

Madras Parent Council Minutes

Wednesday 2nd October 2013, Kilrymont, 7pm

1. Chairman opening remarks:

- Wished to pay tribute to Callum for stepping in for so long as Acting Chair and for maintaining a steady ship. Delighted he is continuing as Vice-Chair and looking forward to his continued input and guidance.
- Rector's interviews due 3rd October. (Since confirmed the appointment of Mr David McClure as new Rector of Madras College).
- PB met with DM and agreed fortnightly meetings to attain a sense of his/school priorities and those of the council.

2. Present – David McClure, Andy Primmer, Rachel Naismith, Debbie Cumming, Dawn Waddell, Sally Walker, Paul Brown, Charlotte Kirby, Rebecca Trengove, Sam Byers, Cllr Dorothea Morrison, Susan Simpson, Lynne Christie, Colin Palmer, Carol Urquhart, Karen Barnett, Cllr Keith McCartney, Scott Wilson

Apologies- Dave Rickman, Barry Millar, Jane Pettegree, Cllr Brian Thomson, Cllr Maggie Taylor, Callum MacLeod, Cllr Tim Brett.

- Email from Jane Pettegree confirming that she is resigning from the Council due to work commitments. Chair wished to recognise the Council's thanks and gratitude for Jane's work through both Homestudy Group and general support of the school.

3. Minutes from Previous Meeting:

- Apologies for not distributing these prior to this meeting, technical IT hitch. Agreed with the following points discussed:
- Rector confirmed that work has been scheduled for the October holidays for continuing repairs. The felt roof at South Street will have scaffolding erected for approx. 8 weeks as this is replaced.
- Discussion around new Group Call. Issues as this system does not appear to accept dual parental emails.
 - Costs equate to c£240/month. Parent Council monies previously funding £750/a so there will be a shortfall.
 - Queries over absenteeism text facility. South Street pupils advised no back up letter required, whereas Kilrymont advised differently.
- Curriculum for Excellence S4-S6 had been issued. S1-S3 to be issued. Information night in January for S1-S3 will be prior to course choices. Under discussion if P7 parents? to be invited as well, and P6?
- Today's notices webpage has not been updated. General discussion about the lack of consistency in dissemination of information at South Street. DM confirmed first 5mins of each P1 should be devoted to short notices etc.

- Facebook – Discussion about inappropriate use of this by pupils and the access to School Logo. Rumours website closed. DM confirmed that the usage of FB was being discussed in Social Education classes.

Action Points:

- DM to investigate dual emails from Group Call and correct procedures for reporting absences.
- DM to confirm attendance at S1-S3 CfE evening.
- DM to check re communication channels at South Street.

4. Rectors Report:

- **Attainment Data** - The DAS adjusted figures issued in August have been revised by the Education Service and will now have a slight % drop from the originally issued figures. The new figures were issued to the PC which show:
 - S4 down by 1.5% at level 4 & 5
 - S5 down by 1.5%
 - S4 5+ - DM feeling that there is headroom to improve this by 10%
 - S5 +S6 – DM feels room for positive improvement here too.
 - Issues with new National 4/5 that there is no benchmarking like the PIPS predictor so comparison statistics will be difficult.
- **Rewards System** – Re-introduced ‘stamp cards’ into S1 and S2. Those achieving highly will be rewarded with a trip to Alton Towers. Pupils excited however concerns expressed by council members as to consistency of teachers awarding stamps: some don’t, meant to be one a day per subject but they forget/ run out of time, take a ‘guilty by association’ approach when a pupil plays up and the whole class is penalised. DM advised that he cannot rectify this if he doesn’t know where the issues lie. Encouraged parents to let him know specific examples
- **Uniforms**- Orders for the blazers from M & S are now complete. M&S have agreed to be present at the January evening and discuss concerns with parents. Parent Council confirmed that problems have occurred over 2 years, M&S in Dundee can’t manage the orders and preference may be to return to Academy Uniforms for quality and service.
 - General discussion around use of blazers. DM confirmed this is improving with high percentage of take up in S1 and S2. S4 pupil representative confirms S4 keen, but blazers are being kept in their bags and not being worn. This is a work in progress.
 - Winter Uniforms –DM to meet with S3 representatives who have approached him with views for ‘acceptable’ winter attire. DM thinks that so long as school colours then keeping warm and suitably dressed is more important, but DM would still prefer blazers to be in evidence.
- **Reviews** – Planned programme for undertaking Departmental Quality reviews. Started with Modern Languages and Science. Analysing classroom learning and teaching, homework policies, assessment criteria, course structure and the opportunities which the pupils have for achievement.
 - Discussions re procedure if weaknesses identified. DM confirmed that this is not intended to precipitate a ‘blame culture’. Focus on identification of areas to be improved, improvement and support/monitoring.

- **Homework** – DM confirmed changes to homework policies were being written due to inconsistency throughout the school.
- PB confirmed that Homework Group worked hard to be able to create a document for communication of expectations to parents etc. Nothing has been distributed.
 - General discussion re irritation of parents when ‘satisfactory’ completed on reports and no homework has ever been distributed. Further to this the lack of co-ordination of subjects when distributing the homework – children having multiple last minute requirements and tests. Final discussion as to children ‘self marking’ – this does not provide a learning experience and causes frustration.
- **Learning Outcomes –DM advised it is** very difficult to get an Assessment Calendar which covers all subjects but working on this. Concerns expressed by PC members as to ‘rushing’ assessments by sciences and pupils in S4 having to ‘learn’ themselves to sit assessments before the holidays. Further discussions as to practical timetabling to be had.
- **Primary Roadshows** – Strategy to encourage primary pupils to come to Madras College. Like last year will have S1 and S6 pupil giving their take on life in the school. Discussion re Parent Council members supporting school at these roadshows.Support offered by PC and welcomed by DM
 - Discussion re fall in head count at Madras. Loss of pupils through transfer to Dundee High School, St Leonards and Bell Baxter. DM – loss of trust, faith and confidence in school. Need to re-establish this and actively ‘sell’ the enormous benefits of the school.
- **Security Policy** – Previously discussed and accepted.
- **Change in periods per week for next year** – Move to 25 period per week next year and guarantee that all subject choices of current S4 (CfE) year will be maintained, along with Scottish Studies award.
- **New Build** – Issues DM would flag as requiring further consideration as follows:
 - **Parking and buses** – Layout not sufficient. With community use, parents evenings, full school spill over will be into the hospital. This does not need to happen, just need to re-assess the layout.
 - **DAS** – Support corridor is insufficient
 - **Music** – Requirement for choir rehearsal space and instrument storage
 - **Science Base** – currently positioned in library space, this needs to move
 - **Vocational provision** – Requires amendments and further consideration within the proposed design
- **Tracking Systems** –Very important to ensure consistency so as we know how a pupil is progressing and provide for constructive conversations between pupils and teacher.
 - **Traffic Light System** –Consistency with primary schools. Base line assessment which is simple and easy to use in Secondary school eg 2+ambers with an accompanying AFE score of 94+ and on target for 5 National 5’s. At discussion/consultation stage and will be explained to parents once it is developed. Suggestions to roll out to S1.
- **Car Incident** – The alert was triggered by the school as a result of the Police advising that an investigation was underway.
 - **Safety Procedures within the school** –Personal Safety Programme is integral to the Health and Well Being section of the curriculum. Pupils constantly discussing internet safety, predators, responsibility in relationships etc. An ongoing programme of

discussions running throughout S1-S6. Madras College will not make 'sweeping statements' or call 'specific' assemblies so as to avoid panic etc.

- **Staffing** – Moving forward but still issues in English, Drama, Maths, Support for Learning and Biology.

Action Points:

- PC to summarise the pupils concerns re allocation of reward stamps and advise DM on a collective basis.
- DM to continue 'policing' usage of blazers at South Street.
- DM to confirm winter uniform policy.
- PC member suggested a computer science pupil may be perfect for helping create the Subject Assessment Calendar. To liaise with DM on this.
- DM to investigate timings of check-ups in Science and general homework policies.
- DM to forward roadshow t/t to see if PC members can attend local ones to them.

5. New Madras Consultation:

Deadline 08.10.13- Key that everyone comments on planning application which is on Fife Direct Website.

6. Chairman's Report:

- PB acknowledged that the Council is not fully representative of whole school and encouraged council members to bring concerns to the table from parents not present. Important to strengthen our representation and accessibility and show a clear presence.
- Primary Road shows – Try to sign up to ones that are within your locality.

7. Treasurer's Report:

Currently have £2840.97 available funds and continued discussion required as to how to help the school. Ongoing commitment to Lynsey Seeley re insurance for the Fashion Show.

8. Secretary Report:

Update of parent council website is still a work in progress.

9. Fundraising Group:

To meet after the October holidays but the Easy Fundraising Website had 81 members and raised £1141.76. 50/50 club renewal is in February. Still need to look at ways to engage more people.

10. AOCB:

- Extra-Curricular activities - Issues of collection from Rugby matches, last minute notification of games.
- Rugby – Issues of transport support for pupils.
- GLOW password – what is it?

Action Points:

- DM to investigate transport support for pupils and also rugby training/fixtures.
- DM to enquire about Glow and advise.

Date of Next Meeting 27th November 2013