

## Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023

7pm Upper Library

Present: Sally Mcneish, Olivia Macpherson, Mark Summers, Kerry Spence, Paul Barber, Kate Shiner, Thorfinn Johnston

Apologies: Caz Lourie, Lian Brown, Dennis Dounaev

Adoption of previous minutes:

AGM August and EGM June.

Proposed TJ seconded KS

New clerk:

SM introduces Kate Brown clerking this meeting and **will confirm if she will continue at a rate of approx. £50 a meeting.**

Fereday project:

Anonymous parent attended council meeting to raise concerns about the Fereday Project – purpose and scale of the project, perceived pressure on parents to complete it, is it still relevant after 30+ years of running?

Council discussion generally agreed that the project is ambitious for S2, that it's a valuable project when done correctly and promotes universal skills such as research. Orcadian parents feel pressure to compete, although this is cultural and not promoted by the school, and often complete the project for their children whereas parents who have moved into Orkney feel less pressure. Suggested changes included moving the deadline date away from holiday times, giving more support to pupils in school along with time to collate their research, adding guidance about different potential formats etc. Council agreed the principle of the Fereday Project is good but the guidelines could use clarification. The current S2 will continue as usual but the topic will be revisited by the council in January, for potential changes to be made before next year's projects.

OM thanked the parent for attending and highlighting the issues, on behalf of the council.

**PB to research current school guidance with history department.**

**SM to talk to chair of KGS parent council about their opinions.**

Review of S1 Welcome Evening:

It was felt that the S1 parents evening went well; the smaller venue made people come together. Breaking down volunteering into smaller tasks led to more people signing up. Some new parents plan to attend although were unable to make tonight's meeting. SM advised that Caz Lowrie had made PowerPoint to promote awareness of Parent Council. It will be laminated and available for display at school events.

It was discovered that some S1 parents did not receive the email and therefore were unaware of the welcome evening. MS advised that parents with shared custody did not always get information as emails and letters tended to go only to one parent.

Council agreed that school communication with parents needs to improve.

**PB suggested that a weekly update on the school website and Facebook page would provide short, frequent information for parents.**

**OM to check with office regarding the failure to email all S1 parents.**

**PB will check with office that information should go to all parents unless there is specific reason not to inform one party.**

Senior Phase Parents Evening:

This will be on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November from 4.30pm – 7.30pm with set-up from 4pm. Tea and coffee will be offered for free, while baking will be charged. Parents should be reminded to bring cash. The possibility of a card reader was raised, for future of events, and can be discussed in later meetings. Last year's Whatsapp group for volunteers needs to be updated as data protection and consent is out of date.

**TJ and KSh to set up a Parent Council stall.**

**SM and KS to take it down at the end.**

**SM, KS, KSh and TJ to provide baking.**

**SM to contact volunteers from sign-up sheet.**

**SM to contact Lynne Leitch regarding use of the urn.**

**SM to speak to CL to get a float.**

Leavers Hoodies:

Council agreed in principle to contribute to funding of Leavers' Hoodies for next year. **Financial details to be discussed in January.**

Head Teacher Update:

See attached

Parent Council Shared Digital Location:

Proposed shared drive/secure website for minutes, documents, funding etc. that council members could access with password. Agreed in principle.

Any Other Competent Business:

MS concerned by potential Halloween "Devilment". PB could send message out via bulletin and assembly but unsure if this might encourage devilment. Not something the school can control.

Reinstating Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme. PB advised that staff shortages make this difficult immediately but would like to offer DofE to wider group of pupils: Younger groups can be flexible from the New Year, exam groups would hold expeditions in June.

Parent Council keen to encourage parents to come and raise issues. Specific age-group reps not currently required, and there is no representation for S3, S4 or S6. Groups of parents could be encouraged to attend 1 meeting each per year.

Time and Date of Next Meeting:

**SM to talk to CL re Primary Winter Fair on 11<sup>th</sup> November**

Planning meeting may be required.

**Whatsapp poll will be held,**

Possible dates for next meeting 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> November.