

# Madras College Parent Council

Wednesday 12 January, 2011 at 7.00 pm

The Library, Madras College, South Street Campus

(Preceded by a tour of the school site leaving from the Rector's Office at 6.30 pm)

## ***DRAFT MINUTES***

Present – John Barnett, Callum McLeod, Ian Jones, Cllr Robin Waterston, Councillor Dorothea Morrison, Jackie Himpson, Linda Hardie, Andy Herd, Dawn Waddell, Jane Pettegree, Debbie Cumming, Paul Brown, Hugh Watson, Lynsey Seeley, Jayne Fraser, Alex Slawin, David Rickman, Henry Paul, Bruce Sinclair

Apologies for absence – Karen Barnett, Emma Henderson, Andy Primmer, Charlotte Kirby

1. Chairman's opening remarks – introducing new office bearers  
John Barnett is the new Chairman. Callum McLeod is the new Vice chairman. Callum is both a parent of a child at the School and a teacher at Waid Academy.
2. Minutes of meeting on 3 November 2010  
Accepted as true record.
3. Matters arising  
None that are not coming up later.
4. Chairman's Report  
The Chairman has met various people of relevance to the Parent Council (PC) since taking up his role. He and the Rector have been in frequent communication. He met informally before Christmas with current and former office bearers in the PC. He has met Ken Greer, and found him to be supportive of the School, the new build, and the academic collaboration with the University. He has met the University's Dean of Science, who is leading for the University on the academic collaboration. He has recently met with the University Principal, and found her to be very much in support of the new School being built on land currently owned by the University. She is also interested in the academic collaboration, and is open to further contact. John has also put out press releases including about the consultation about the combination and move of the two School sites, and has contributed to a piece to run in the Courier this Friday on the New School. As chairman he aims to be open to parents, and as such is willing to have his landline on the PC website. Some issues that have been raised with him he has advised on the best way to take forward, which may not be through PC meetings. He is happy to see all local councillors from the entire catchment area attending these meetings and appreciated the presence of three at the meeting.

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### 5. Treasurer's Report

When Dawn took over the books there was £2119 in the account. Some £56 has since been spent on web-site hosting and domain name charges for last year and this. £420 has been committed to the pipe band, but not yet taken up.

#### - *Insurance*

This is organised centrally by Fife Education.

At this time there was a discussion about a PC and School event on 24 February as a Fashion show. The PC will have a snack stall. Callum will lead a team of volunteers. John will thereby be able to obtain additional insurance cover as a PC event.

#### - *50/50 club*

The 50/50 club is handled separately, and is currently being sorted. Debbie has talked with Carol in the School office about this and hopes to have the first draw in March.

#### - *Grant to PE dept*

The PE department has recently asked for £120 towards body armour for the hockey team, and the PC approved this expense. That leaves £1462 as a working balance.

### 6. Secretary/Webmaster's Report

Updates being made to site as appropriate. The PC wishes to note its appreciation of the work of School staff, particularly Magnus Laytona, on the new Madras web site.

### 7. Eco Club Rep's Report

Congratulations to the Eco Club for winning joint first place in the St Andrews Community Council Young Citizen of the Year competition. A survey of school travel is currently being analysed. The gardens are being maintained and used. The EcoClub would like to meet with the design team of the New Madras. The Eco garden in South Street may be part of the Hidden Gardens event on the last Sunday in June.

### 8. Rector's Report

*Pool* – It is hoped that the Kilrymont pool will be reopened in early February after 10 months of closure following storm damage.

*Procedures for severe weather* – The Rector explained the reasons for decisions made about school closures, and the difficulties caused by overload of Fife Council systems that first Monday. Janitorial staff were better placed to deal with snow on school ground for the second major snow fall. The Rector now has access to Parent Mail at home, and can use this as another way of communicating with parents in the case of closure being needed. In response to a question the PC learnt that Fife Council is undertaking a rigorous debriefing following the failure of its systems.

*Glow* – Fife has now bought in to the computerised learning and communication

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environment called Glow, as one of the last authorities in Scotland to do so. Staff in the School are being trained in the use of this tool, with Madras being one of the first schools in Fife to be involved. By Easter the opportunities provided by Glow should be better understood. It is intended that one thing it can be used for is providing work for pupils in times of school closure. The Rector noted that the access to IT facilities in classrooms in the School was lacking, especially in South Street.

*Reports* – The S1 reports should come out using a new computerised system in week commencing 24 May.

*Careers* – the Careers Adviser had offered to talk to the PC about the School's performance in this area. The PC accepted this kind offer. The Rector will invite the adviser to speak at the start of the next PC meeting.

*Staffing* – there has been a good response to the advert for a new teacher in Modern Studies. The new appointment in Home Economics should be taking up their position soon.

*School Standards and Quality Report 2009-10 and Improvement Plan 2010-2013* – A summary had gone out to all parents. Members of the PC were given the full version, which is used to report information, set targets, and monitor progress. Any parent who wishes a copy of the full report can request one from the School Office. Results at credit at Standard Grade were particularly good, though at other parts of Standard Grade there was a wish for improvement. Attainment in S5 and S6 is strong. Madras was the only school in Fife to make it into the Glasgow Herald's top 50 schools as defined on Highers results. There is significant value added in Madras between Standard Grade and Higher.

*Questions:-*

*Course choice during S1* – a parent was concerned that little information was available yet, with the choices being made in the near future. The Rector explained that choices made now do not rule out or rule in a pupil taking any subject for Standard Grade. The new Curriculum for Excellence is focussed more on skills rather than subject content. Pupils who choose particular subjects in the expressive arts now should be able to return to other subjects for their Standard Grades, and pupils who choose two of the sciences to do in S2 and S3 will still be able to do the third one in S4 to Standard Grade if they wish. It was noted that the revision to the SQA syllabi that follow on from CfE have not yet been published.

### 9. Maintenance of existing school buildings

*Toilets* - After concerns expressed at the last PC meeting Andy Primmer wrote to Ken Greer and an audit of the Kilrymont toilets was organised. This took place with Fife Council staff before Christmas. Andy has asked to see the report, but apparently it is still not ready.

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*Ken Greer* – The director of education agrees that the existing School buildings need to be maintained to a reasonable standard.

### 10. Proposed new school building

The Local Development Group had been expected to meet mid to late January, but no date has yet been fixed. There is some anxiety at the speed of the process.

The formal consultation about a move from the two sites to one new one has gone pretty much to plan, though the consultation period was expressed in school days, so had to be extended due to the snow closure. Two open meetings, both well attended, were arranged as part of this. On the 25 and 26 January HMIE is in the School to look at this process. (S)he writes a report on this. Fife Council then writes a report. HMIE then determines if the move is permitted.

The submission of the first planning documents does not seem to have followed the planned timescale. There are still major negotiations in progress about the proposed boundaries of the 5.2 hectare site for the new School, and the way that the School fits within that. Once this is determined the architects can start their draft plans. There is pressure to have this resolved by 28 January. There can then be more detailed plans drawn up. There has been recent consultation with teaching staff about what is needed. On 28 January the Rector and Andy Herd will with others visit Corby Business Academy to view again what is thought of as a useful template for the New Madras. There will also be a visit to the Voyager School. This has three wings, which is thought to be useful for Madras with its three houses.

The Rector acknowledged all the extra work that Andy Herd is putting in to this process.

The Rector was asked what pupil and parental involvement there was to be in the design process. There has already been some pupil involvement through the group of pupils that went to the Fife School design day. The Architects have also met with the Pupil Council. Parents may have input via the local development group.

The Rector was asked about environmental issues. The aim is to build the School to the highest of environmental standards, matching those of Tynecastle High in Edinburgh.

There was a questions about design of lab spaces, and in particular how furniture can be chosen to suit the various heights of pupils in the School. The design team is considered to be experienced in addressing such things.

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### 11. Academic collaboration with University of St Andrews

The University and the School are working to have a useful collaboration. Alyson Tobin (University) and Robin Waterston (Fife Council) were amongst those on a working party that reported on how Madras College and the University could collaborate more. A meeting between Madras faculty heads and relevant University staff had to be postponed due to the School closure, but will now take place on 19 January. Cllr Waterston commented that he regarded this collaboration as interesting and important.

### 12. Fundraising

*Fundraising group* – The PC fundraising group will consist of the following volunteers, amongst others to be recruited – Henry Paul, Jackie Himpson, Linda Hardie, Jane Pettegree, Debbie Cumming, Jayne Fraser. The School will aim to provide volunteers from senior pupils and staff. Andy Herd commented that he is happy to facilitate access to the School for fund raising events. Survey Monkey could be used to gather views on what might best be done.

*Proposed September South Street lawn event* – Fundraising group to consider.

*Other fundraising events.* These might include a Christmas Fair, though it should not compete with existing events by primary schools, or activities linked in with the St Andrews festival.

### 13. Forthcoming events

Fashion Show 24 Feb

Burns Supper 27 Jan

1<sup>st</sup> year parents evening 3 Feb

Careers convention 8 Feb

In Service Training Day 16 Feb

S4 Parent Evening 22 Feb

Next Parent Council Meeting 9 March (Kilrymont)

### 14. AOCB

*Madras Endowment Fund* – Cllr Morrison noted that she is a trustee of this fund, which has around three £150 bursaries to award to Madras leavers who are travelling during a gap year.

*Royal Wedding* – Not clear yet on whether or not the School will be open on 29 April.

*ParentMail* – We should consider using ParentMail more to publicise to parents what the PC is doing.

*Open Meetings* – John reported being contacted by parents with diverse issues and concerns. Should we run an open meeting for all parents? This might be considered,

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possibly in connection with specific events, such as a consultation public meeting on the New School.