

**Madras College Parent Council**  
**Minute**  
**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017, 19:00**  
**Kilrymont Road**

**1. Apologies received**

Georgiana Mazilu, Sally Walker, Claudia Ortiz, Andy Primmer, Jonathan O’Riordan, Callum MacLeod, Heather Moffitt, Marie-Noel Earley, Cllr Margaret Taylor, Cllr Keith McCartney, Louise Playford (Fife Council).

**2. Minutes of previous meeting**

These were adopted – proposed by Lynn Christie and seconded by Susan Simpson.

**3. Update on the maintenance programme**

Louise Playford (Fife Council) has sent an update on the planned maintenance work and once this has been reviewed by Mr McClure an update will be sent to members of Parent Council. Representatives from the building service team at Fife Council have already met with the Business Manager for Madras to review priorities and timing to fit in with the school year.

Cllr Tim Brett – An amendment to the budget profile was approved to prioritise the maintenance work and have all of the money (£750k) available during this financial year.

It was noted that painters have already been in and more work is planned for the Easter holidays. Given the timescales it is considered unlikely that all the work can be completed over this year but having the money approved is very useful and means that as much work will be completed as possible and any funds left over will be carried into the next financial year.

Paul Brown – We should note our appreciation for the hard work put in by all of our local councillors, over a prolonged period, to ensure that the school is given a high priority within Fife Council and it is good to see the maintenance work getting underway.

This was unanimously supported and as parents we are grateful for the local support, thank you!

**4. Update on the plans for a new Madras College**

Mr McClure requested that this item be deferred to the next meeting for a more detailed update as he is scheduled to attend a meeting with the Education team of Fife Council at Rothesay House on 9<sup>th</sup> March. Things seem to be moving quickly now and notification of the public consultations will soon be issued.

Cllr Tim Brett – The Council Executive have now approved the Langlands site and the planning will take account of the master plan for that area. An amendment was approved for the public

consultations to have one held at Madras and one in the Bridgehead area. It is also expected that some primary schools will host drop in sessions.

Cllr Brian Thomson – Work is already underway at the Langlands site with what appears to be ground inspections.

## **5. Matters arising (from meeting held 25/1/17)**

### **a) The priority given to Madras College**

This has been covered by the previous points and the action we can see on both the maintenance work and plans for a new school.

### **b) Seat belts on school buses**

Susan has been in contact with Fife Council and the response confirmed the previous update by Cllr Brian Thomson. Buses with more than 16 seats do not require seatbelts. There was some discussion about the different approach for rural v urban routes but Fife Council are not aware of any legislation requiring seat belts to be fitted (or used) in Fife.

The response from Malvine French (Transportation Officer with Fife Council) was as follows – “What Councillor Thompson said is quite right as buses that have more than 16 seats do not require seat belts by law and neither do registered local service buses it is not a requirement when building buses. Neither I nor my colleagues know of the legislation mentioned by the parent regarding rural routes. Fife Council follow legislation when tendering school transport and monitor contracts to ensure that operators are complying with all requirements...”.

### **c) Teacher recruitment**

There has been a recent change in this area and Mr McClure highlighted that teachers now need to give four term weeks as a minimum notice period. Previously the notice period also included the holiday period. This is an improvement but ideally we would like one term’s notice and exclusion period during the run up to exams. There is some discretion for head teachers to agree start dates and locally that works well.

Some discussion followed regarding the rules in England & Ireland where it seems teachers cannot move during term time.

Cllr Bryan Poole – The underlying issue here is still the overall shortage of teachers but we need to clarify this point with Fife Council, as they should not be recruiting from January for the current term.

Cllr Dorothea Morrison – Is housing also a contributing factor to the shortage we are experiencing in St Andrews?

Mr McClure – Yes, very much as due to the location (i.e. NE Fife) and the cost of housing we find that new teachers need to travel further.

**Action:** Mr McClure to ask that teacher recruitment be raised through Head Teacher meetings with Fife Council.

d) Inset days

No movement at this stage and Mr McClure will add to his list of discussion points with Sheelagh McLean as the previous system had been working well.

**Action:** Mr McClure to ask that the scheduling of inset days be raised through Head Teacher meetings with Fife Council.

e) Pupil support hours

This topic was discussed in detail and Mr McClure confirmed that the formula used to determine allocation among schools was based on free meal entitlement (FME) as opposed to actual need. In his experience there is no direct link between income (as a basis for FME) and the need for educational support; Madras lost 14 hours of available support at the last recalculation and based on current data there are approx. 181 pupils at Madras with a justifiable need for additional support. In summary, the FME based formula does not reflect the educational need or requirements. The pupil equity fund could be used to top up but that is still under review.

Cllr Bryan Poole – The budget provision for this support has remained constant across Fife but there was some redistribution, based on the formula, giving more to primary schools and the West of Fife.

**Action:** Cllr Bryan Poole to take this back to Fife Council and check what can be done.

f) School feedback and input to tendering

**Action:** Cllr Bryan Poole to chase for a response on this matter.

g) Review of the previous report outlining links between Madras College and the University.

Carried over to the next meeting.

## 6. Office-holder reports

a) Chair

Nothing to add that not covered already.

b) Treasurer

Cheque issued for £300 to cover the travel costs for the pipe band and current balance is now £2425.10.

### c) Secretary

A clean up of Parent Council membership list is underway and this has resulted in four being removed with one further still to respond. There are currently twenty-one members and this will be an on-going activity to review involvement.

The Constitution has been revisited and if there is a need to review then a proposal will be added to the AGM agenda. Note - the current Constitution is available online at the Parent Council website, <http://www.madrasboard.org.uk/category/documents/background/>

Website review – Carried over and any feedback is welcome. It has already been noted that some of the material is out of date.

## 7. Developing the young workforce

Mr Darge (DHT) presented a series of slides on the topic of developing Scotland's young workforce. The subsequent discussion focussed on building links with local businesses; ideas for guest speakers to address school assemblies (form time - 20 minutes), and how to integrate employment skills into lesson plans.

Di McGhie suggested that a note be issued to parents/guardians asking for volunteers who could host pupils in their organisations and/or offer to speak at the assemblies.

Mr Darge – Yes, this would work well now as from recent experience we have a better understanding of how to make this work for the pupils and for the organisations. A short survey of S5/S6 pupils also provided useful data about what the pupils would like to hear about.

**Action:** Mr Darge to arrange for a school communication to be issued highlighting the opportunity for involvement and requesting volunteers.

## 8. Rector's report

### a) Pupil equity fund

Mr Wishart (DHT) advised members of Parent Council that Madras College had secured approx. £67k to be spent on tackling the poverty related attainment gap. This money will be provided over four years and the school has discretion over how best use the funds.

The approach being adopted is to gather relevant data, analyse for poverty/attainment links and then to propose a strategy with key projects.

The initial data is pointing to a link between FME and attendance levels at secondary school level. The attendance level then has a direct impact on levels of attainment.

The level of funding is based on the FME uptake levels and it is important that parents/guardians sign up if they are entitled. The school only sees the uptake level when pupils are at school and does not have visibility of the total entitlement.

More discussion followed and it was suggested that Madras could look at the uptake levels in feeder schools to assess the level of drop off when pupils move to Madras. The data (numbers) at primary school level should be publicly available via educational reports.

#### **b) Easter school**

Mr McClure confirmed that this would run for 2 weeks.

#### **c) Modern languages**

All feeder schools are now offering French language courses and this will have an impact on the German department if we don't take action now. Parents have been contacted to advise that from next year Madras will offer two languages in S1 and pupils can pick from French, Spanish and German. Taster sessions will also be offered in all languages to give pupils a broad understanding of modern languages and to encourage the '1+2' strategy, which means that pupils should study English and two modern languages.

Madras has good cross-skilling within the language department and can support the broad approach to three languages. The department also has well supported language exchanges across all three and it was noted that the German exchange has been running for nearly 60 years.

### **9. AOB**

#### **a) Madras pupils at meeting of Tayport Community Council**

Cllr Bill Connor commented that two Madras pupils had attended the recent meeting of Tayport Community Council to discuss the world challenge event and their fund raising. Some funding was approved by the Community Council and Bill praised the pupils for their excellent approach and presentation.

Anna Moss - The pupils are also organising a ceilidh in Tayport to raise additional funds.

Mr McClure welcomed the feedback and commented that the pupils had also been asked to make an appointment to meet with him over the coming weeks. Some additional funding for this may be available via the Madras Endowment Trust.

#### **b) S4 course choices**

Brian Thomson – The S4 course recommendations take the prelim results into account and the form states that guidance teachers cannot overrule a recommendation. Is this correct?

Mr McClure – The school cannot stop a pupil from requesting another course but the recommendations are based on what we believe will be best for the pupil. If results are borderline then there is more chance of turning it around but progression to the next level is not automatic.

Mr Watson (DHT) added that it was correct to say a guidance teacher could not overrule a recommendation. However, if supported they would take the request to the Head of Department for review. If a pupil is strong in other subjects e.g. English is key indicator, then the broad view will also influence the review.

Mr McClure - The prelim recommendation is used to help get the right course choices from the start and avoid a crash. It is possible to switch later but it does become harder. However, feedback noted and the wording can be reviewed; we can soften it a bit for next year to help explain the reasons and options.

**Action:** Mr McClure to review the wording used on S4 course choice form.

**c) Science and maths**

Lynn Christie – Is it made clear to pupils taking science subjects at a higher level that they will also need to be strong in maths?

Mr McClure – This is an area where we do encourage pupils to work hard at maths if they intend taking further science subjects. There may be more we can do as now maths is almost a pre-requisite; historically it was accepted that you needed advanced maths with physics but now chemistry and biology also have a high level of mathematical content.

**10. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

Meeting closed at 21:00.

**Attendance List 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

***Parents***

Susan Simpson, Chair  
Lynn Christie, Vice-Chair and Treasurer  
Barry Millar, Secretary  
Rowena Kyle  
Paul Brown  
Anna Moss  
Diane McGhie  
Jan Constable

***Teaching Staff***

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

***Local Councillors***

Cllr Brian Thomson (also a parent member)  
Cllr Bill Connor  
Cllr Bryan Poole  
Cllr Tim Brett  
Cllr Dorothea Morrison