

MADRAS COLLEGE PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 16th May 2012

Present: Rev R MacLeod (in the chair); C MacLeod (Minutes); D Waddell; D Cumming; J Himpson; L Hardie; C Kirby; A Primmer; R Trengrove; L Ashe; K Barnett; J Pettegree; R Naismith; E Henderson; S Levy; B Dritschel

In attendance: I Jones (Rector); Cllr D Morrison; Cllr K McCartney; Cllr B Connor; Cllr T Brett; B Millar (Depute Rector); L Seeley (Depute Rector)

- 1 **Welcome** - The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present and making a number of introductions; a farewell message of thanks and good wishes was received from former councillor R Waterston; L Hardie intimated her forthcoming retiral from the Parent Council

Apologies – Apologies for absence were received from J Walker; B Sinclair; F Tannion; D Rickman; P Brown; S Byers; J Fraser.

Cllr B Thomson, Cllr F Melville and A Herd (Head of Community Use) had also intimated that they were unable to be present

- 2 **Minutes of the previous meeting** – these had been circulated by B Sinclair and were accepted as a true record

- 3 **Matters Arising:**

The Rector updated the meeting as follows:

- 1 The greenhouse on top of the science block at South Street is now a dark room; the structure is now watertight and recent damage from a blocked drain had now been repaired, with repainting now awaited
- 2 The upgrading of the South Street Music House roof has been postponed until the summer holidays
- 3 RAF Leuchars – a meeting to be held on 30th May 2012 will receive reports on proposed transitional arrangements
- 4 Revised times for the visit of the Olympic Torch on 13th June 2012 have become available – now 6.15 am – 7.45 am and so will not impinge on the school day

- 4 **Rector's Report**

- 1 Attendance – a draft Attendance Support Policy has been circulated, in line with Fife Council's own Policy. A Parents Leaflet and a Policy into Practice Leaflet are to be devised. The system will operate online; upgrading of classroom computers is ongoing but is hampered by financial restraints. Prompts to parents will take the form of texts where possible. The system will be as fool-proof as possible. Comments to the Rector were invited, with a deadline of 25th May 2012. It was agreed that J Pettegree should be the Parent Council liaison with the school in relation to developing the policy.

- 2 Maintenance – ways are being explored of improving the ambient air temperature of the Kilrymont Pool, especially in winter: there will be a cost for this
- 3 School Finance – the Rector tabled a document showing the “A” Allocation for session 2012-2013, this to cover departmental resources, pupil support, library facilities etc. Mr Jones described the operation of the budget and answered a number of questions in relation to it
- 4 S2 Olympic Themed Fortnight – S2 pupils will recreate the “Chariots of Fire” opening scene at the West Sands on 25th May 2012; Mr Millar gave details of how this would unfold
- 5 Staffing – the Library Assistant post is being readvertised; a PT.2 Physics post is to be advertised; the departure of the PT Classics has prompted a review of management arrangements in that area; Classics will become part of the Social Subjects Faculty with a PT.2 post; the Business Manager post will be filled in due course; 2 additional In-Service Days for staff for session 2012-2013 have been intimated by ParentMail; the Chairman recommended that any enquiries from the press on staffing matters should be referred to him directly

- 5 **Treasurer’s Report** – D Waddell reported on allocations of Parent Council funds which had been made and the current financial position. The balance of account at the last meeting had been c £1800 and since then the following income had been received: Easy Fundraising £31.64 and 50/50 Club 2 x £38.00 deposits. With regard to expenditure, a cheque for £1177.50 had been handed over to the School for the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme (£1000) and Art and Design Books (£177.50). The Parent Council has also approved the purchase of Dyslexia Support software but the cost of this has still to be confirmed.

The current balance of account is c £780. The Treasurer reported that she had received a further request for funding from the school to support a programme of refurbishment/replacement of the school’s Award Trophies. It was noted (and demonstrated) that the PTA Award Trophy in particular requires replacement. The Parent Council agreed to seed this programme with a contribution of £500. To enable continuation of the programme, it was suggested that other potential funding opportunities be investigated (e.g. those, or the families of those, who have donated ‘named’ trophies; FPs (perhaps through *Facebook*) etc). Press coverage was also suggested and R Trengrove very kindly agreed to take on the task of writing a press release. [At the end of the meeting the Treasurer received (and has subsequently banked) £450 cash from the Fundraising Convener which has been generated from the sale of Grand Fete Raffle Tickets.]

- 6 **Attainment Sub-Group Report** – in the absence of P Brown, R Trengrove gave an update on the Sub-Group’s activities, in particular the meeting held recently with the Rector. A number of statistical measures were referred to, some sensitive. The Rector answered members’ questions, particularly about predictions for pupils, based until now on PIPS, henceforth on INCAS, with further refinements to come as CfE assessment develops. The note of the meeting itself follows:

Note from meeting of PC Attainment sub-group with the Rector 18th April 2012

Present: Ian Jones (Rector), Karen Barnett, Paul Brown, Charlotte Kirby, Jane Pettegree, Andy Primmer, Jo Secker, Rebecca Trengrove, Scott Wilson

This meeting took place following the group’s request to meet with the Rector to discuss attainment outcomes in the light of the publicly available data for Madras College which had shown declines in outcomes in public examinations over recent years.

The Rector stated that, in his view, the decline was attributable to the changing demographic of the Madras cohort as evidenced by the increased proportion of pupils with Free School Meal entitlement. This had increased from 4.3% of the school roll in 2004/05 to 10.5% in 2009/10 (cf Fife 13.2% to 17.2% and National 12.3% to 14.4% in the same years) and moved from the 10th decile to the 7th decile during that period. The Rector also re-iterated the negative impact of a split site (while acknowledging the 6% uplift in staffing to compensate) and stated that the circumstances of Madras College in consequence were so unique as to render comparisons with other schools effectively meaningless.

The Rector believes a more meaningful measure of school performance is the comparison with PIPs predictions for cohort outcomes in subsequent exam years. These had predicted a decline in S4 outcomes of between 3.4 and 7.9% whereas in all cases the outcomes were better at 0.2% improvement to 5.9% decline. At S5 the predictions were of a decline between 1.7 %and 5.6%, whereas outcomes were between 0.4% and 6.0% improvement. In S6 the predictions were for a decline of between 4.6% and 10.2% but the outcomes were between 1.9% and 5.7% improvement. In all cases, cohorts had performed better than the predictions.

The Rector did not have equivalent data available for previous years.

The Rector also re-stated the school's commitment to improving attainment and asserted that many inheritance issues had now been resolved, eg staffing structures and guidance arrangements, which allowed for a greater ongoing focus on attainment.

Finally there was discussion about the impact of the school fabric on attainment and also on homework policies and practices. The Rector agreed that a re-examination of homework policy should be included in the school development plan for the following year. He agreed to publicise the existing policy (since done) and to consult with parents about the future policy.

The group thanked the Rector for his time and sharing of helpful information

PFB May 2012

- 7 **Fund-Raising Sub-Group Report** – D Cumming reported on arrangements for the Summer Fete; sponsors have been identified; raffle tickets are being sold; etc. Promotion of the 50/50 Club and the Easy Fundraising Scheme continues. The group's efforts were acknowledged with much appreciation.
- 8 **CfE Senior Phase** - R Trengrove, on behalf of a number of parents with whom she had been in conversation, raised concerns about the proposed future structure of the Senior Phase (S4 – S6) at the school, particularly the number of examination subjects (5) which would be taken, which seemed small in comparison with other schools in Fife and beyond (6 – 8). The Rector provided a summary of the feedback obtained at the parental engagement meeting in April 2012. Detailed Examination Arrangement documents have now been published by the SQA; the school's subject leaders are now examining these in detail – it is anticipated that not all subjects will require the notional 160 hours of Teaching & Learning and it may therefore be possible to offer more than 5 examination subjects. National Guidelines have been restated to emphasise that there is to be a Broad General Education from S1 to S3, followed by a Senior Phase of education which will include the taking of qualifications as appropriate to the individual child. Evaluation of the new arrangements will be completed by the school by September 2012 at the latest; the Rector will communicate any changes to his proposals earlier if possible. Mr Jones reiterated his commitment to listening to all points of view; engaging with all stakeholders in open debate; analyzing views and responses and ensuring that no Madras pupil would be disadvantaged by

any development. It was stated that doing so-called “crash” Highers would still be possible in some subjects in S6.

- 9 **Forthcoming Events** – in addition to those mentioned elsewhere, the following were intimated:
- 8th June 2012 – Senior Ball
 - 14th June 2012 – Awards Ceremony
 - 27th June 2012 – Summer Concert
 - 22nd June 2012 – Junior Awards Ceremony
- 10 **AOCB** – none had been intimated and no further matters were raised at this point
- 11 **Dates of Future Meetings:**
- a. Parent Forum AGM and election of new Parent Council – 7 pm - 5th September 2012
 - b. New Parent Council – 7.30 pm – 5th September 2012
 - c. Parent Council – 19th September 2012 (reserve); 31st October 2012; 23rd January 2013; 6th March 2013; 22nd May 2013