

Madras College Parent Council

Wednesday 9 March, 2011, Madras College, Kilrymont Road Campus

MINUTES

Present:- Jackie Himpson, Debbie Cummings, Emma Henderson, Callum McLeod, Cllr Ron Caird, Cllr Dorothea Morrison, Cllr Robin Waterston, David Rickman, Andy Primmer, Linda Hardie, Henry Paul, Rebecca Trengove, Andy Herd, Lynsey Seeley, Dawn Waddell, Karen Barnett, Sophie Millar, Megan Chase, Hugh Watson, Paul Brown, Ian Jones, John Barnett, Bruce Sinclair

Apologies:- Jane Pettegree, Alex Slawin, Cllr Brett, Cllr Taylor, Charlotte Kirby

1. Chairman's opening remarks

Welcome to Sophie and Megan as pupil representatives.

2. Co-option of Rebecca Trengove

Agreed

3. Pre-meeting presentation and Q&A with Careers Advisor

Life is increasingly difficult for School leavers. The Careers Advisers are trying to help all.

First destinations of school leavers are tracked. Positive destinations for leavers from schools across Fife are all around 90% at the time of the survey. But now, some time after the initial survey, in the Spring it is even better. 45% of Madras leavers from S4-S6 are in Higher Education, well above the 33% Fife average. There are 30% in FE as opposed to 37% Fife average. 14% are employed, compared to the Fife average of 12%.

Most (65%) of S4 leavers go into FE aiming for NC or NQ qualifications. These need a good pass (probably 3) in general subjects at standard grade. 12% are employed, 12% are unemployed seeking employment, 4% in training schemes, 2% unemployed not seeking, 5% unknown. There is not much in the way of modern apprenticeships for school leavers here.

S5 leavers – 47% go into FE, 21% employed, 13% to HE, 10% unemployed seeking employment, 9% unknown.

S6 leavers phenomenal compared with other schools. 54% go to University, 17% to college, ie 71% total into HE. Employment including deferred HE is at 14%, FE 10%, unemployed seeking a job 3%, less than 1% other. Note that college is often a bridge into university these days. Performing arts courses are very competitive, people need to have evidence of attainment in a portfolio to get a place. Of 18 who took a gap year last year only 3 are known to have done much significant more than a rest between study times.

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The most popular universities for leavers were Glasgow 22%, Dundee 15%, Aberdeen 14%, Edinburgh 12%, Non-Scottish 10%, Abertay 9%, Strathclyde 8%, Napier 4%, Glasgow Caledonian 3%, St Andrews 3%. Most popular colleges Dundee 63%, Adam Smith 25%, Elmwood 6%.

East Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire have 61% into HE, compared to Madras 46%.

4. Minutes of previous meeting on 12 January 2010

Accepted.

5. Matters arising

- School Standards and Quality Report 2009-10 and Improvement Plan 2010-2013 Presented at the last meeting- and in Rectors report

See also later.

6. Chairman's Report

Since last time the chairman had met regularly with the Rector and Cllr Waterston. He attended the academic collaboration group between the school and university, which was well attended by both groups.

He joined the Rector's party at the Burns supper. High standard.

He attended the fashion show for Namibia. £25 was raised at a tuck shop there for this.

An HMIE inspector was in school for two days for new school process. Andy Primmer and the Chair met with him.

The Chair wrote to parliamentarians and university and education authorities about the New Madras, and had a press release in the Courier. He also spoke to the St Andrews Preservation Trust and had a useful exchange of views.

Yesterday he attended the local development group meeting, see Rector's report.

He has had conversations with the CEO of Scottish PTA.

The New Madras tends to dominate things. We want to get this moving so we can spend more time on all the other things.

7. Treasurer's Report

£1567.98 in bank and small amounts of cash. Pipe band has claimed their £480 pounds. Fashion show was given insurance money of £36.75. Body protection for hockey cost £68.98, which was less than expected, the PC agreed to let them have the rest of the offered support for relevant projects.

8. Secretary/Webmaster's Report

Web pages updated. Chair will use pdf not .docx in future communications with the PC.

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9. Fundraising Group Report

Met two weeks ago. Five people turned up, which was lower than hoped for. Talked about aims, and would like to hold a large event to raise funds for the school. A big event is planned to be a Summer Fair on the South Street lawn in June 2012 to raise money for specific projects in the school. There will be another meeting on 19 April at 7 pm. Will issue parentmail inviting others in to that. Mr McKay was at the last meeting and hopefully will encourage other staff to be involved.

- 50/50 club

There were 90 people, and have since put out two parentmails. Now 34 new, closing date tomorrow. Plans to get accounts audited. When P7 parents come will give out info to them about 50/50. Would like to see more join. A suggestion was made that a return email address to reply to on the parentmail would be helpful.

10. Rector's Report

Standards and Quality report and development plan – mid session review conducted. On schedule for all development areas. Some things will run into next session and will be reported on in due course.

Parent question - Why art and design changed from standard grade to Int1 and Int2 – Rector - due to better articulation to fifth and sixth year.

Parent question about reward systems - Reward system in S3 and S4 is on commendations rather than behaviour for learning. The school wants to get everything into one scheme in due course. Is S1 and S2 reward scheme fully working? Rector thinks as good as it is possible to get it. A parent thought that sometimes the giving of award relates to things happened a long time ago, but it should be processed and done at next available assembly.

Andy Herd and Rector met with view to host in South Street much of the St Andrews Week Festival. Bulk could be done on lawn, quadrangle, and other parts of school.

11. Maintenance of existing school buildings

- Toilet facilities upgrade

Andy Primmer had written to Ken Greer – congrats to Andy on getting some action. Took a long time to get results, but Nov 26th survey done, though the report writing was delayed by weather. Only South Street toilets are to be upgraded, as the Kilrymont toilets were regarded by the surveyor as mostly satisfactory. Roof on South St toilets to be repaired over Easter break and then internal work to be done. Kilrymont toilets acceptable according to survey.

Cllr Caird – he thinks main concourse toilets in Kilrymont are sub-standard. On a previous occasion toilets were not satisfactory. Girls from Tayport try to wait until they get home, which is unacceptable.

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Cllr Morrison – it is a while since she went on a tour, but at that time they were not satisfactory. Girls will often hold off rather than going into unsatisfactory facilities.

Cllr Waterston – Will be difficult to argue against report. Get work done that has been approved and then have another go. Then take photos of specific things and ask for specific comments on those.

Chair to liaise with Andy Herd as how to take photos in an appropriate manner.

- *Other*

The swimming pool in Kilrymont is back in operation and being used.

Ken Greer has said that he will support maintenance to a satisfactory level.

South Street toilet refurbishment will come from new budget. No other school budget for anything other than health and safety issues.

About to get painting done in G2 in South Street, and in Kilrymont in gym and 009.

Repairs scheduled for outside front door of Kilrymont – put tar over the broken slabs.

12. New School Building

An update was given to the meeting by the Rector.

13. Academic collaboration with University

Rector – very positive meeting. All school faculties and University Schools represented. Some projects identified that may be completed by end of this academic year. Look at lecture availability, teaching strategy, transitions. Will bring back projects one at a time to talk about when they reach fruition.

14. Education budget proposals

- *Parent Council's response*

Ken Greer sent us papers on the budget proposals. Some of these were already decided, so how could the PC make a useful response? Our comments might be useful for future cuts discussions.

Query about the two chunkiest parts of reduction – secondary management structures and flexing budgets.

Rector – since McCrone report schools can look at management structures. In a school this size faculty structure is useful. Speed of movement to new systems depends on how people move on. There is an issue around the way in which number of posts were allocated to different schools, so try to get standard approach across Fife. In Madras most of structure is already in place, so promoted posts have the value they should. By completing the process in remaining schools will get the savings wanted.

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Flexing budgets – most funding is roll related, based on predicted rolls. New budget says that if new roll figure is substantially different from predicted roll then there will be an immediate change to the school's budget, and that will affect this and other schools.

Cllr Waterston – the figures in these lists are the cumulative impact after three years. Budget savings were considered in two categories – some needed Councillor approvals, and others were management efficiencies. There will be more cuts. How can we have a process that brings some more consultation before decisions are taken? Currently proposals are given to political groups and unions for scrutiny some months in advance. Unions make representations but are asked to keep confidential. Some of the original proposals were much worse than those that were eventually agreed.

There was a general public consultation on balancing the books, but perhaps not so effective at seeking out where cuts should come. Now fewer management staff at most senior level in Fife Council, while at same time school attainment has gone up. Pro-rata Fife is now leanest on senior education management at Council level, as there is a heavy responsibility on head teachers in Fife. 2 million pounds of savings were expected on teacher terms and conditions, but if this does not happen then another 2 million pounds of savings will be needed elsewhere.

How might consultation be done better? Parent comment - Difficult to understand document.

Other comments –

Faculty approach not uniformly liked, as sometime interim arrangements after McCrone are not best financial value.

Can works be done in the school at better value than done by Council through use of private sector, including printing? Print08 to be looked at again for example. 80% of education budget is devolved to schools already. Cllr Morrison - Stuff going through procurement in Council seems to add cost significantly.

15. Forthcoming events

Henry Paul - 29 April Community Council street party, St Salvator's Quad to be used, BBC wish to film to beam around the world. If any school clubs wish to get involved, contact Henry. 1500 max number in quad, may have to be allocated by ballot.

Rector to put in parent mail and contact wind band and similar. Giant outdoor screens to be there. Free breakfast from Fairmont, as there is a need to start at 8 in morning.

EcoClub going for second green flag on 30 March. Wellie day and ecostuff to be done, including planting apple trees near Lamond Drive. Details to go out by parentmail.

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16. Date of next meeting

11 May in Kilrymont at 7 pm, unless need for meeting earlier.

17. AOCB

Thanks to Sophie and Megan as pupil reps. Megan found the meeting absorbing.

BDS 9.3.11