

Madras College Parents' Council

DRAFT Minutes of Meeting 20 March 2008

Present:- Roger Coultherd, Catherine Dunn, Marjory Finlay, Katy Pitman, Mary Scott, Adam Alexander, Andy Herd, Ian Jones, Lynsey Seeley, Cllr Robin Waterston, Alex Slawin, Phill Williams, Heather Marriage, Henry Paul, Joanna Wright, Jackie Morrissey and Geraldine Wooley

Apologies:- Rebecca Bransby, Fiona Roger, Alison Scott, Cllr Morrison, Eric Bowman, Fiona Roger, Cllr Caird, Ian Green, Alistair Black, Gillian Bowman, Robin Dewar, Olav Darge, Bruce Sinclair, Lynn Hynd and Rebecca Brands.

1. Welcome

The chairman welcomed all those attending and noted that the date clashed with several other events in the school. In future, the PC would try to ensure that dates of meetings do not clash with school events.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes were taken to be an appropriate record of the last meeting and were proposed by Adam Alexander and seconded by Alex Slawin.

3. Presentation on “Planning Schools for the Future: Projecting School Rolls.”

Councillor Waterson gave an update on the paper entitled “Planning Schools for the Future: Projecting School Rolls”, which had been approved by the NE Fife Area Committee on 5 March and would be presented to the Education Committee at Fife Council for ratification on 10 April. The discussion following the presentation focused principally on the accuracy of the projections, with several members pointing out that the University was due to expand and a large number of family houses would become available in due course. Cllr Waterston expressed the opinion that, although the figures appear to be correct on the basis of current P1-7 and nursery statistics, they remain estimates. The Rector also pointed out that, in order to deliver a full curriculum choice, a school would require a minimum roll of 900 pupils. It was also pointed out that, in order to get all the facilities currently enjoyed by Madras (drama workshops, swimming pool etc.), the roll would need to be between 1200-1400.

4. Rector’s Report

- a. The HMIE report was distributed and a copy would be sent to all parents on 24 March. A full copy is available [from the HMIE website](#), and available from the school office. The only point where progress had been weak was in the action “To take immediate steps to remove barriers to learning, teaching and behavior due to weaknesses in accommodation.” The Rector pointed out that this point concerned the unsatisfactory split-site issue and the chair added his concern that Fife Council has made no progress in resolving this issue. HMIE would revisit the school in May 2009 to assess progress on this point.
- b. The Rector reported that the timings of lunch at Kilrymont would be shortened by ten minutes. The advantages of this reduction would be that there would be less time for pupils to loiter after lunch and, at the end of the day, Kilrymont would finish ten minutes before South Street, which would allow the buses to arrive at the South Street site as the pupils left school. The Rector indicated that he would check with the bus companies that this was acceptable, as the present bus contract was set until 2009. The issue of lunch-time clubs was raised and it was suggested that pupils attending these clubs should be given priority passes for the cafeteria.
- c. Parent Mail has been purchased and will be ready for use soon. It is hoped that the next school newsletter will be sent out by parent mail and schoolbag.
- d. The Rector distributed a summary of the projected budget cuts the school will have to make over the next three years, amounting to £190,937, £216,222 and £264,190 respectively. These savings will have a major effect on

the school, possibly leading to cuts in the number of teachers, librarians technicians and many other areas of school expenditure. All the parents were appalled at the effect on the school of these projected cuts. A full report about the school budget will be given at the next PC meeting by the budget manager (Allan McNish), but the Rector pointed out that some choices at Advanced Higher may be limited. One compromise the school will consider is delivering Higher and Advanced Higher classes together, if the numbers in each separate class make this feasible. The PC agreed that Catherine Dunn would draft a letter for the PC to send to Fife Council.

5 Sub-Groups

a. Fund Raising and Social Sub-Group

The PC has paid for insurance to allow the school to borrow clothes from local shops for a fashion show as part of the School Evening of Performing Arts. The PC and pupils will run a refreshment stall at the event, and Fiona, Henry, Phill and Robin volunteered to man the stall.

The PC Ceilidh is planned for 9 May at Kilrymont from 7:30-10:30pm, with tickets available from both school offices. Catering will be provided from an outside source and the PC will run the bar. A final planning meeting will be held on 15 April at 7:00pm in Kilrymont.

The Rector provided the meeting with a breakdown of how donations of £4450 from the Madras College PTA had been spent. The items purchased were as follows:

Audio/visual systems - £2000 – Digital Projector and other items purchased.

More lockers for Kilrymont Road - £1000 – ordered

Picnic Tables for 5th Year area South St - £500 – purchased

Expressive Arts for Music Stands -£350 – (30 music stands plus 2 trolleys) purchased.

Art Dept – £200 – for frames – not yet purchased.

Crafty Cooks Club - £200 – for equipment – not yet purchased (A Grieve Home etc).

Burns Supper - £200 towards costs of pupils' supper.

The chair made a plea for pictures of these items so that they can be used in a display so that all Parent Forum members can see where money goes that is raised at social events.

b. Infrastructure

No meetings had been held in the last period and the Chair agreed to write to the PCs of all the feeder Primary Schools to invite them to comment about the “Planning Schools for the Future: Projecting School Rolls” paper and any other points that would help us build a partnership between their PCs and the Madras College PC.

c. Policy and Communications Sub-Group

A long discussion was held concerning the minutes from the first three meetings of this sub-group. The members of the sub-group believed a detailed report of all their discussions should go on the PC website, but the Rector pointed out that several members of staff had been upset by some of the comments in the discussion section of the minutes, therefore he believed they should not be put on the PC website. The PC decided to put only the top page of the minutes from the sub-group meetings on to the PC website and the discussion pages would be available to any member of the Parent Forum on request. All PC members stressed that we are trying to build partnerships and improve communications between parents and the school and the concerns raised in the discussion parts of the sub-group minutes are genuine concerns. In order to help the sub-group establish the extent to which the wider parent body have the same concerns, a questionnaire will be sent out to seek views from the Parent Forum concerning issues they would like the PC to address.

6 Social Event for Staff and PC Members

The chair sought ideas for a social event. Two possible suggestions already made are to meet informally half an hour before the next PC meeting (wine will be provided), and for the PC to help on 2 July when the parents of children moving to South Street are invited to that site to meet the staff there and to view the facilities.

7 Date of Meetings for Next Year.

The chair stated that he would like to plan all the meeting dates for next year before the end of the summer term so that they may be published in advance with school diary information, avoiding school events. All inputs should be passed to the chair or Rector prior to the next meeting.

8 AOCB

- a. Timings of course choices. A parent had written to the chair complaining that curriculum choices in S2/S4 had to be returned to the school the morning after the parents' evening. The Rector pointed out that any parent could request extra time to make these choices if required, but the school need decisions quickly in order to start planning the following year's timetable. Several other PC members agreed that submitting choices the morning after parents' evening was undesirable and the Rector agreed to look again at the issue. One possible solution would be to hold S2/4 parents' evenings on a Tuesday, thus allowing pupils until the following Friday to get their choices in.
- b. Church Services. A PC member pointed out that by holding the senior school assembly in Holy Trinity Church, pupils from a minority religious group would not be able to attend. She suggested that the assembly be held in the Younger Hall instead. The Rector pointed out that the assembly was a non-religious event and that it was too late to change this year's assembly, but he would look at the issue for next year. Other members pointed out that this assembly has always been held in Holy Trinity church and that this was an appropriate venue as it was the town kirk.
- c. PC Display Board. The chair stated that he was making displays about the role of the PC for the school notice boards and he would require a digital photo of all members. The Rector would take photos at the next PC meeting.
- d. Asbestos. A member had raised the issue about asbestos and the building works taking place at Kilrymont. The Rector and Andy Herd both stated that a full safety audit had been carried out prior to the work starting and the workers were complying with the relevant safety practices required to deal with asbestos. The majority of the work would be completed during the forthcoming school holidays.
- e. ECO School. Brendan Fox (teacher of biology) has requested support from the PC to help the school become an ECO school. Initially, he would like to issue a questionnaire to all PC members to complete. There was unanimous support from the PC for helping the school improve its ECO credentials.
- f. Bus Passes. One member raised the issue about bus passes, as a group of pupils had been turned away by an inspector because they had forgotten their bus passes. The Rector pointed out that this was not an appropriate response, as all bus drivers have a list of pupils entitled to travel on each bus. The Rector undertook to investigate this issue and talk to the inspector and the bus company.

9 Date of Next Meeting

The PC agreed that the main agenda item would be a presentation by the school's budget manager (Allan McNish) on the impact of the planned cuts in the school's budget. The meeting will be held on 28 May 2008 at 7:00 pm in the Kilrymont building.