. This can be discussed at the next Head of Department meeting. Mrs Carson said we could also look into an online system although there would be a cost for this.

8. Headteacher's report

Sponsored Walk – This was a brilliant day. Mrs Carson thanked all who helped. Over £3000 was raised with some still to be collected. There will be follow up assemblies and it is planned to send out letters next week.

Visits – Calum McSween has been visiting other schools and said what he saw in Grantown Grammar is as good as anything he has seen elsewhere. He suggested the school records what we are doing and shares it as good practice. John Considine, Acting Head of the Education Service, also visited. The school

is becoming known nationally. Dugal McCrow has made a presentation on Sustainable Development at Learning Teaching Scotland.

E1 – All staff have now been trained in using E1 for accessing information and to do afternoon registration. Some have been entering data and comments for S4 reports. Input is working well and it is hoped that output will also work well. E1 is user friendly. In the very long run some access might be available for parents.

Annual review meetings – To date Mrs Carson has met with all departments with SQA results. These meetings have been very positive, showing the significant developments taking place across the school and highlighting the communication and sharing between departments. Part of the meetings looked at attainment data pre Appeals. This was followed by Attainment meetings with the Quality Improvement Officer, which were also very positive. These meetings recognized the significant developments taking place across the school and the communication and sharing between departments. There have been improvements in most areas and Mrs Carson is happy with plans in place for support where appropriate. There have been many positive appeals, although there were problems with the history appeals. This was due to problems with the commercially produced paper. This is being looked into. The post-appeal STACS will improve.

Welcome Disco – This was a great event with S6 really on the ball. Mrs Carson thanked them and the parents who helped at the disco.

Bridge to Employment – Diabetes awareness. Grantown Grammar School pupils were joint winners with Millburn Academy. Around eight pupils have continued the BTE this year and they teamed up with the school S6 rock group, The Lost. There was an article about the winners in the TES.

S2 Song contest – There was a great turn out from parents. We need a bigger hall! This was a great opportunity for the pupils and Mrs Carson thanked Mrs Shearon for all her work organizing the competition.

2 INSET days in October – Five Learning Development groups have been set up in Literacy, Numeracy, Skills for Work and Life, Sharing Practice and Curriculum Architecture. The last group is looking at how we review our curriculum and will need to consult with parents. All of the groups have long and short term plans and will link with the Primary schools. Mrs Carson will try and organize representatives from the different groups to come to a Parent Council meeting and report on their work later in the year.

The Highland Council - Has shown support for the Curriculum for Excellence in various ways. There is support for SMT in managing the change and this has been very reassuring. There is also support for improving classroom practice. Four teachers have signed up to Tapestry, which is a two year commitment looking at practice and involves attending monthly meetings. This will take us further towards where we want to be.

Student Council – The most recent format for the Student Council is now up and running, thanks to our School Captains. There are three sub-groups and each School Captain is a member of one. McLain Carter, Revack, is in the Canteen Group, Ananda Hummel, Roy, the uniform group and Hannah McCook, Revoan, is in the group which is looking at improvements to the girls' toilets.

Fashion show – this was another exceptional event. Enjoyed by everyone who attended. Well done S6.

Business Engagement Event – Mrs Carson attended this event in Aviemore with two pupils who spoke very confidently about their placement at McKellars. The event was an acknowledgement of business partners by Highland Council.

Safe in Strathspey – There has been some very positive feedback about this

event. It might be worth considering another similar event in the future. Mrs Carson thanked Mrs Thom for organizing it.

Alaskan visitors – The school was paid a reciprocal visit by Alaskan teachers following Mr Grant's trip earlier in the year.

School photos – These took place earlier in the week. Lots of family photos were taken. There has been a request for another whole school photograph. It is ten years since the last one. Mrs Thom is planning this for the spring.

Staffing – Sharon McWilliam has left us to take up a post in Millburn. There are two full-time vacancies and one part-time for Learning Support Auxiliaries.

Despite the embargo on filling vacancies all have been advertised and Mrs Carson hopes to interview at the end of the month. There may be a gap for the starting dates of newly appointed LSAs because of the need for disclosure. This is due to the Santas who have to go through the same procedure at this time!

Chaplaincy team – Mrs Carson thanked Mrs Thom for organizing this.

Assemblies have taken place to introduce pupils to the new Chaplaincy Team, which includes the S6 School Captains

Pupil successes – There have been several sporting achievements. Hannah McCook. Golf, Yandra Banks Brown. Ski-ing, Amber Hunter and Michael Lewis. Kick Boxing.

Spending embargo – Essential purchases only and maintenance is possible only if there are immediate Health and Safety issues.

ICT – the Fujitsu catalogue is up but there is still an embargo on PCs and laptops.

There will be a meeting before Christmas to discuss our plans. Mrs Carson attended the ICT Innovation forum on Friday and found it very informative. Solution X, with regards to printer management has been piloted at Tain and we are still awaiting the outcome. Lots of issues have arisen.

Mr Smith asked about the recent work experience undertaken by S4 pupils. He felt there had been a lack of information. Mrs Carson said a letter should have gone out to parents before Easter but, unfortunately, it didn't. There have also been problems with the database and not enough employers have been available. The issues will be looked into carefully.

9. Treasurer's report

Mrs Wharton distributed copies of the report and explained the details. There has been confirmation of the grant from the Badenoch and Strathspey Sports Council for the sum of £500 to go towards the purchase of canoes. These will be used by youths working towards their D of E award. The amount must be claimed within three months of the 10th November. They will need a receipt. Mrs Wharton will discuss with Mrs Young. Mrs Wharton also said she will collect the money raised at any events. She has had problems with the Bank of Scotland and it was agreed that Mrs Wharton and Mr McCook will discuss this and make a decision on whether to change banks or not.

At least half of the school computers will not be up to spec for the new network. Parent Council funds might be spent to update this once the costings of ICT are known. Mrs Carson explained that the contract allows a certain number of pcs per school, based on the school roll. We are entitled to fewer pcs than we have in the new building.

10. Fundraising

The Christmas Disco will be held on the 16th December for S1. 3 pupils.

There will be a school concert on the 21st December.
The next newsletter will request donations for the Christmas hamper. Mrs Tucker asked if there would be a Parent Council newsletter.
Mrs Tucker asked for fundraising ideas. One possibility is a silent auction.

11. Any other business

Mr Smith is still working with the youngsters who were in the Eco-schools group.

The question was raised as to whether the school could raise any money by selling recordings of concerts. Mrs Carson doesn't think this is allowed but will check.

The Lucky numbers were drawn. Winners were:

- 9 . Seonaid Walker
- 47 . Daphne Ritchie
- 52 . Lisa Gunn

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 26th January 2011 at 7.30pm.

Mr McCook thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.35pm with wishes to all for a good Christmas..