

Madras Parent Council

Wednesday 7 March 2012

Draft Minutes

Present:- Charlotte Kirby, Jo Secker Walker, Rebecca Trengove, Andy Primmer, Barry Millar, Ian Jones, Callum McLeod, Jayne Fraser, Emma Henderson, Karen Barnett, Linda Hardie, Sam Byers, Cllr Ron Caird, Scott Wilson, Dawn Waddell, Paul Brown, Rachel Naismith, Debbie Cumming, Andy Herd, Hugh Watson, Cllr Robin Waterston, Bruce Sinclair

Apologies:- Cllr Bill Sangster, Rory MacLeod, David Rickman, Cllr Dorothea Morrison, Cllr Tim Brett, Jackie Himpson, Jane Pettegree, Rona Froot, Olav Darge, Lynsey Seeley

1 Welcome from the acting chairperson

2 Election of Chair - Rev Rory MacLeod had agreed to take the role of Chairman, subject to the agreement of members. He was nominated and seconded and was duly elected, unopposed.

3 Election of Vice-Chair

Callum McLeod was nominated and seconded and duly elected, unopposed. In the absence of the Chair the Vice-Chair chaired the meeting

4a Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday 18th January 2012 and matters arising therefrom (this meeting had been adjourned)

Agreed correct record.

Science block – Bruce had written to the Executive Director of Education as requested, following a visit to the School hosted by the PTC Science. The main items highlighted were the water leaking through ceilings, the holes in ceilings, the water ingress through closed windows, and the closure of one classroom due to mould. There has now been progress in these issues. The closed classroom is in use, and there is a plan to sort out the remaining issues in the near future.

The Rector commented that the greenhouse on the Science Block roof is still leaky. Several thousand pounds have already been spent without achieving a watertight result. The School needs a more permanent solution. The greenhouse is to be boarded over and felted. It is not used much, and there is a greenhouse outside Home Economics. Once this is done it makes sense to replace holes in ceilings etc.

Item 2 – strong south or SW winds bring rain in through closed windows. Company CRS to look at windows and consider what remedial work needed. Once Greenhouse work is done the plasterboard work is to be done. That part to be done within 4 weeks. Then paintwork sometime.

Requests for Funding

There is currently about £1880 in the bank. It was suggested that we spend £1500 on worthwhile causes in the School.

From Art and Design - I propose a bid to purchase 10 'Art and Design Studies' books. This book has been co-authored by Alan Watson, formally Art Advisor for Fife, and is the perfect accompaniment to the Art and Design Study component of the Higher course. The book as you would expect, is specifically designed to illicit responses enabling pupils to respond with depth and insight to works of art and design.

Art and Design Studies - £17.75 X 10 = £175.50

We agreed to donate to the request from arts and design. There was a discussion re Dyslexia software, and it was agreed to keep some money for this.

From Duke of Edinburgh Group - It was mentioned that some financial help may be possible. Below are 3 different things that are on my wish list for this year and that I do not have funding for (well certainly not all of them, priority is staff training this year). This gives the PC choice of where they'd like to contribute and even part (ie/3 of the tents, or half of the trek poles) would be a great help. I have managed to secure some funding this year already for compasses, map cases & maps.

Staff training - 3 members of staff are willing to do the week M.L. training. I have managed to get this for a lot less than the predicted £500 each but it is still a lot. The training will help add to their skills and hopefully in a year or so will allow them to go for qualification so giving us more qualified staff. The cost £1350.25 (Course - £900 + Accom £280 + registration - £170.25), so far I've paid out the deposits (£184) and the registration (£170.25).

Tents - we have 9 x 3 man tents and 1 x 2 man tent that pre date me (over 11 years of intensive use by teenagers). Their fabric is perishing (well has been for around 3 years), but I can't operate with out them, so they are given out as a last resort (fingers crossed it is a VERY DRY expedition!). This year I need to replace them, as they are not even in the "emergency use only" condition, they've finally died. I'd like to get Vango Halo 300's and one 200. These are £170 + £150 respectively (full price though hopefully I can get 15-20% off and VAT off).

Trek Poles - we started having these around 6 years ago and they have proved invaluable. They protect the knees, help with walking rhythm, help with heavy back packs, help with going up / down hills and river crossings. However, they are hammered by the kids. Of the 40 poles (20 pairs) I started with I am down to 16 that sort of work. This is due to bending of poles, rusting of screw joints, loss of segments etc. The poles come in at around £25 a pair (if I can find the buy one get one free offer) and if I use the same company as I alluded to in the tent section I can probably get the same discounts. I'd like to get another 40 poles (20 pairs).

We agreed to donate £1000 towards the needs of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The School has also put in a request to the Community Trust for funding.

Duke of Edinburgh Awards – Andy Herd reports that Jim Douglas is Fife Council manager.

Community Ed staff got together here to set up open group for a DofE scheme. This happened last Monday. Seven people putting name down. From this can do parts of the scheme. Others in Fife Council can do expedition work. Vicki Blair will take notes of interest, next meeting 19 March 6 pm at Cosmos for those youngsters who may be interested. Pupils aged 14 and above.

Vicki.blair@fife.gov.uk, 01334 479974. 0785 711797.

08 – Bruce has linked to relevant documents on Curriculum for Excellence, after Rector identified.

09 – Bruce with Debbie’s input has put details of 50/50 and shopping and on PC website and minutes. Parentmail on 50/50 sent at Debbie’s request.

10 – Attainment group – meeting to happen, date for meeting with Rector agreed. Information to come on how parent opinions to be sampled, and on parental guidance on study opportunities.

Note official report on attainment is on Fife Council web site at

<http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication.pop&pubid=85C63126-E898-C65B-F6D31A5D2B819D33>

11 – Awaiting information on decant arrangements, Fife Council has now published some information.

12 – Callum taking advice on Fife Council consultation document and setting time of meeting to determine response. –determined to be 7 pm on Wednesday 8th February 2012 at Kilrymont School.

4b Minutes of the adjourned meeting reconvened on Wednesday 8th February 2012 and matters arising therefrom

Agreed correct record.

5 Report on the meeting held with HMIE Lawrie on Wednesday 22nd February 2012 – C MacLeod

A useful dialogue. Views expressed on process and proposal. Questions from the inspector answered. His report should have become available to Fife Council by now. HMIE report forms one appendix of main report that comes out from Education Services. The leaders of the three political parties have said that the report will not go to committee until June.

6 Rector's Report

Accommodation – plans to do major work to second half of roof in music house over Easter holidays. Science block see above. Swimming pool at Kilrymont –plant has difficulty keeping air temperature above temperature of pool water. Some walls not well thermally insulated. Intake to air heater is from outside via heaters. Need additional heater in air duct. Being investigated. Also looking at cover to go across pool.

Staffing – library assistant appointed. Audrey Greave gone from Home Ec, replacement starting next week.

Curriculum for Excellence – Second engagement meeting scheduled for Wed 25 April, 7pm KR hall. Wish to present work on the way that the senior phase is shaping up. May not have all details from Education Scotland by then. East Renfrew are on a year delay, but only because they don’t do standard grade now. Also being told need two times three years (junior and senior phases). Madras made all changes needed, and fits guidelines. Broad general phase – This year gave more time between form going out and course choice deadlines. Also more info by course fair in assembly hall. Also had displays for parents at parents’ evening. Major change from last year is that column nine gives choice of one- or two-year course options in order to give broader range of choice. Column 1-8

curricular areas covered up to level 3 in CfE. Column 9 enrichment. One year course in latin offered in S2/3, taking this or not will not make a difference in choice of senior phase.

Parent – was not sure about social studies element in column 5, but parent evening gave more info. Other social studies bits are elsewhere.

Options in column 9 – would have been nice if all had same amount of space in information sheets.

Three year general education, with some refinement at end of S1.

Difficult to make choice of sciences after 7 weeks of each subject. What is happening in social subjects may go over to science soon.

Mike Russell got grilling recently, any chance of him changing his mind – thought not, but if changes had to be made here they could just be, but only shortly. SQA will not be giving Standard Grade in 2014.

There will be an entry route to every course for every youngster in S4, but the route may be different for learners who have or have not done that subject in S2/3.

Strategic Defence Review and RAF Leuchars. ~10% of Madras pupils linked to service families. RAF to move out and army units to move in, and about two years in between. Not clear what type of unit will be there. Document being produced to explain differences between English qualifications and CfE etc. Rector has visited Lossiemouth school and is to talk with groups in England. What is impact on teaching staff for the two years? Would not be nice to lose 10 members of staff – need to work through consequences once more information is available. Task force meeting last week – RAF officer wishes RAF to be kept in Leuchars as long as possible, and currently building up numbers. Army officer had little additional information on army movements. MoD has some funding for transitional arrangements.

Attainment report – Madras unique in Scotland on split site. Timetable has to have space to let teachers move buildings. Where teachers have to move against the flow classes are left early. A teacher is put in to cover, ideally subject specialist, but this is not always possible.

Areas of strength noted.

Measure against Fife, National, and Comparator schools. Highlights where school is performing well in those comparisons or where some improvement is needed. Wish to see improvements in art and design (though Standard grade results are currently improving), Int 2 biology (change in personnel is making positive difference). Report went to area committee in February.

28 March Rector will discuss with attainment sub-group of PC. Handout on aspects of raising attainment. Two years ago Int1 and 2 done in partnership with Elmwood. SCQF level four results statistics are impacted by this. These pupils get unit passes and not certificates, which reduces Madras attainment level four (Standard Grade General). But these vocational courses are valuable and appropriate for these young people. But if 10% of year group don't get SCQF award this impacts on the stats. Any questions to go to Paul (or Rector) for discussion at sub group.

7 Treasurer's Report See matters arising above.

8 Secretary/Webmaster's Report Nothing to report.

9 Fund-raising Sub-Group's Report

Easy fund raising has brought in small cheque.

Fete raffle tickets about to be printed, will be sold at school events. Lots of good prizes – 4-night stay at Abermore house, 1 night Deveron house, meals various places, 4-ball at Fairmont, half a spring lamb, 30 or 40 prizes. Note also 50/50 club.

Debbie has booked place at a Cupar meeting on Fund Raising for Parent Councils, run by SPTC.

10 Attainment Sub-Group's Report

Meeting on 28 March.

11 The New Madras

Currently in political and practical limbo period. A teaching staff member wishes to note that teachers are frustrated at the delay, 90% of teachers were in favour of the refurbishment of the Kilrymont site. Project team has been stood down meantime. It seems unfortunate that the decision has been delayed till after the election. Cllr Waterston – timing has been difficult. HMI final report has not yet been received. There then needs to be three weeks – ie into April. There are no scheduled meetings of committees in April. The political party leaders met and decided it was inappropriate to have a meeting in April to make a decision. When Ed committee meets once new administration formed may be useful for Development Group to have look at report and talk to Ed Committee. This means a delay of at least five months, which makes another year delay to entry to new school. Why so much rush in November etc if this was likely to happen?. If public response had been positive then might have been pushed through beforehand. North Haugh site on South Side with lake is now being considered. This was site originally offered by University, but officers decided then no go, so negotiated on upper site. Reporter on local plan suggests this site be designated as a site for things that could go next to a university. Negotiations with the University had been ambitious, and this contributed to difficulties. North Haugh site might be thought of as a land sale. Rector on a personal basis has no confidence of reopening negotiations with University. Cllr – risks with all options. Station Park also risky. Kilrymont option has been plan B. Botanic gardens? Assessment of sites? Will look at ground conditions and buses, but not acceptability to parents and other residents of the town. Reporter has this week ruled that southern hillside is green belt. Now need clarity on what sites are worth doing full assessment of. Demoralising effect on staff and pupils.

12 AOCB

Has school been asked to be involved in Olympic torch relay? There will be some involvement.

13 Date of next meeting - 7 pm Wednesday 16th May 2012, Kilrymont Road site.