

GRACEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL

PARENT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

HELD ON 27TH APRIL 2010

Present:

Ken Gregor	<i>Chair</i>
Stephen Rafferty	<i>Deputy Head Teacher</i>
Gwen McLeod	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Ian Duncan	<i>Parent Member (Treasurer)</i>
Lesley Gibson-Eagleshan	<i>Parent Member</i>
Christopher Hume	<i>Staff Member</i>
Ashley Christie	<i>Acting Clerk</i>

Ian passed around copies of the Annual accounts before meeting officially began.

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Ken welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from Audrey Gillan, Staff Member (Christopher Hume was representing staff), Ashleigh Kennedy, Clerk and Margaret Ozturk, Parent Member.

Ken introduced Ashley Christie who was standing-in as Clerk for Ashleigh Kennedy and also Stephen Rafferty who was standing-in for Pauline Walker, Head Teacher.

2. Minutes from previous meeting

One change was made to the minutes of 15 March 2010. Audrey's name does not appear. However, Ashleigh was aware of this and has amended the master copy.

Matters arising from previous minutes:

a) Ken confirmed he had written to Maggie Bisset thanking her on behalf of the Parent Council for her commitment to the School and had received a reply indicating that Maggie was feeling quite emotional about leaving.

b) Ian indicated he had spoken to Susan Hall and she was still keen to be a member of the Parent Council but was unable to attend this meeting due to prior commitments but hopes to attend in future.

c) Ken advised he had been in contact with Bob Perry who had been unable to attend recent meetings due to work commitments but was keen to remain as co-opted member.

3. Report from Chair

a) Depute Head Teacher (DHT) appointment

Ken confirmed that the DHT Short list interviews had taken place on the 16th of March and that Stephen Rafferty had been appointed.

The interview panel had consisted of Pauline, Sharon Muir (QIO), Ken and Donald McDonald (HT Liberton High).

Ken indicated that the Parent Council had previously discussed the issue of internal appointments however he confirmed the best candidate had been appointed and Donald McDonald had commented that this was a compliment to the strength of the School.

Stephen is to take up his new post on 4th of May.

Ian expressed his view that there was a good mix of males and females in the Management Team

b) Curriculum for Excellence

Ken advised that the additional in-service day to support Curriculum for Excellence has been confirmed as August 18th 2010.

Stephen advised that Teaching Unions were expressing concern about implementation of Building the Curriculum 5 as it was still not clear how assessment was to be carried out.

Ken produced booklets and posters he had been sent as Chair of the Parent Council from the Scottish Government.

Concern was expressed at the usefulness of these documents and the cost at this time of budget cuts.

Ian was given one of the posters to take as he wanted to take this matter up with his MSP.

c) Budget Cuts

Ken advised that he had been informed by the CEC Parental Involvement Unit that the payment Ashleigh would get for the previous meeting had been reduced to £40 as the claim had been submitted in the new CEC financial year.

Ken advised that a cheque for £10 has been sent to the CEC from the Parent Council to ensure that Ashleigh would get paid £50 for the previous meeting.

Gwen asked if it would be possible to top up the Clerk payment to £50 from Parent Council funds. Ken intimated that as the funds are to be used for Communicating and Consultations with Parents, as preparation of accurate and concise minutes of meetings were part of that he could see no problem if the Parent Council agreed. Ian voiced his concern that there may be income tax and National Insurance implications for the Parent Council.

It was agreed Ian would write to the CEC to voice the concerns of the Parent Council at the treatment of the Clerk and the CEC financial year rules.

Ken concluded by advising he had apologised to Ashleigh for the delay in receiving her payment. He will check with the Parent Involvement Unit on how appropriate it would be to top-up Clerk Payments from Parent Council funds.

d) Catchment Changes

Ken confirmed that the Draft Catchment Change proposals which Pauline had distributed at the last meeting were now official and a public meeting to discuss the issue would be held on 26th of May at 7pm at Gilmerton Primary School.

Ken distributed a draft of an objection he intended to lodge and copies of the objection Pauline had lodged. Ken asked for any one who had suggestions of changes or additions to his objection to let him know within the next 10days to that it can be officially lodged.

Ken explained what was included in the proposal and outlined his objections to it.

It was the view of the Parent Council that catchment areas of both High Schools remain the same and that this proposal was conceived by the Children and Families Department for ease of Management following the closure of Burdiehouse Primary and has no educational benefit.

Ian suggested setting up a website that Parents could access to fill in a pro forma document that they could use to send in an objection.

It was pointed out that getting web site information to Parents could be difficult. Ian suggested members of the Parent Council could hand out letters to Pupils for their Parents with the information or the Parent Council could fund a mail shot to all Parents.

Ken suggested that this was unnecessary as all Pupils had been issued with a simplified version of the Proposals which contained information on how to provide comments.

Ken concluded by reminding members of the public meeting and as he is unable to attend asked for other members to attend, Ian said he will attend and Gwen and Lesley both hoped they would be able to also.

At this point Lesley apologised and excused herself from the meeting.

e) Dates of Meetings for next year.

Members agreed that the current practice of holding meetings on Monday and Tuesday evenings had most agreement.

It was agreed to hold next years meetings spaced throughout the School year taking into account of the length of each term.

Ian suggested that a date chosen close to the end of the financial year could cause difficulty with payment to the Clerk.

Ken decided that concern over the financial year was taking over from important Parent Council business and the necessity to hold meetings that were appropriately spaced. Ken advised that dates should be arranged on that basis and he would take full responsibility if it results in any financial impact.

Dates for next year were agreed as follows:

Meeting	Date
1.	Monday 23 rd August 2010
2.	Tuesday 12 th October 2010
3.	Tuesday 3 rd December 2010
4.	Monday 7 th February 2011
5.	Tuesday 26 th April 2011
6.	Monday 20 th June 2011

4. Report from Treasurer

Ian took members through the Annual Parent Council Accounts which had been audited. Members agreed that the Accounts were accurate.

Ian suggested a copy of the Annual Accounts is placed in the Parent Council notice board, Stephen to try and arrange.

Ken asked that Ian pass on the Parent Councils thanks to his neighbour who audited the accounts. Ken concluded by thanking Ian for his work on the accounts throughout the year.

5. Report from Pupil Member

Becky began by reporting that the pupil council have split into groups to tackle various issues around the school and raising awareness of things the school are involved with. One group, for example is the Charity group, who are working on raising awareness of the charities that the School are currently working with.

Becky also informed us that the Health Club is currently dealing with various issues surrounding school meals. The dining hall cannot hold all of the pupils and therefore, a large number of pupils go to the local shops for their lunch. Becky reported that the pupil council intend to approach the shops to try to get them to provide healthier options. Becky also informed us that some of the pupils go to the shops because they are cheaper than school lunches. The health club have spoken to Caroline, the cafeteria manager, regarding this particular issue and she explained that Amey has to be strict with their menu in order to reach their quota. Also, Amey must meet council guidelines and Amey will only provide the minimum of what is expected of them. Becky also informed us that there are currently in excess of 150 pupils who are entitled to free school meals but only a small percentage of these pupils actually claim them. Caroline had explained to the health club that she is struggling to meet what is expected of her from Amey.

Ken closed by thanking Becky for her report and it was agreed that it was good that the pupil council were doing something about these issues and if the Parent Council can help or support in anyway they were available to do so.

6. Report from Head Teacher *(Stephen Rafferty delivering report on behalf of Pauline)*

a) PT Guidance and P.E. appointments

Stephen reported that Scott Roger has taken up his appointment as PT of Guidance and will be guidance teacher for Lewis house.

Jonathan Else has been appointed as PT for P.E in place of Stephen. Stephen suggested that although Jonathan is quite young and has not been at Gracemount for very long he has a good background in Rugby coaching and has shown that he has a good pedigree as a leader. Stephen did advise that this does mean that there is a vacancy for a PE teacher. Currently Pauline is assessing the best way to fill this position.

b) PT Dance

Stephen reported that due to the success of the Dance Academy a new position of a PT in dance was being created. Kirsty had done a great with the Dance Academy and the dance shows have

taken GHS by storm. Stephen acknowledged that, before the Dance Academy few girls excelled in P.E.

On a related note, Gwen reported that there might be an opportunity in projects funded by the Scottish Arts Council as part of a joint initiative with Learning Teaching Scotland, called Co-Create. Gwen suggested that the Y-Dance programme may be of interest to the School and we have used them before. There is a possibility that this would be of interest to higher dance as, although we now have the skills to run this, it could be helpful to bring in additional support for Kristy.

c) Bursars and Business Managers

Stephen advised that there were concerns about rumours circulating that proposed cost savings may remove the posts of Bursars and Business managers in Schools. This is a worrying proposal as Gracemount High School is purposely a managerial led school. Ken requested that Pauline keep the Parent Council apprised of the situation as the Parent Council were fully aware of the work that the Business Manager and Bursar do for the School.

Ian proposed that the Parent Council take action and write to the CEC now.

As this possibility is still only a rumour it was felt that the Parent Council should wait until there is firmer evidence of this policy before considering a response.

Stephen reiterated that both Pauline and he would keep the Parent Council informed.

7. Issues from:

a) Staff

Chris reported that Audrey Gillan has advised that a drugs awareness event for Parents and Pupils is to take place in May.

The issue of how to keep Parents informed was raised. It was suggested by the guidance department that parents could be contacted via e-mail to inform them of their child's progress.

Ian raised the point that some parents, such as he, do not use computers. Ken suggested that he believed a least 90% of parents have access to e-mail. The point was also raised that GLOW groups can be used to inform parents.

Ken asked what the simplest way to collect parents email addresses might be. Ian indicated that some parents may not wish to be contacted via email.

Chris suggested that, in order to keep in line with data protection, we could issue a letter similar to that of personal detail updates that has a section for email addresses and an opt-in, opt-out tick box. It was also suggested that it might be possible to send all parents a text requesting an email address that would only require a one-off response.

Stephen advised that this was an issue the Pauline was taking very seriously and there would be a drive on improving parent communications.

b) Pupils

There were no issues from Pupils.

c) Parents

Ian began by telling us that there had been some complaints that the schools communication is not particularly good. One of the complaints was that parents never know when school football events will be. An additional complaint was that the school concert was recently cancelled. Ian heard that this was due to a lack of parent interest. He, however, felt that this was a “chicken and egg” situation, explaining that the lack of parent interest could have been a result of poor communication from the School. He suggested that the school ought to make sure that all events are clearly marked on the calendar. The point was also raised that the school newsletter does work but a more regular update of school events would be helpful.

Chris intimated that this is another scenario in which email communication would make getting this information to parents simpler.

8 Publicity and Recruitment

Ken reminded everyone to look out for potential members.

9 Report from Sub-committee

Gwen gave a report of the suggestions resulting from the sub-committee meeting to discuss the format of the forth coming AGM

It is suggested that the AGM could be included into a School information evening. Gwen indicated that this could be a good way to try to recruit more parent members. She also suggested that by advertising the AGM as an information event we would be able to access a wider parent-body. The event should be used to let Parents know the various ways for them to be involved with the School such as the events team or bringing their individual skills to the School. Flyers could also be handed out at this event appealing to parents for their participation. For example, *can you help out with..?*

Ken explained that including the AGM in this way would tie-in with things that parents respond to, such as the information evening. It would also allow Parents and staff meet each other informally.

Ken and Gwen will arrange a meeting with Stephen to work out some details.

Ian suggested that flyers could also be utilised at parent’s evenings to give parents an opportunity to write down any issues they may have. It may also be an opportunity to collect up-to-date email addresses. Perhaps we could get the seniors help to canvas this at parent’s evenings. It was recognised that this may be difficult to co-ordinate that with parents busy trying to get to their various appointments.

This topic was closed in agreement that the AGM should be an excellent opportunity to bring parents together and help to get them more involved in the school.

10. AOCB

Gwen advised that she will contact Audrey Gillan with details of the Co-create project 'Sow And Grow Everywhere' which may be of use in the Healthy School Scheme.

11. Date of Next Meeting

AGM June 14th 2010