

**GRACEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL
PARENT COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF MEETING
HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER 2008

Present:

Jim Cassidy	<i>Head Teacher</i>
Ken Gregor	<i>Parent Member (Chair)</i>
Ian Duncan	<i>Parent Member (Treasurer)</i>
Gillian Fitzpatrick	<i>Parent Member</i>
Lesley Gibson-Eaglesham	<i>Parent Member</i>
Arthur Hopkinson	<i>Parent Member</i>
Gwen McLeod	<i>Parent Member</i>
Laura Kelly	<i>Staff Member</i>
Bob Perry	<i>Co-opted Member</i>
Audrey Gillan	<i>Principal Teacher</i>
Caroline Sanderson	<i>Clerk</i>

1. Welcome and Apologies

Ken Gregor welcomed everybody to the meeting, including Audrey Gillan who was attending for Item 4. No apologies had been received.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2008 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Draft School Session Dates 2010/11 (Item 7)

Ken had pointed out the error in the dates to the Children and Families department and it had been corrected.

4. Visit by Audrey Gillan

Ken introduced Audrey Gillan, Head of the Department of Home Economics, who had come to talk about health promotion. The school had already achieved Stage 1 as a Health Promoting School and hoped to submit for Stage 2 in March 2009.

A survey of pupils' opinions was being conducted, using Tiree house as a sample of the whole school population. The results of this would be compared with a similar survey carried out 3 years ago of pupils in Lewis house. Parents of pupils in Tiree would also receive a questionnaire.

It was hoped to involve parents in other ways as well. Parents with relevant expertise were already coming into school to talk to pupils and any more would be welcome. Gwen said that she would be interested in becoming involved in the area of mental and emotional health. Bob Perry said that he could arrange for someone from the Blood Transfusion Service to come and talk to the pupils about donating blood.

Gwen and Bob to contact Audrey Gillan (Ken to supply e-mail address).

5. Report from Chair

Curriculum for Excellence

Jim had agreed to talk about the Curriculum for Excellence at the next meeting.

IT Overcharge Costs

Ken had written to the Councillors for the Gilmerton and Liberton Ward about the fact that the school had still received no refund after being overcharged for the IT refresh programme and IT network connections in 2006/07. A partial refund of £2,641.42 of the total overcharge of £5,422.42 had now been received.

School Budget Cuts and the Edinburgh Parent Councils Network

The City of Edinburgh Council had announced further budget cuts for education next year (2009/10) and the newly formed Edinburgh Parent Councils Network was compiling a dossier about the impact of this year's budget cuts on schools. This dossier would be presented to Councillor Marilyne MacLaren, Convener for Education, and Gillian Tee, Director of Children and Families, at a meeting on 17th December.

Position of Vice Chair

Ken wished to make members aware that there was still a vacancy for the position of Vice Chair.

Constitution Change

This item would be deferred until a future meeting.

Recruitment and Selection Training

Gwen had attended a recruitment and selection training course since the last meeting.

6. Report from Treasurer

Ian reported that there had been no expenditure since the last meeting and the current bank balance was £588.49.

7. Report from Head Teacher

Budget Cuts

In the current year (2008/09) the school had been asked to sustain a budget cut of 1.5%, amounting to £42,000. The school had now been informed that there would be a further budget cut of 2% in 2009/10, amounting to £60,000. This was supposed to be achieved by efficiency savings, but in practice there was very little flexibility in the budget because the main element was fixed staffing costs. Jim tabled a paper showing various possible scenarios for implementing this cut.

It was proposed that the 4 local Councillors should be invited to the next meeting to show them the effect of the budget cuts. Ken would also write to Nigel Griffiths MP and Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Ken to invite Councillors to next meeting and write to MP and MSP.

Staffing

Melissa Johnson, teacher of Modern Languages, who was currently on maternity leave had resigned and was returning to Canada. Kate Mountford, her temporary replacement, had been appointed to the permanent post.

Fire

A fire had started in a science storeroom at 1am on Friday 28th November. An investigation had taken place but failed to establish the cause of the fire. Fortunately only one area of the building had been badly affected, and Amey and the Edinburgh Schools Partnership had taken immediate action to make the 3 damaged classrooms ready for use later in the same day.

School Visits

Gillian Tee, Director of Children and Families, had visited the school recently and had been impressed by what she found. Maureen Watt, Minister for Schools and Skills, was due to visit on 11th December as part of the launch of a national initiative on attendance.

Outward Bound

A benefactor was proposing to donate £10,000 annually for 4 years to fund an outward bound leadership course for pupils at the school.

8. Publicity and Promotion

This item would be deferred until the next meeting. Members were asked to bring along any ideas for making parents more aware of the activities of the Parent Council.

9. Issues Raised by Parents/Staff/Pupils

Parents

Ian asked a question about the provision of notes for pupils by teachers. Jim replied that pupils were currently being invited to share their views about the learning process.

Staff

No issues were raised.

Pupils

No issues were raised.

10. Any Other Business

Lesley asked about the criteria for authorised and unauthorised absence. Jim replied that the school followed Council policy when deciding on individual cases.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 22nd January 2009 at 7.00pm