

Madras College Parent Forum
Annual General Meeting, September 2008
Draft Minutes

Present:- 34 parents and teachers

Apologies:- Cllr Morrison.

1. Report on Progress

The Chair, Henry Paul, summarised what the Parent Council had been doing over the last year.

The aims of the Council are

- To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of pupils.
- To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school, and on other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils.

The Parent Council meets approximately twice a term, and does other work through its sub-groups.

The Infrastructure Group aims to support the School by

- Developing and engaging in activities which support the education and welfare of pupils.
- Identifying and representing the views of parents on the education provided by the school, and on other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils.

The split-site School is considered by HMI as unsatisfactory. There are only two split-site schools left in Scotland. There is a problem with teachers having to drive between the sites, and the lack of prefects in the junior site. The School cannot use the Madras system and mentoring and buddy systems are difficult to organise. However, it seems that some pupils like the split site, regarding the move from Kilrymont to South Street as a right of passage. The main recent developments are:-

- May 2005 – CSC approved 10 point plan
- May 2006 – HMIE – Unsatisfactory report
- Jan 2007 – CSC – Look at 5 options
- Mar 2008 – HMIE – Still Unsatisfactory
- Apr 2008 – Education & CSC decision to build single school
- Jun 2008 – Capital budget approved for 10 year plan

The January 2007 paper gave five options:-

1. Kilrymont - Refurbishment + Extension
2. Kilrymont - New School
3. South St
4. Council site - New School
5. Private site - New School

The first and second options have their problems:-

- Impossible to cost a refurbishment (Originally - £17M, but no account of Asbestos and B listing)
- The site is small compared to similar sized schools elsewhere in Fife
- Bell Baxter took 15 years to move to single site
- Transport needed to sports pitches
- Many buses come from settlements on the other side of town

The third option is not really an option, as there is insufficient space for a school the size of Madras.

The fourth option might be Station Park, but then where would the School sports fields be?

The fifth option may be a site on the Western expansion of the town, possibly in partnership with the University.

Fife Council has now set up a development board to consider options. This consists of Fife Council officials, School representatives, and Parent Council (Madras and feeder primaries) representatives. This body may start meeting in 2009 to select a preferred solution. It is also expected to oversee the delivery of replacement school. The expected timescale to the opening of a new school is five to ten years.

The Fund Raising and Social Group aims to work by raising funds for the benefit of the School and through promoting social contact amongst staff and parents. Over the last year it has distributed £4,450 of former PTA.funds in the form of

- £2,000 – Audio/Visual inc Digital Projector.
- £1,000 – Additional lockers.
- £500 – Picnic tables at South St.
- £350 – Music stands.
- £200 – Art dept for frames.
- £200 – Craft cooks club.
- £200 – Burn’s Supper club

The Parent Council itself has been involved in raising funds

- £700 from Fife Council
- £150 from Expressive Arts evening.
- £160 from sale of simulator ride.
- £50 from sale of golf prize.
- £500 from R&A (for eco-club)
- £100 from raffle at summer concert (for archive project)

Some of this has been spent on the following projects:-

- £550 for Parentmail.
- £35 for insurance for Expressive Arts evening.
- £500 for eco-club.
- £100 for archive project.

The Chair described some of the major work done in collaboration between parents and the School for the Eco-club and their work in the School grounds.

The Group also attempted to arrange a Ceilidh, but this had to be cancelled due to the low number of tickets requested. This may have been due to non-ideal timing.

The Policy and Communications Group intends to be

- Forging and maintaining effective communication links with and between the Parent Forum, staff, pupils and the wider community, to inform and to seek feedback where appropriate.
- Supporting the interests, needs and welfare of the pupils by working with the school to help develop and refresh its policies and procedures.
- Taking a pro-active role in fostering good community relations.

With the School it got ParentMail working, which seems to have been appreciated by parents. It had carried out a survey of parents about what they felt current issues are, and it had tried to work with the School on refreshing and evaluating policies.

The survey suggested that the following issues should be examined by the Parent Council in partnership with the School:-

- 78% Pupil Behaviour and Discipline
- 71% Maintenance of School Facilities
- 50% Reporting on Student Progress
- 46% Homework
- 44% Communication between school and parents
- 36% School Uniform
- 36% Bullying and Harasment
- 18% Student Behaviour on Buses
- 5% Community Relations
- 5% Fundraising

The Rector commented on these findings. He noted that in May and June the staff had determined priorities, and none of the top five above was a surprise. He was encouraged at the match between parent concerns and that of his team and the HMIe.

He said that at the start of his time at Madras he had decided that the top priority had to be making progress on the issues raised in the HMIe report in time for their follow-up visit. There had also been work on “Behaviour for Learning” and more recently on “Praise, Recognition, and Rewards” for pupils. These policies were important for setting standards, and worked for the majority of pupils. The School was now looking at how best to deal with the small minority of pupils where Behaviour for Learning was not designed to work, and where other strategies were needed to stop disruption by these pupils. The Rector reported that this year’s change in the Guidance Structure should help this, as should the escalating strategy on response to misbehaviour. There will be an in-service day in January to promulgate these policies to staff.

The Rector told the meeting that there had been progress on School facilities also, with PCs being planned to be moved upstairs in order to bring sections of Support for Learning closer together.

There was also progress in target setting and tracking, and the intention was that this would be harmonised better with reporting. Fife Council is investing in management information systems and when these are operational these will be used for reporting to parents.

The homework issue is being addressed. A letter was to go to parents the following day about the new design of the planner including the traffic lights. All parents are to be asked to look at the planners. Homework is a development priority for the current session. Principal Teachers were being asked to look at the School’s statements on homework, as in some cases these were not being used fully. The statements may be changed, or there may be better adherence by some staff with the current statements. When asked by a member of the Parent Forum the Rector stated that he believed more teachers were on board with homework requirements than used to be. He noted how important principal teachers are for quality assurance.

The communication between School and parents was being looked at. Two volunteers will help the School with this. The results of this will be brought to the Parent Council in due course.

A member asked the Rector about Peer counselling. The Rector said that this was happening in only a limited way due to the split site.

A member asked if the pupils were involved in determining the content/reasoning of Behaviour for Learning. The Rector reported that around 300 pupils had been surveyed twice on discipline and Behaviour for Learning.

The Parent Council's future projects may include

- Supporting School Projects
- Concerts/Expressive Arts/Eco Club
- Fund Raising for these Projects
- Seeking Corporate Donations
- Seeking comments on Madras and forward to staff

2. Rector's Vision

The development priorities for the School had included an attainment review in certificated courses. The results at Standard Grade were considered to be good, and there was significant added value at Highers. The Advanced Highers results were thought to be outstanding.

There are major developments across the country associated with A Curriculum for Excellence. The School is now seriously looking at this, with Principal Teachers currently heavily involved. A main change will be in the introduction of choices within a subject in first year. By year four, pupils will normally be doing only five subjects, with there being no compulsion to take maths, English, or a modern language. There will also be changes to the examination structure.

An ethos group is looking at the aims and values of the School, and these will be communicated to the Parent Council.

The Rector had been surprised that there was no link between the School and Chennai. He is now trying to set up a lasting and valuable link where there can be a sustainable programme of pupil volunteering.

A number of questions were asked of the Rector. In response he said:-

- It is acceptable for buses to double-park at Kilrymont due to staff supervision.
- There had been a surprisingly high staff absence this term, with four or five supply teachers in this day.
- The lack of a physics teacher for certificate classes was unfortunate, and had been caused by issues outwith the control of the School. There is now a qualified physics teacher working with each of the classes affected. A new person may be in post by the end of the October holidays.
- A statement on how the School deals with specific learning disabilities is being worked up in light of the integration of various support teams within the School. This may take a couple of years, but will be made available then.

When asked what he would like to see the Parent Council doing to support the School he stated that it would be wrong for him to say this. He commended the Parent Council for its activities this year. He recommended that the Parent Council should be realistic about how much can be achieved in a given time. He expects the Parent Council to have input to draft forms of School policy in due course.

It was positive that two teachers were at the AGM, but there was scope for improving communications between the Parent Council and teaching staff. The Rector advised that this was an area we needed to work on.

Councillor Waterston commented that the Curriculum for Excellence was very different from previous initiatives in as much as a great deal was left to be implemented locally. There is a hope that Madras will have well attended curriculum discussion evenings on this matter.

A request for bike racks at the School was made, and another bid for funding these was suggested.

A member commented that it was unfortunate that parents of pupils in some years saw their teacher only at the end of the year, was there a possibility of generic discussions earlier in the year?

3. Treasurer's Report

Two sets of accounts were presented. One was for the end of the PTA, the other for this year of the Parent Council.

MADRAS PTA - Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended June 2008

	2008		2007	
	£	£	£	£
<u>Income</u>				
Refund for Bingo Night		91.45		
Interest		70.49		59.50
Raffle		0.00		0.00
Donation from 50/50 Club	600.00		770.00	
Less:Expenses	<u>20.00</u>		<u>35.00</u>	
		580.00		735.00
Easter Concert			17.00	
Less:Expenses			<u>10.23</u>	
		0.00		6.77
Girls Night In/Beauty and Beast	804.94		742.50	
Less:Expenses	<u>79.02</u>		<u>27.87</u>	
		725.92		714.63
Bingo Night			509.50	
Less:Expenses			<u>91.95</u>	
		0.00		417.55
Xmas Concert Teas:			55.00	
Less:Expenses			<u>16.67</u>	
		0.00		38.33
Teas		-15.87	0.00	-13.76
Mr Matheson - Retiral	486.50			
Less:Expenses	<u>488.70</u>			
		-2.20		
<u>Net Income</u>		<u><u>1449.79</u></u>		<u><u>1958.02</u></u>
Less: Expenses				
Insurance	36.75		101.00	
Accounting Expenses	10.00		0.00	
Secretarial Expenses	46.06		<u>9.27</u>	
Closing Expenses	<u>60.60</u>			
		153.41		110.27
Surplus for the Year Retained		<u><u>1296.38</u></u>		<u><u>1847.75</u></u>
Cash Movements for the year ended 30 June 2008				
Bank Balance b/fwd		4565.90		3322.60
Petty Cash b/fwd		23.86		10.86
Surplus for the year retained		1296.38		1847.75
Donation to Sports Fund				-500.00
Donation to School		-4450.00		
Donation to Burns Supper (Jan 07 and Jan 08)		-400.00		
Transfer to Parent Council		-1029.78		
Petty Cash trf to Parent Council		-5.92		

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	0.44	4681.21
Bank balance c/fwd	0.44	4565.90
Petty Cash c/fwd	0.00	23.86
Refund for Bingo Night		91.45
	0.44	4681.21

MADRAS Parent Council

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended August 2008

		2008	
	£	£	
<u>Income</u>			
Interest		2.26	
Raffle		160.00	
Donation from 50/50 Club	350.00		
Less: Expenses	0.00		
		350.00	
Donation from Expressive Arts		150.00	
Teas		-4.00	
<u>Net Income</u>		658.26	
 Less: Expenses			
Insurance	10.00		
Accounting Expenses	0.00		
Secretarial Expenses	0.00		
		10.00	
Surplus for the Year Retained		648.26	

Cash Movements for the year ended 30 June 2008

Transfer from PTA		1029.78	
Petty Cash Transfer from PTA		5.92	
Surplus for the year retained		648.26	
		1683.96	
 Bank balance c/fwd		1682.04	
Petty Cash c/fwd		1.92	
		1683.96	

4. Membership of the Parent Council 2008-9

Adam	Alexander
Alistair	Black
Gillian	Bowman
Eric	Bowman
Roger	Coultherd
Marjory	Finlay
Jackie	Himpson
Heather	Marriage
Jackie	Morrissey
Henry	Paul
Alex	Slawin
Alison	Scott
Mary C	Scott
Bruce	Sinclair
Iona	Smith
Phillip	Williams
Geraldine	Wooley
Muriel	Gray
Linda	Hardie
Andy	Primmer
Lousia	Cocris
Sheena	Watson
Jo	Secker-Walker

Co-opted Members

Ian	Jones	Rector
Olav	Darge	Teacher
Robin	Dewar	Teacher
Lynsey	Seeley	Teacher
Andy	Herd	Community Use
Ron	Caird	Councillor
Dorothea	Morrison	Councillor
Robin	Waterston	Councillor

4. The next meeting of the Parent Council is on 8 October.