

Madras College Parent Council
Minute
Wednesday 23rd May 2018, 19:00
Kilrymont Road

1. Apologies received

Clare Campbell, Georgiana Mazilu, Taciana Kasciukovic, Vicky Hobba, Leanne Hulse, Lynn Christie, Cllr Jonny Tepp, Cllr Linda Holt.

2. Transport & school buses

This topic was added to the agenda due to recent press articles in The Scotsman highlighting that Fife Council was proposing to make further financial savings by reviewing the provision and charging for school buses - <https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/transport/thousands-of-fife-pupils-could-lose-free-bus-passes-1-4742447>

The Rector had not been involved in these discussions and agreed that the parent council should be finding out about these proposals via the school rather than in the press or committee reports on www.fifedirect.org.uk.

Cllr Nolan had attended the committee meeting where these proposals were considered and confirmed that the proposals had been rejected.

3. Minutes of previous meeting held 7th March 2018

Change to item 7(b). Should state 'this session' as opposed to 'next session'. Minutes were then adopted, proposed by Sally Walker and seconded by Andy Primmer.

4. Matters arising (from meeting held 7/3/18)

- a) Visit to Waid Academy - Only 3 parents were able to make the revised date so the decision was taken to cancel and rescheduled for the next school year (date tbc).
- b) School Calendar and WUPPA - Hard copies of the calendar for 18/19 were circulated at the meeting. The exams are slightly earlier and it was noted that the WUPPA requirements (write-up/project/portfolio/assignment) make it a very busy period.

5. Office-holder reports

- a) Chair - nothing to report.
- b) Treasurer - apologies sent but Lynn had confirmed in advance that the available balance remained unchanged at £2972.
- c) Secretary - nothing to report.

6. Rector's report

- a) Staffing - Three new members of staff have now started. Two members of staff are currently on long-term absence but one is due back soon and supply cover is in place. Apart from Psychology the other subject areas have been generally ok for staff cover over the year.
- b) Parents' evening - It is recognised that the current arrangements can make it hard for parents to secure appointments and then make their way around the school in reasonable time. It was also noted that staff put in a considerable effort for these evenings and often stay late to ensure parents have the opportunity to discuss progress. We do occasionally get difficult/hostile parents attending and these situations can be hard for staff to manage due to the personal nature and abusive language. There is no tolerance for this sort of behaviour and in these cases the parents will be seen directly by the Rector or Guidance Staff as opposed to the class teacher.

A change of format is under consideration and this would involve basing staff in the dining room, main hall and locker room areas. This should make it safer for staff and easier for parents to get around. Backup classrooms would also be available for 1:1 discussions if privacy is required and these could be requested in advance.

These suggestions were well received and there was further discussion about what could be done to ensure staff were supported. The Rector confirmed that he writes directly to any abusive parents to advise that any further update reports will be delivered by senior staff (Rector/DHT/Guidance) and the parent(s) will not be permitted to meet directly with the teaching staff.

- c) Maintenance - An updated list of maintenance work undertaken was circulated at the meeting and this has progressed well. It has taken slightly longer than expected to get to this stage as the Rector generally wanted work completed during the holiday periods to avoid any further disruption. As the outstanding list was reviewed it became clear that some items related to fire safety and should be prioritised for completion asap. The Rector and Cllr Thomson agreed to check these with Fife Council.
- d) New school - Cllr Thomson and Cllr Brett advised that permission for the new access road was granted on the 4th April but work will not commence until the end of the bird-nesting season (September 2018). It will then take approx. 30 weeks to complete the road to the required standard to allow work to start on the new school. To ensure the expected build timescales are met it may be necessary to decouple the planning application for the school from the wider application for St Andrews West. Fife Council is reviewing how this might work and they are also undertaking a voluntary environmental impact assessment (eia) to assist with this process, should it be required at a later stage.
- e) School budgets - Mr McClure has seen his estimated Madras school budgets for the next three years and these present clear financial challenges. The savings will generally come from staffing cuts and by year three the local options will have

been exhausted and we will require a fundamental change. This may lead us down the route of what is termed 'asymmetrical timetabling' where the staff deliver 27 periods over a 4.5 day week. There is a window of opportunity to link the review of the school week with changes to the bus contracts when they are due to expire. Detailed engagement will be required before any proposal of this type can be formally considered and the new school build should also help to reduce maintenance/running costs.

7. Fundraising group

Wine tasting now to be held at Madras Rugby Club during September 2018 and date is likely to be Friday 7th or Friday 14th. Barry to pick up with Lynn and check if these dates are available at the Rugby Club.

Irene is also in touch with Morrisons regarding dates for Madras pupils/parents to raise funds by offering bag-packing services.

8. AOB

- a) Rugby - Jonathan highlighted that there is an opportunity to play a combined St Leonards / Madras team. The rugby programme is already in place and coaching is available. Mr McClure will take this back and discuss with the relevant parties to assess if there is an appetite to resurrect a previous arrangement for combined teams.
- b) Station park - leading on from the rugby team discussion Jonathan pointed out that the posts in Station Park are badly rusted and in need of painting. The rugby club could pay for part of this if required but the work needs done urgently. Cllr Thompson agreed to take this up and check options as there may be local community funding options and the poor condition had been commented on previously.
- c) 6th year last day - Paul raised the point that last teaching day arrangements had been changed at a late stage and this had caused some disappointment among pupils. It is a sentimental time and pupils are keen to enjoy the experience. Mr McClure advised that the decision to change plans and cancel the last day was not taken lightly and was in response to serious concerns about the level of disruption being planned. The last day should be fun for all with various light hearted awards being presented but several sources had indicated that the expected disruption was likely to go far beyond acceptable levels and this would have posed a danger to staff, pupils and the fabric of the building. 25 pupils still attended school on the Friday and there were issues with toilets being blocked and doors being damaged. There was a further comment that the same year group had also missed out on a previous Christmas party but this was just a coincidence as the cancellation was largely due to the on-going maintenance work combined with staff availability.
- d) Connect - The Chair advised that Vicky Hobba has volunteered to be the new Connect rep for Madras.

- e) Thank you - The Chair advised that three members of our Parent Council were stepping down at the end of this school year as their children were completing their final years at Madras. Andy Primmer (10 years), Paul Brown (6 years) and Sally Walker (6 years). Many thanks to all for your active participation and involvement over the years. It is much appreciated and best wishes for the future!

The Chair then thanked Mr McClure and his team for their hard work over the year and wished everyone a lovely summer break when it comes

9. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 29th August at Kilrymont for the AGM and first meeting of the new school year. The AGM will start at 18:30.

Meeting closed at 20:25.

Attendance List 23rd May 7th 2018

Parents

Susan Simpson, Chair
Barry Millar, Secretary
Anna Moss
Jaap Jacobs
Di McGhie
Irene McMenamin

Andy Primmer
Heather Moffitt
Paul Brown
Sally Walker
Jonathan O’Riordan

Teaching Staff

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

Local Councillors

Cllr Brian Thomson
Cllr Tim Brett
Cllr Bill Connor
Cllr Ann Verner
Cllr Dominic Nolan
Cllr Jane Ann Liston