

**Madras College Parent Council**  
**Minute**  
**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017, 19:00**  
**Kilrymont Road**

**1. Apologies received**

Paul Brown, Callum MacLeod, Fiona Day, Heather Moffitt, Diane McGhie, Derek Brown (Fife Council), Cllr Margaret Taylor, Cllr, Dorothea Morrison.

**2. Guest speaker**

Louise Playford, Service Manager (School Estate), Fife Council, attended the meeting to give an update on progress with the proposed new school and interim building works.

*New School Update*

Four potential sites technically remain in play for the new school and will be subject to further assessment. The site known as 'Langlands' is the prime site and it is anticipated that this will be selected, but it is not yet finalised. The Council Executive Committee will meet during February to review final reports and confirm further details.

Louise then invited any questions and a discussion before we moved on to the maintenance schedule:

Cllr Tim Brett - Can we have any more information on the likely timescales and are there any planning concerns with the Langlands site e.g. might it be caught up in the wider plans for St Andrews West?

Andy Primmer - What sort of issues could the new site present and are there any concerns about the master plan?

Tim - The master plan covers the whole site and there are several interested stakeholders/parties to pull together.

Cllr Brian Thomson - Can the school decision be taken in isolation to allow it to proceed before the master plan is finalised?

Louise - I can represent the education service here this evening but can't comment on the planning process as that is a separate service area of the Council and they will have to follow the appropriate process.

David McClure - Good progress has been made and we appreciate the early view but clearly there is still some more work to be done before things are finalised.

Cllr Bryan Poole - There has been a slight delay in the process (approx. 1 month) but a decision is expected at the February meeting of the Council Executive. The project to

deliver a new Madras School has a lot of support from Councillors, the University and the Fife Council Executive team; once a decision has been finalised we will move as quickly as possible. This is an exciting time and we look forward to closer links and greater levels of collaboration with the University once the project has been delivered.

Rowena Kyle - There was talk of an access road being built as part of the plan for this site. Has that been agreed?

Bryan - That is one of the topics still under discussion and at this stage he cannot comment further.

### Interim Building Works

Louise issued a report showing the combined list of works for 2017/18 across both Madras sites. She added that a programme of refurbishment was completed over the summer of 2016 and the report highlighted the key areas for the next phase(s). The maintenance plan will be maintained irrespective of the timetable for the new school build, once that is available; that is to say Madras will be treated the same as any other school with the existing process for agreeing maintenance work. The paper was reviewed and Louise then invited questions/discussion:

Andy Primmer - Cllr David Ross (leader of Fife Council) had previously indicated that Madras would be given a higher priority due to the outstanding maintenance requirements. Would not expect Madras to be treated as other schools given this comment.

**Action:** Louise will check with David re previous comments and the current position with Madras and priorities.

Anna Moss - How will the list of items be scheduled and will there be a timetable for the work?

Louise - No funding has been allocated at this stage but the work has been submitted as part of the capital plan for review at the February meeting. Once confirmed the plans will be drawn up and it is likely that the majority of work will be completed during school holiday periods.

Anna - So at this stage it would be fair to say this is a list of work but there is no firm plan for delivery?

Tim - This is simply a list and it is long overdue. The leader of Fife Council (Cllr David Ross) promised more money but now we are told there is no confirmed budget. We really should have a view of any available funds required to complete this work as a matter of urgency; I am publicly stating that I am not happy with the progress or position we find ourselves in.

Marie-Noel Earley - What will happen if the funding for maintenance work is not approved at the February meeting?

Louise - There are no funds allocated in the capital budget as it stands.

Georgiana Mazilu - So if no money is allocate in February then what happens?

Louise - Fife Council does have some challenging priorities and it will down to the elected members to agree the process / funding.

Claudia Ortiz - Do parents have any power here and can we do anything to apply pressure for the funding to be approved?

**Action:** Susan will write to Fife Council to emphasise the importance and remind them of the comments made previously by Cllr David Ross.

Anna Moss - Are costs available for the proposed maintenance items?

Louise - There is a general request for the overall programme and that is approx. £750k.

Bryan - All parties should be supporting this work and putting the £750k forward in their submissions for the capital plan.

David McClure - Once approved could some areas of maintenance start this Easter?

Louise - Yes that's possible and we will work with the school to agree final priorities and scheduling.

Jonathan O'Riordan - Are the fire doors specified to meet regulations?

David - There is an annual fire inspection of the School and we need to comply with regulations.

Brian Thomson - Do we have internal (Fife Council) costs itemised at this stage?

Louise - Not detailed yet but they are broadly in the region of £700-750k.

Susan then thanked Louise for attending to update members of parent council. Louise then left the meeting.

### **3. Minutes of previous meeting**

These were adopted - proposed by Lynn Christie and seconded by Sally Walker.

### **4. Matters arising (from meeting held 26/10/16)**

- a. Letter to Derek Brown, Head of Education, Fife Council

Susan has spoken with Derek for an update and the only outstanding point is the inset day that is scheduled for the day before the maths exam.

David - Teachers are on call that day and there is a high turnout for study leave revision. Staff essentially lose what is meant to be a development day and this has longer-term implications.

Andy Primmer - Who makes the decision on these dates as the school is not being used for voting at this time?

Cllr Keith McCartney - The only school in St Andrews used for voting purposes is Canongate and last time they stayed open by creating a separate entrance and voting area.

Bryan - It does come down to Fife Council and he will check with the Council to ensure this does not happen again.

**Action:** Bryan to check with Fife Council re the scheduling of inset days (or equivalent) and assess how these can take account of existing school commitments to ensure that the teacher development days are kept free.

- b. Letter to Shelagh McClean, Interim Executive Director for Education & Children's Services, Fife Council. Note - This was to address questions relating to pupil support allocation and payment for community use repairs e.g. the recent invoice for astroturf.

David - the allocation of pupil support is based on free school meals entitlement and this does not give much to Madras. Would prefer it to be based on educational need as that reflects the demand, as opposed to being linked to income.

Bryan - There was no cut in the overall budget for Fife.

David - If the total is the same then the way it is allocated has changed as we have seen the provision cut by 14 hours.

Bryan - The allocation should be based on clusters and he will check with Fife Council to confirm how it is being applied.

**Action:** Susan to send the background and Bryan to check with FC.

David - The community use payment has now been resolved after Brian Thomson raised it with Shelagh and for astroturf repair Madras paid one third. This should now be consistent with a third share paid by the school in each case.

- c. Easy fundraising and promotion over the Christmas period

£26 was raised by this method and Lynn will continue to encourage greater use.

Anna Moss - Other groups are also doing this now and she had 4 requests in the run up to Christmas.

d. Community use charges and budget

This point was largely addressed earlier under 4 (b). Brian Thomson added that any income from community use goes to a separate service area in the Council and is not available to education.

e. Clarification regarding the provision and use of seatbelt on school buses within NE Fife

Brian Thomson - Feedback from the Council indicates that as the school buses have more than 16 seats and are registered as local services they do not need to have seatbelts and if any are in place there is no duty to enforce their use.

Jonathan O'Riordan - The challenge here is that rural routes should be treated differently and this is a reserved matter covered by Westminster legislation.

David - A lot of the issues we have with buses relate to behaviour and these take staff time to investigate. We would benefit from having cameras on the buses or a second person for supervision. The School is not asked for input when Fife Council is tendering the contracts.

**Action:** Bryan Poole to check how the Schools can provide feedback and have input to the contract requirements relating to school buses.

**Action:** Susan to add seatbelts and the clarification of urban v rural requirements (and classification) to her letter to Fife Council.

f. Update on the assessment timetable and S4 tests.

This was completed and matter is now closed.

## 5. Office-holder reports

a) Chair

The key points have been covered already and Susan requested that we minute the positive relationship with Fife Council. Derek Brown is keeping in touch and there are signs of clear progress.

b) Treasurer

The current financial balance is £2725.

Georgiana highlighted that she has a few website related invoices to be paid. These will be forwarded to Lynn for payment.

Lynn - There is a need to tackle fundraising as little activity over the last three years has depleted the available funds. Some discussion then followed about the nature of possible fundraising activities and should they be targeted at a specific purpose/ requirement e.g. pipe band, IT, trips etc....

David commented that as an example the pipe band requires approx. £9k per year. Madras also has the Vanessa Crone Fund that is used to assist with the costs of trips. This is used regularly and would benefit from topping up.

It was agreed that we would create a small fund raising team to look at options and come back with ideas. Georgiana expressed interest in being involved and Barry will highlight this opportunity when the minutes are issued.

c) Secretary

Barry suggested that he review the Constitution and provide a draft for comment at the next meeting. There is a need to tidy up slightly and he will also check it against the current operational requirements for a parent council. As part of this exercise he will also review attendance at meetings and write to any members of parent council who are not attending but still remain on the list. We are limited to a maximum of 30 members and at the moment we have 26.

The website also requires a refresh and Barry will arrange to meet with Georgiana, Susan and Lynn to discuss how we can progress this. All parents are invited to provide any comments or suggestions directly to Barry.

Georgiana - In relation to the website she has been approached asking if we can advertise any after school clubs on the website?

David - We get a lot of requests for this sort of thing and don't allow any advertising in school; to be consistent with this it shouldn't be on the website either. There was general agreement that no advertising or clubs would be listed on the PC website.

## **6. Rector's report**

Despite the challenges Madras continues to be an amazing school with excellent engagement from pupils and staff. This is a big term in the school year and it will feel like hard going at times before things ease off slightly after Easter.

The Nat 5 assessments lose their unit tests next year and this was intended to reduce the workload on teachers. In practice this has not reduced workloads, as teachers still need to find and design a fail safe for students. Nat 4 was the fail-safe position previously but this is not likely to work for some subjects e.g. maths. The current year 3 students will be part of a pilot.

Links with the University are strong and Principal Sally Mapstone has now met 3 times with David and staff. There is a real interest in education and learning at this end of the student journey.

Tim - A report was previously completed to highlight links between Madras and the University. Can this now be revisited?

David / Susan - Yes now would be a good time to revisit that report and update.

**Action:** David & Susan to review the previous report.

Now that the new school is progressing again and we can see the development on the horizon David suggested that we form a development group to include 2 \* 4<sup>th</sup> year pupils, PC members, himself and the business manager to look at plans and consider the educational requirements.

This was agreed and notes of interest should be passed to Susan. Sally Walker expressed her interest in being part of the group and Barry will highlight this opportunity when the minutes are issued.

Bryan - We should recognise the great job done by the Rector in strengthening links with the University and exploring the potential of joint working.

Staffing continues to be an issue for madras and it does not help when staff can apply for new posts and be appointed at key times of the year. As a suggestion, there could be a hold on placing new adverts (or appointing) in the run up to exams across Fife. This would reduce the risk of staffing changes and provide greater levels of continuity.

**Action:** Susan to include the point about recruitment in her letter.

Georgiana - There have been recent issues with the availability of English teachers. Has this now been resolved?

Angela Robertson (DHT) - We have staff returning this week and have adjusted the timetable to share out the gap. Recruitment is also in progress to replace another member of staff who is due to leave in approx. 3 weeks. The gap has mainly been an issue for South Street and the adjustments should help but this will continue to be monitored.

Andy Primmer - Is there a joined up resource plan across Fife to manage the supply & demand?

Bryan - We don't have enough teachers in the system at the moment. There are 130 vacancies across Fife with a high % relating to STEM subjects. We are feeling the pain now from previous cuts but there are some initiatives starting to address the shortfall. Workload is certainly a concern for all of us.

Kenny Wishart (DHT) - The remark policy has changed and at Madras we believe in considering the potential risk & reward before progressing a request. Following a risk assessment the potential of a downgrade or upgrade will be considered and this advice offered to the student/parent. There is an appeal process and this will go to the Rector who will review the risk assessment. In cases where students & parents still want to pursue a remark they will be asked to sign a waiver.

Anna Moss - Who would initiate a request for remarking?

Kenny - It has to come from the student or parent as if a teacher suggests this then it sets an expectation that the remark will be successful yet we know that only 20% succeed and in some cases the mark is downgraded.

Tim - How does the 20% success rate compare against other schools?

David - A similar % would be expected and we have checked with Bell Baxter in Cupar. The risk assessment is very important given the (small) chance of a downgrade, as at this stage the grades may be required for an application. The policy is under review by Kenny and if approved by the Parent Council it will then be added to the website for visibility.

Marie-Noel - Do we consider the consequences of the potential outcome e.g. if the student already has a conditional offer for University?

David - Yes the risk assessment would capture this and form part of the advice. The old system of appeals was based on prelim results but the new approach is very different and the actual test is remarked in full.

Due to time restrictions it was agreed to postpone the educational update report by Olav Darge (DHT) until the next meeting.

## **7. Funding request for the pipe band**

Request for funding support for the pipe band transport costs associated with attending the 'Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championship 2017' (<http://thechampionships.org.uk>) The event is to be held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May at James Gillespie's High School in Edinburgh and the estimated cost of transport is £400.

The request was approved.

## **8. AOB**

### **a) University Pitches**

It was noted by Brian Thomson that the University rugby pitches are regularly in use by Madras students and the charge was £1 per person.

David - Yes this is coordinated via the PE department and hockey pitches are also used regularly.

## **9. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 8th March 2017.

Meeting closed at 21:00.

## **Appendix 1: Attendance List January 2017**

### ***Parents***

Susan Simpson, Chair  
Lynn Christie, Vice-Chair and Treasurer  
Barry Millar, Secretary

Sally Walker  
Rowena Kyle  
Anna Moss  
Andy Primmer  
Georgiana Mazilu  
Jonathan O'Riordan  
Marie-Noel Earley  
Claudia Ortiz

### ***Teaching Staff***

David McClure, Rector  
Olav Darge, Deputy Head Teacher  
Angela Robertson, Deputy Head Teacher  
Kenny Wishart, Deputy Head Teacher  
Hugh Watson, Deputy Head Teacher

### ***Local Councillors***

Cllr Brian Thomson  
Cllr Bill Connor  
Cllr Keith McCartney  
Cllr Bryan Poole  
Cllr Tim Brett

### ***Guest Speaker***

Louise Playford, Service Manager (School Estate), Fife Council.

