

**Madras Collee Parent Council Meeting
10 March 2010**

Draft Minutes

1) Welcome etc

Present:- Hugh Watson, Jackie Himpson, Heather Marriage, Alex Slawin, Eric Bowman, Cllr Ron Caird, Lynsey Seeley, Jayne Fraser, Jane Pettegree, Andy Herd, Jackie Morrissey, John Barnett, Callum McLeod, Andy Primmer, Henry Paul, Jean Duncan, Bruce Sinclair, Ian Jones, Phill Williams

Apologies:- Peter Brown, Vanessa Rengger, Olav Darge, Dorothea Morrison, Marjory Finlay, Emma Henderson, Robin Waterston, Sheena Watson

2) Chairperson Update

Zoe had been planning to chair these meetings, but immediately before the last meeting she resigned the post for personal reasons. Phil as vice chair was willing to take on the role of chair for the remainder of the year, and the meeting agreed to this and thanked him. Phil asked members to consider who would be willing to stand for chair after the summer.

3) Minutes from the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were taken as a true record. One matter arising was the signing of cheques – this meeting agreed that Peter Brown and Henry could be two of the signatories.

4) Rector's Report

The South Street pool is still out of action. Costs for refurbishment are being sought, but given that the curriculum and community use are currently managing with just the Kilrymont Road pool, it is thought unlikely that the South Street pool will be renewed. There are plans to improve the changing facilities at Kilrymont Road to suit community use.

There are cuts being put in place by Fife Council.

- a) A change in class size in Maths and English from the current 20 to an average size of 25, and a maximum size of 33.
- b) The introduction of term-time-only contracts for support staff from August, review ongoing.
- c) A 25% reduction in musical instrument teachers from August. A member noted that the school music trip was now in abeyance thanks to this. Another member suggested that this cut was very damaging to local education, and would impact directly on core curricular music, as well as on school and regional music groups. There was unanimous support for the Chair to write to Fife Council to urge the Council to reverse this major cut.

Printing

This is being standardized across the Fife Council systems, but the accounting system is currently a “guddle”. This is being worked on. In response to a query the Rector said that it was possible to go to external printers if cost, quality, and availability were appropriate.

Glow

This is an online virtual learning environment and associated learning materials and tools. This was discussed at a Parent Council some time ago, and Fife has now bought in to the project. It will start to be rolled out after the Easter break with the most IT literate in the school, with the aim to use it widely next academic year. Amongst other things, pupils should be able to save their work in school, then pick it up from home. The Rector cautioned that the internet bandwidth available to the school was not good (a maximum of just 100 MB/s into St Andrews for ALL Fife Council concerns, just 10 MB/s into South Street, compared with 200 MB/s into each Edinburgh school), and this may impact on the performance of this and other networked systems. He has made his concerns known to Fife IT.

Robert Woollins is to be congratulated for winning the award for the highest scoring pupil in Fife in maths. Debates pupils Michael Weir and Miriam Malek are congratulated for their Scottish win, their appearance in the Donald Dewar competition at the Scottish Parliament, and their July debate in London.

5) Treasurer's Report

The current balance is £1578.47 after donations towards the Dux board (£150) and the Awards Day (£150), and a contribution to the school Eco Club. The last is expected to be made up again by fund raising. The school pipe band has not yet written in with a request.

6) New Madras

Andy commented that the Rector had given an excellent presentation at the Monday evening meeting, but that it was disappointing that so few (~30) people turned up. This had been advertised in the local press, by Parentmail to Madras families, and sent to feeder primary schools. There is an account on the Parent Council's "New Madras" web page. The whole communications strategy for the project was being considered.

There was a discussion about what capacity the new school's eating area should have. The Rector and Andy Herd are now spending significant amounts of time on this project. The Rector has had a new depute appointed to assist, but nothing has been done for Andy Herd. The Parent Council agreed to write to Fife Council to seek assistance for Andy Herd.

Things should move forward rapidly after the Education and Children's Services committee meeting on 8 April. The school and others have many ideas that they wish to feed in to the design team that will be appointed via a tendering process. There is an upper limit on cost, and there is a schedule of necessary accommodation showing a need for 15,600 square metres of space. The Rector is hoping for wide and airy corridors. The meeting decided to convene a meeting on the evening of 31 March at 7 pm to which a representative from each feeder primary school's parent council would be invited. This meeting would discuss design possibilities in order to feed back to Andy Primmer and his role with liaison with Fife Council design teams etc.

7) Curriculum for Excellence

The school is on track to deliver this. There is to be an open meeting on the Curriculum for Excellence in the School on 21 April, primarily for parents of current P7 pupils.

8) Smoking

It was reported that there was an issue with some pupils smoking in the toilets in Kilrymont Road. Staff from pupil services are continuing to call by the toilets in order to try to stop this happening.

9) Dress Code

There is a current consultation on this, and the Rector believed that there was a ground swell of opinion from pupils towards the idea of a fitted school jacket. The Parent Council was generally in favour of introducing a new dress code including a fitted jacket.

10) Parent Council Website

The Chair noted that the web-maintainer had still not been refunded by the Parent Council for the money he had paid out for the annual web-hosting subscription for the website. A member suggested that the Parent Council might consider moving to a new domain name at some time in the future.

11) AOCB

Alex flagged up a STEM talk on Wednesday, and Bruce noted the University's major National Science and Engineering Week event on this Saturday on the North Haugh.

The terms of reference for the Parent Council are said to be on the PC website.

Henry reported that the Eco club's presentation to Fife Council had gone down well. Brendan Fox had received £10000 to create a portable garden behind the CPD house. It was hoped to include the South Street garden in the St Andrews open garden day on 27 June.

Parentmail continues to be well used, with in excess of 70% of families being involved. The hope is that current P7 families will soon be added to the distribution list.

The School was congratulated on its fund raising activities for charity, including for the Haiti appeal.

The Chair would like to discuss at a future meeting the possibility of trust status for the school.

There is a seminar in Edinburgh on 20 March on improving parents' input to pupil learning – anyone interested please contact Phil.

Date of next meeting – 12 May 2010