



WELCOME ...

to the first issue of the Madras College Parent Council Newsletter. We bring together the representatives of the Parent Forum (that's you!), the school and the local community. We've been working on a range of topics over the last year, which you'll find outlined later in the Newsletter. But we would like to hear more from you, so please help us by filling in and returning the attached questionnaire, which will help guide our work over the next year.

All Scottish schools now have a parent council. These started up in 2007 as a result of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act. The PC aims to improve communication between the school and parents, giving parents a voice and recognising that they can offer insights into the needs of their children.

There are about 30 parent members of the Madras College PC, along with the College Head, Mr. Jones, and a range of co-opted members. You'll find more about who's on the PC later in the Newsletter. We aim to work in partnership with the school and the local community to create a school which is welcoming and inclusive. Our activities support the education and welfare of pupils, and represent the views of parents.

The PC is chaired by Henry Paul, and has three working groups: Infrastructure and the New Madras; Events and Fundraising; Policy and Communications.

Do you get your ParentMail™?

The school is now able to keep in touch with parents using **ParentMail™**, a specialised emailing system designed for schools. You should already have received several emails through this system. However, if you are not getting **ParentMail™** and would like to receive it, please register you email address with the school by contacting: madrascollege.enquiries@fife.gov.uk

Is Madras Excellent?

There is considerable evidence to show that Madras is a very good school. The high level of response to the HMI questionnaire showed that, most of our children enjoy being pupils at Madras.

However, that does not mean that there is no room for improvement. The Parent Council would like to know the views of the wider parent forum (that is all of you!), which is why we would appreciate it if you would take the time to complete the attached questionnaire. This will allow you to voice concerns, make suggestions or praise the strengths of the school.

Having completed the questionnaire, please send it directly to me or drop it in to one of the school offices. I will assume that no response indicates that you are absolutely happy with Madras and do not want any aspect of the school to change.

The Parent Council is committed to supporting staff and pupils at Madras and helping them in every aspect of achieving the highest quality of education, and we look forward to a positive response!

Henry Paul



Henry Paul, Chair of Madras College PC and leader of the Infrastructure and New Madras Sub-group

Contact: madras_college@scottishparents.com

Fund raising auction!

Fancy a Tornado simulator ride at RAF Leuchars, or a round of golf for four at the Scotsraig golf course? See the fundraising section on the next page.

Infrastructure and the New Madras Sub Group

The biggest issue facing Madras is the "unsatisfactory" split-site accommodation. Fife Council is slowly moving towards providing a new single-site Madras, but this will take at least five years to deliver.

An HMI report in 2006 criticised Madras College's split-site buildings at Kilrymont Road and South Street. This was followed up in a second report published in March 2008, which found only weak progress has been made on improving the school's accommodation. The HMI reported that the poor accommodation at Madras creates barriers to learning, teaching and acceptable behaviour.

One reason for the delay in resolving this issue is that Fife Council has, for some years, been debating whether a new school should be sited at the Tay Bridgehead. As pupil numbers are now predicted to fall, the Council have definitively rejected this idea. All members of the Education & Children's Services Committee agreed that schools "unsatisfactory" split-site should now be addressed urgently. The Parent Council hopes that Cllr Chapman will promptly produce a paper to show how a new single site Madras will be delivered.

In practical terms, this means that all pupils currently at Madras will complete their education in the present buildings. So we need to ensure that the school can achieve the best results possible with available resources during that time. Several long-term solutions have been presented to the council, but decisions still have to be made.

In the meantime, some progress can be reported – access to ICT has improved, some redecoration has been done, and the Kilrymont building is now accessible to disabled students. However, the fabric of the buildings, toilets and security arrangements are inadequate for a 21st century school, and the problem of staff travel between the two sites has an adverse effect on learning. At the same time, Fife Council has also imposed budget cuts on the school. So the Parent Council urges our councillors to stop making vague promises and to commit, with a sense of urgency, to delivering a new school by the next local elections in three years' time.

Fundraising Sub Group

Just before the PTA disbanded they made grants totalling £4,500 to projects in the school including: £2,000 for audio/visual systems including a digital projector, £1,000 for additional lockers at the Kilrymont site, £500 for picnic tables for the 5th year area at South Street, £350 for music stands and trolleys, £200 to the art dept for frames, £200 to the Crafty Cooks Club for equipment, £200 to the Burns' Supper Club.

Since then, the Parent Council has donated £550 to buy Parentmail (an e-mail communication system) which will make a significant improvement to communications from the school. Insurance for the Expressive Arts performance to enable pupils to borrow clothes from local shops has also been funded.

We now need to raise money to support other projects, such as the Eco-club. To help with this, please continue to donate your old mobile phones, for which we get £2.50 per phone. Please note that the SIM cards should be removed and that broken phones are also accepted.

The good news is that two items have been donated to be auctioned to raise funds for to the newly formed Eco-club. The first item is a **Tornado simulator ride at RAF Leuchars** for up to four people (this experience will last about two hours and has previously been auctioned for £200). The second item is a **round of golf for four at the Scotsraig golf course** in Tayport (worth up to £250 for a weekend round of golf for four). We will contact you by ParentMail to let you know how to bid for these prizes!

Questions, questions...

Following the high level of response from parents who were invited to participate in the HMI questionnaire, we hope that you'll all give us your views on issues which you would like to see taken up by the Parent Council. You'll find the questions on the back page ...

Policy and Communications Sub-Group

Good communications are vital to the effective operation of the Parent Council and the school, and a number of you raised communications as a concern in the HMI questionnaire. The policy and communications group aims to improve communication by providing links between the Parent Forum, staff, pupils and the wider community. We see our role in improving communications between the school and parents by supporting both technical means of communication, and ensuring that the value of good communications is recognised.

Early on in the year we set up the Madras College Parent Council website to provide a link between parents and the school. Alongside the recent introduction of "ParentMail", we feel that parents now have more effective ways of being informed about the school, and we will continue to work to achieve better communications between parents and the school.

Over the year, our discussions have been wide ranging and we plan to re-evaluate these topics over the next session, guided by your response to our questionnaire. We have covered topics

including bullying, homework, school transport, school uniform and contact between school staff and parents regarding issues on schoolwork, behaviour or other incidental issues.

This newsletter and the attached questionnaire is another way in which we are providing information and seeking feedback from you. We will use the information we gain to work with the school to evaluate, enhance and to refresh its policies and procedures.



Adam Alexander leads the Policy and Communications sub-group, and is also vice-chair of the Parent Council

Who's on your Parent Council?

Contact the Parent Council email: madras_college@scottishparents.com
or write to: Madras College Parent Council, South Street, St Andrews KY16 9EJ

Chair - Henry Paul

Vice Chair - Adam Alexander

Treasurer – Mary Scott

Other Elected Members

Alistair Black
Eric Bowman
Gillian Bowman
Rebecca Bransby
Iain Collie
Roger Coultherd
Cathy Dunn
Emilia Ferraro
Marjory Finlay
Ian Green
Jackie Himpson
Angela Hodge
Lynn Hynd
Louise Kay
Heather Marriage
Jackie Morrissey
Matthew Paterson

Katy Pitman
Brian Purvis
Christine Rawlins
Fiona Roger
Alison Scott
Alex Slawin
Iona Smith
Phillip Williams
Geraldine Wooley

Other members including co-opted members

Rector - Ian Jones

Website – Bruce Sinclair

Community Use – Andy Herd

Councillor Ron Caird

Councillor Dorothea Morrison

Annual General Meeting

The next AGM of the Parent Forum (that's **YOU!**) will be on 17th September at 7pm in the Kilrymont Building. Please come and discuss our plans for the next session.

Councillor Robin Waterston
John Lyden
Olav Darge
Robin Dewar
Lynsey Seeley