

Madras College Parent Council
Minute
Wednesday 26th October 2016, 19:00
Kilrymont Road

1. Apologies received

Cllr Keith McCartney, Cllr Margaret Taylor, Cllr Tim Brett, Cllr Bill Connor, Claudia Ortiz, Callum MacLeod, Diane McGhie, Joanna Secker Walker.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

These were adopted - proposed by Lynn Christie and seconded by Sally Walker.

3. Matters arising (from meeting held 31/8/16)

- a) Payments confirmed for Duke of Edinburgh scheme (£1000) and the Department of Additional Support (£450)

Lynn Christie confirmed that the cheque has been passed to the school and this item has been accounted for in the Treasurer's report.

- b) Payment confirmed for Ohio trip expenses (£412.08)

Lynn Christie confirmed that the cheque has been passed to the school and this item has been accounted for in the Treasurer's report.

- c) Exam conditions in South St and possible use of low turbulence air conditioning units

Brian Thomson has sent over the name of the company he dealt with previously for reference and this will be reviewed by Kenny Wishart.

- d) Letter to Derek Brown, Head of Education at Fife Council

Susan prioritised the need for an inspection visit and wrote to Derek regarding this in her first letter. Date was agreed and is covered in the next agenda point. A follow up letter was then sent to cover the outstanding points and no reply has been received at this stage.

- e) Date of inspection visit to be confirmed with Derek Brown and Ken Gourlay from Fife Council

The inspection took place today (26/10/16) and attendees were - Susan Simpson, Andy Primmer, Derek Brown (FC), Allan Paterson (FC), three senior pupils at South Street and three junior pupils at Kilrymont. Andy gave a short update and emphasised that the pupils involved were a real credit to the school.

In summary:

- The visit covered both the Kilrymont and South Street buildings;
- Most of the summer maintenance work was targeted at Kilrymont with the carpets, toilets & IT, but South Street also benefited from some new carpeting and painting;
- There are still several issues to build into the new plan and these include variable heating, windows, blinds & roofing.

Fife Council will now review the findings and formulate a viable plan.

4. Office-holder reports

a) Chair

Susan raised the point about how pupil support time is currently allocated on the basis of free school meals and this may not be the best formula to use, as Madras will lose out to other areas across Fife. Marie-Noel asked if we had an alternative proposal to suggest and Angela Robertson responded with a view that it could be simply be based on support needs within the school. Anna Moss then continued this discussion to enquire about identification and standard testing.

It was agreed that Susan would write to Shelagh McLean (Interim Executive Director for Education & Children's Services at Fife Council) suggesting that the approach taken to assess demand in Madras should be reviewed.

Action: Susan to write to Shelagh McClean at Fife Council.

b) Treasurer

Lynn circulated her report at the meeting and a copy is attached as Appendix 2. Cheques have been paid to the school and the remaining balance is £2701.24. The change to account signatories has been submitted for processing.

As we are approaching the Christmas period Lynn suggested that an email goes to all parents encouraging them to utilise Easy Fundraising where possible. This is a website where a % of any spend is paid to the school. This was agreed and email to be issued via the school office.

Action: Lynn to contact school office and arrange for comms to be issued about Easy Fundraising.

c) Secretary

Barry highlighted that Georgiana Mazilu had now taken over management of the website (www.madrasboard.org.uk) from Graham Kirby and that thanks to Graham would be recorded to acknowledge his long-term support in this area.

5. Rector's report and school repair costs (Angela Robertson, Deputy Head)

Apologies from Mr McClure as the primary school roadshows have started and this evening he is in Newport. Angela gave a brief overview of how the school year was progressing and how even at this early stage parents will be receiving some indicators relating to performance. Tracking is ongoing and full reports will be available in due course.

Madras also has an active programme of social and charitable activities and these include:

- Talent show, 27/10;
- Shoebox and gift bag donations for the elderly;
- Toy drive.

The school quality plan is at the final draft stage and will soon be agreed with Fife Council before posting on the school website. As Mr McClure explained at the last meeting, the 5 main priorities for the year are:

- Broad/general education in years 1-3;
- Focus on maths/numeracy and link this in with primary school education to tackle STEM subjects earlier and build confidence;
- Leadership of learning - CIPD for staff;
- Employability skills;
- Learning and teaching across the school.

Third year pupils will now have the opportunity to meet with a career advisor and participate in interview practice.

All departments are reviewing areas for improvement with the aim of raising attainment levels for all. Some changes may have marginal gains but these are still worthwhile for pupils/staff and can be realised with some additional effort and encouragement.

Fifth year pupils may be learning to drive this year and they will have the opportunity to participate in the safety campaign 'safe drive, stay alive'.

Mr Wishart recently hosted a visit to the University English department to hear about current research projects and this was very well received by the pupils.

The point about repair costs had been added to the agenda at the request of Mr McClure in order to highlight the challenge of meeting the annual budget. The example given was a repair required to the astro turf pitch. Previously the repair costs had been split three ways and paid by 1) the school, 2) Fife Council and 3) the community use fund. The community use area has no funds to cover costs now and charges are therefore being split 2/3 to the school and 1/3 to Fife Council. Staffing budgets have not been finalised yet and the additional charges for unbudgeted repairs can have a serious impact on the overall running costs of the school.

The use of community funds was queried by Marie-Noel as clearly charges are being made for use and income is generated (e.g. the Colts), so where is this money going

and do they have a surplus? Brian Thomson offered to take this point back to Fife Council and Susan will include in her letter to Shelagh McLean.

Mr Wishart also highlighted the budget challenge and tight level of staffing as having a potential knock-on effect in other areas. This year the school sent approx. 60 requests for remarking and of these 12 were successful. Charges are currently paid by Fife Council, but if this changed then the budget would come under further pressure. The charges are £29.99 for a standard remark and £39.99 for a priority remark.

Sally - Nat 4 papers were sent out recently but there was no mention of certificates.

Angela - These are sent to the SQA over August/Sept and the system does catch up later in the year when updated certificates will be printed and sent.

Action: Brian Thomson to take the question of community use charges & budget challenge back to Fife Council and Susan to include as part of her letter to Shelagh.

6. AOB

a) Seatbelts on buses

Jonathan O’Riordan raised the point of safety on school buses and how in his view the routes around NE Fife should be treated as rural, with a requirement for seatbelts to be in place and used.

Sally - Similar point was reviewed recently by Tayport Community Council and conclusion was that if seatbelts are in place then they should be used.

Dorothea Morrison advised that the requirement for seatbelts was not part of the tender specification when transport contracts were last awarded.

Brian Thomson offered to take this question up with Fife Council and clarify if the urban v rural classification made a material difference to our safety requirements.

Action: Brian Thomson to contact Fife Council about the provision and use of seatbelts on school buses within NE Fife.

b) PCs left switched on

Observation by Brian Thomson that as we are striving to cut costs it seems unusual to always see the PC monitors left powered on in this room.

c) South Street canteen

Question from Brian Thomson about whether this area was reserved for 6th year pupils? Mr Wishart advised that it was very much a shared space for years 4-6 but there was a tendency for it to be frequented by the 6th years.

d) Website

Barry Millar advised that Georgiana has updated the basic information of the website and there is now an opportunity to review the general appearance along with the main content. Any suggestions for updates or amendments can be sent directly to him in the first instance.

e) Provision of lockers and coat hooks

Question raised by Andy Primmer and Susan Simpson about whether we have enough lockers available to pupils. This was also highlighted as part of the inspection visit as pupils often have to leave jackets and bags on the floor. Can be classed as a maintenance issue and Susan to check if it can be covered under the new maintenance plan.

f) Assessment timetable & S4 Tests

A few questions were raised about the accuracy and completeness of the timetable posted on school website as some assessments had been omitted and some dates were incorrect. Agreed that the information will be reviewed for accuracy, updated on the website and notified to parents by way of an email or text.

Georgiana queried the upcoming tests for S4; there is some confusion over which tests are prelims and which are A/B tests, as well as the confirmed assessment dates. Hugh Watson commented on this point and confirmed that a timetable with full information would be forthcoming.

Susan asked if dates for the Nat 5 prelims in January could be confirmed as only dates for higher prelims were identified on the school calendar. Also, could an email be sent out informing parents of the senior assessment directory as not all parents look at the school website for this information.

Action: School management team to review the information and update before advising parents that it is available online. Confirmation of prelims and A/B tests in November for S4. Dates confirmed for S4 prelims in January. Email to parents of senior school pupils to let them know about the assessment directory and where it can be found.

7. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 25th January 2017

Meeting closed at 20:05.

Appendix 1: Attendance List October 2016

Parents

Susan Simpson, Chair
Lynn Christie, Vice-Chair and Treasurer
Barry Millar, Secretary

Sally Walker
Rowena Kyle
Anna Moss
Andy Primmer
Paul Brown
Georgiana Mazilu
Jonathan O'Riordan
Marie-Noel Earley
Heather Moffitt
Fiona Day

Teaching Staff

Angela Robertson, Deputy Head Teacher
Kenny Wishart, Deputy Head Teacher
Hugh Watson, Deputy Head Teacher

Local Councillors

Brian Thomson
Dorothea Morrison

Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report

**Madras College Parent Council
Treasurer Report
26 October 2016**

	Amount (£)
Opening Balance (31/8/16)	4563.32
Income from 31/8/16 – 26/10/16	0
Contribution to cover shortfall in fundraising for Ohio 2016 School Trip	412.08
Contribution to School' Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme	1000
Contribution to the School's Department for Additional Support (DAS)	450
Total Expenditure	1862.08
Balance as at 26/10/16	2701.24

- Change to Account signatories submitted to Bank for processing
- Transfer of administration for the Easy fundraising account complete
- I would like to circulate an email to all parents encouraging them to make all online purchases through Easy Fundraising where at all possible, given that we are into Christmas purchases season. Full instructions will be provided. Is this possible?

Lynn Christie
Treasurer
26/10/16