

Annual Report 2011-2012.

Introduction

Welcome everybody and thank you for attending tonight. Special welcome to Lewis Paterson who is taking over from Pauline Walker during her maternity leave. AGM's can sometimes be a bit long and drawn out and the aim of this evening is to prove that they do not have to be!

I will talk for a short while on what the PC is all about and some of the things that we have been up to during the last year. Then Mike Brooks, police liaison, then our quiz.

It's the job of the Parent Council to represent the views of parents of all children who attend the School. The aim is to work in partnership with the school to deal with any issues that might affect school life for the children attending and /or their parents. There are different ways of getting involved and the Parent Council is always interested in hearing from parents.

Hopefully have to use this bit! - Anybody new that is attending for the first time tonight might consider becoming a member and attending regular meetings or you can get involved for a limited time to deal with a specific issue. Don't run away at the end of tonight – please stop to have a chat and let us know what you think of tonight's meeting.

Membership

We are fortunate to have three new members who have been attending recent meetings.

We lost the services of our longstanding co-opted member Bob Perry. Bob had served the School for many years through the School Board and Parent council. Unfortunately Bob's work commitments meant he could no longer support the School as he would wish.

Bob's Place has been taken by Andrew Gray-Muir who has no association with the School but wishes to add his support to it.

Another long standing member representing staff, Audrey Gillan, also stood down. I'd like to thank Audrey for the contribution she made. Currently the staff are represented by Ashleigh Kennedy, Chris Hume and Heather Livingstone

We have also been fortunate this year to have a Pupil Member. Lauren Burnett takes an active part and keeps the Parent Council updated on the activities of the Pupil Council and we have offered our support to the Pupil Council should they ever need it.

Publicity

We have continually tried to raise the profile and awareness of the Parent Council.

We have started a Parent Council FACEBOOK page - although we need someone with a bit of expertise to allow us to put it to more use.

In return for publicity through advertising in the programme we donated some of our funding to the School show production of FAME.

We put forward a trophy for 'Parent Council Team of the Year'. Parents, Pupils and staff were asked to nominate teams. The votes were cast on Survey Monkey and the first recipients with their name on the trophy this year are the 'eco team'

We have used the Schools e-mail and text contacts with Parents to publicise meetings and other events.

We also have a suggestion box which is situated in the entrance hall.

Finance

We have continued to receive financing from the city of Edinburgh council. I'd like to thank Ian for his continued work as treasurer. The audited accounts for each year can be found in our section of the School web site

We have continued to top up payments to our Clerk so that she receives £50 per meeting

This year we have had the services of Rachel Matheson a learning assistant at the School as Clerk and I'd like to thank her for her hard work.

Issues

The major issue has been the Management restructuring that High Schools in Edinburgh have faced.

We were heavily involved in opposing these changes. We had representatives at meetings attended by Parent Councils from throughout the City and at Parent Council Meetings here in the School with all our elected City of Edinburgh Councillors where we tried forcefully to explain our opposition. However we were unsuccessful and the resulting loss of a deputy Head Teacher and introduction of faculty departments we still believe cannot be good for the School.

This School will be losing a Deputy Head Teacher from Easter and as Parents we will have to carefully watch what affect this has on the running of the School.

Discussions have also been held regarding the cut back in allocation of Learning Assistants to the school. Councillor Bill Cook was very helpful in enabling us to get further explanation from the council regarding this.

We have also discussed the exam results and the positive destinations placements, which appears to be highly successful.

The local house building developments have also been raised. With a close watch being made on any new planning applications which fall within the catchment area.

The school receives updates on any imminent severe weather warnings - Snow Glow has been put in place to ensure that pupils could continue to work from home should the weather prevent them from attending school.

We have also received an update from the school on their letting targets and were amazed to *learn about the school actively marketing the premises and obtaining lets for wedding feasts and* charity dinners. Well done to those involved in securing these lets.

The Staff have been able to raise issues via their representative regarding the loss of the 3 day activities programme and Rapid Response for 1st year pupils. The Head Teacher

explained the reasoning behind this cutback and the need to ensure that all future school trips are purely educational.

Achievements

In the past year a major achievement of the Parent Council has been to instigate the setting up of closer links between the School and the Safer Neighbourhood Police team. It was clear that that no formal link existed between the two. Assisted by Cllr Hart meetings were arranged which the Head Teacher and the local Police Inspector attended and a mutually beneficial way of working was put in place. This was a real example of how important the Parent Council voice can be and evidence that it is listened to.

As a result of this we have been very lucky to have had the services of P.C. Carol Menzies, who has been present in the school on a regular basis and has been working with the pupils. Carol has also been great at attending our meetings and providing us with updates on her work within the school. Carol is no longer working with us as we now have been allocated a School Link Officer. Mike Brook has been working within Liberton High School for the last few years and he is now going to be working with Gracemount High School as well.

Mike has kindly agreed to give us some insight into his role within the school and to help us try to understand cyberbullying. He will be talking to you shortly.

Next steps

Increase membership,

How to increase membership

Communicate better

We will listen to any suggestions!

Thanks

I must thank everyone for their participation and help over the past year. Thanks must go to our local councillors who make the time to attend our meetings, raise questions on our behalf and come back with answers. Also thanks to Kenny MacAskill, MSP who has attended our last few meetings and has pledged his assistance in fighting our schools corner when required and helping divert youngsters through various projects such as youth boxing.

Most of all our thanks must go to Pauline Walker. We wish her all the best and promise that we will all try to look after her school while she is off!