



PARENT COUNCIL NOTE OF MEETING

24th October 2018

Kilrymont Road

Room 111

APOLOGIES

Lynn Christie, Barry Miller, J. Tepp.

MINUTES

- Typo - to be fixed
- D, E and F - to be carried over to next meeting (from Aug meeting).
- Minute passed

PUPIL PRESENTATION

Pupils invited to give update of process of change to school day. All gave their account of the consultation process Rafi Reicher-Saleem, Calum Coote (Junior School) and Alex Mazilu (Senior School) - Pupil Reps for pupil voice. This took place during the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Process Junior School

Meeting in Hall with Pupil Council at which Mr McClure outlined consultation followed by Q&A. Issues discussed- pupils then presented in form classes.

Further meeting around 2 weeks later Pupil Reps shared class views.

Finally, proposal issued and comments invited from all pupils.

Process in Senior School

Mr McClure presented at Assemblies the issues facing the school. Met with senior Captains.

Comments and Q and A invited.

Finally further meeting with Captains around 2 weeks later and a proposal issued and comments invited from all pupils.

Results from Consultation Survey from pupils

All pupils in both campuses involved were almost unanimously in favour of the proposal to change the school day to 1 hour periods. It was felt that this would make very little difference to pupil experience and was a much better alternative to the status quo.

Consultation Comments from pupils:

Pupils expressed concerns re maintaining the status quo:

- Lack of choice for Advanced Higher and Highers due to cuts.
- Viability of Exchanges and trips due to cover issues.
- Study support may not be available due to time and goodwill.

Pupils expressed that the proposal will:

- Safe-guard their curriculum.
- Protect what is already in place beyond the classroom- (this was the feeling of the vast majority of the pupil body.)

Pupils left the Parent Council meeting at 7.30pm

MATTERS ARISING

Parking - planning for barriers in South Street.

Parents Night changes - delayed until next year.

Letter from Parent Council to Fife Council re the New Madras to be sent.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Budgets

Chairpersons from local schools are presently forming networks to discuss strategy/ concerns about budget cuts - especially those bearing the brunt of the cuts.

Tim Brett had presented a motion at council: to review the implementation of cuts; in particular to consider other significant factors for the allocation of budgets beyond FME uptake. Factors such as the numbers of service children, LAC and pupils with additional support needs are not supported by the administration in terms of budgets.

School budgets are often linked to FME and in Madras College there is a culture of going out of school to eat lunch. So families in poverty are often under pressure not to take or even apply for FME. In South Street this has become particularly evident as not one meal has been sold in the past two years. Applying for FME has to be done online on an annual basis.

Mr Brett indicated that four schools were taking 80% of cuts. Balwearie H.S, Inverkeithing H.S, Bell Baxter H.S and Madras College.

The motion was not carried and Councillor Liston was told that these budgets were being reduced due to falling rolls since 2010/11. Mr McClure agreed the roll had fallen since then, but that budgets are enacted on a year on year in basis. As any school roll falls, the formula is adjusted annually and automatically. In the past 7 years the roll has been relatively stable. The budget savings these four schools are being asked to make, are not based on the formula for the school roll; they are over and above this.

However management points are linked to school roll -and there has been a reduction through the management of change process. This is now underway.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Lynn had given her apologies. Auditing of Parent Council accounts will be done by Ewan Sparks.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

None (no secretary) Note of meeting only.

RECTOR'S REPORT

Pupils, staff and the Parent Council are all aware of the budget cuts. Mr McClure stated that it was his job to manage such cuts hence the proposals and consultations that have taken place.

Different ways to make cuts were discussed with the staff.

Staffing is the largest budget. Making cuts here could mean that a significant number of staff could be declared excess to balance budgets. There is also a need for cover in school - slack is needed to cover educational trips and excursions out of school, staff CPD, staff absence, illness, bereavements, etc.

The consultation around the timetable changes was done as follows. Staff were made aware of the savings required.

Following a whole staff meeting where the issues were outlined and questions encouraged, staff were then presented with a questionnaire to canvas their opinions on the proposal. This was done over a 10 day period to allow time to consider the proposal and suggest alternatives.

Staff were made very clear what the proposal meant. By reducing the period times and extending interval and lunch an average of 75 minutes becomes available. This means that staff will be asked to teach one extra period - hence 60 mins. The remainder will be taken up with registration, cover or just added to their non-contact time.

This year £266,000 is to be found and with the changes proposed this year and a £140,000 reserve, the budget will balance. But next year there are no savings possible.

Overall Results of the Consultation

98% of staff in favour of the proposal

99.2% of pupils in favour of the proposal

100% of The Parent Council in favour of the proposal.

Proposal now has full support to go to Parent Forum.

Note

Pupils have expressed concerns about the future. Not this year, but next 2-3 years.

Staff equally concerned.

PC council member asked about morale of staff and the effect of the cuts.

Mr McClure stated the excellent examination results had given the staff a boost but this has been dented by budget concerns, changes to their teaching time and the spectre of job insecurity.

Mr McClure stressed that the ethos and culture of learning is superb at Madras College but that with Managing Change - staff may be reduced in salary via re job-sizing and the budget cuts. Next year they will be asked to teach an extra period.

Despite the latter, support for change has been solidly positive.

Managing Change

The Managing Change has been instituted Mr McClure has met with promoted staff. This was necessary to take place as the last time such a review had taken place was 2010-11 and this keeps Madras College in line with the rest of Fife. Salaries may change although structure will primarily stay the same. Staff were issued with tool kit. There is a 90 day consultation - just to check through - and to be open and transparent. Staff can discuss with professionals.

There will be further changes when going to a new building.

Office staff - have been reduced and still one down.

Charities Work

A great deal of work has been done at the end of term. The Talent Show organised by Mrs Miller has raised a considerable amount and gave expression to a great deal of Madras College talent. Mrs Robertson, the Junior Team and S3 prefects organised charity football and netball tournaments and a Big Breakfast for around 500 pupils. Macmillan Coffee mornings were held in both buildings too on the last Friday of term. Mrs Robertson announced that Toy-drive Campaign would be launched on Monday. She is also planning another breakfast at end of term to raise funds for Shelter.

Error in Groupcall

Mr McClure gave his apologies for the Groupcall sent out. This was due to a training issue.

Storm

Horse-Chestnut Tree came down in South Street. No pupils were hurt due to quick action cordoning off the area. While in consultation with staff SLT evacuated the top floor of the Celtic Block and Chemistry lessons took place in the Hall.

Mr McClure explained that the School was not closed as it takes almost 2 hours for buses etc. to arrive and pick pupils up. There was also a concern about releasing pupils out into a storm when it was at its height. Hence the decision was made to not close the school.

Assessment Calendar

Mr Watson indicated that the S4 - A/B Tests will begin on 19th November.

Timetable has now been created for the A/B tests.

Mr Watson has asked staff for an Idea of all class tests taking place even if not timetabled for the Hall. This is to look at the balance of assessments in overview.

No AB Tests in Science - they will just do end of unit tests.

There was some concern that the Modern Studies N5 Write-Up is to take place that week too. Mr McClure suggested that if individuals needed special arrangements due to pressure of work, that this would be accommodated.

Supported study is also available in almost every subject and Mr Watson will check that it is online. All students have been made aware of study classes and copies of the timetable are up round the school and available in SS office.

PC members raised the issue of mental health & anxiety/stress due to amount of course work associated with National exams and during exams. The Academic Skills Department of the University of St Andrews will run study skills which includes coping strategies. There is also a drop in counselling service on Thursdays in South Street.

Mr McClure stated that Mrs Robertson would be leading on Mental Health in the coming year. Mrs Robertson said she was looking at SQA accreditation and also that she would be building this into the curriculum in a more formal way: there would be a change of ethos regarding Mental Health. However she also confirmed that mental health is a priority for Soc Ed and for Assemblies and that counselling services were available to pupils via the school nurse as well as productive links with both the Educational Psychology Service and CAMHS.

Mindfulness was raised by a PC member. Mrs Robertson said this too would be looked at as a possible strategy.

SQA

There are 36 staff who support 71 courses for SQA. Despite the benefits gained from SQA processes and standards, there is some concern that if staff cover is significantly cut that this may have to be reconsidered.

Covering Classes

Mr McClure stated that he hoped that housing classes in the Hall will only be as a last resort if it is impossible to cover classes.

To ensure this happens Mr McClure has reduced attendance at non-essential meetings for staff.

Ohio Exchange

There were only 3 pupils not going on trip- and this was very upsetting for these three pupils. It was mooted that the date for the interviews and the results thereof was too close to the examination period.

Mr and Mrs Clark who run the exchange would be informed of this. As a result of this and other issues raised, it was stated that the interview procedures would be reviewed with regard to dates and process.

Maintenance Work

Nothing planned for the immediate future. Upgrades in electrical issues in SS are being pursued.

Projector in J Block still to be fitted.

A. O. C. B.

New Madras

Road has started.

New school to be started in April - subject to planning. Master plan has to be approved before school - delays on roads.

Fund-Raising

Wine Tasting was held last term with 24 people in attendance. - £110 raised for PC funds - next Gin Tasting ?

Other potential fun-raising

- Morrison's Bag Packing
- Christmas Concert Raffle
- Easyfundraising

Supporting the school to help ease the impact of cuts

It was suggested that if the school had a specific project in mind to fundraise for this could sharpen interest and even raise larger sums.

It was suggested that along with the letter to Fife Council, the parent council should organise a Petition to Fife Council re cuts.

Perhaps the school could consider volunteer help from parent body re DoE or school trips. This would mean disclosure but was thought to be a possibility.

Suggestion to PC to set up PC Facebook Profile where the PC could gain advice and support from the parent body.

PEF

The Chair raised the issue that Fife Council Education Service charges each school an administration fee of 2.5% for the PEF fund. Every school in Fife - over who is given more than £6,000 pays 2.5% as an administration figure. Mr McClure was not aware of the cost detail supporting this charge. The PC will send a letter to seek clarification.

Visit to The New Waid

In abeyance as only three people have expressed an interest.

Mr McClure ended the meeting on a positive note that with the excellent results and support of the staff, the educational experiences for pupils at Madras College will continue undiminished.

Meeting closed by The Chair at 9.20pm.