

**GRACEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL
PARENT COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF MEETING
HELD ON 22ND JANUARY 2009

Present:

Jim Cassidy	<i>Head Teacher</i>
Ian Duncan	<i>Parent Member (Treasurer)</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 (Acting Chair)</i>
Caroline Sanderson	<i>Clerk</i>

1. Welcome and Apologies

Bob Perry welcomed everybody to the meeting. He was acting as Chair in the absence of Ken Gregor because of a family bereavement. The Parent Council wished to record its condolences.

Apologies had been received from Gillian Fitzpatrick, Susan Hall and Susan Wilson. It was recognised that Thursday evening did not suit everybody and consideration would be given to varying the day of the week when planning the dates of meetings for next year.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2008 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Visit by Audrey Gillan (Item 4)

Bob was still trying to identify a suitable contact at the Blood Transfusion Service. Gwen would contact Audrey Gillan now that she had her e-mail address. Lesley said that she had sent details to Audrey Gillan of somebody who could talk to the pupils about oral health.

IT Overcharge Costs (Item 5)

Ian asked about an additional overcharge of £1,127.60 for 2007/08. Jim said he would give further information about this at the next meeting.

Budget Cuts (Item 7)

There had not been time to invite the local Councillors to this meeting but perhaps they could come to the next meeting.

4. Report from Chair

Bob reported on a proposal from Ken that the Parent Council should write to the local Councillors about the proposed budget cuts for 2009/10. The letter would include the following elements:

- express the concern of the Parent Council at the size of the cuts and the detrimental impact on the school;
- ask the Councillors how they intended to vote on the budget cuts at the City Council meeting on 9th February;
- invite the Councillors to attend the next meeting of the Parent Council.

Bob would draft this letter and let Jim see it before sending the final version to the Councillors.

Bob to draft letter to Councillors about budget cuts.

5. Report from Treasurer

Ian reported that the current bank balance was £588.74.

6. Report from Head Teacher

Attendance Rules

Jim tabled a paper detailing the official attendance rules, which defined authorised and unauthorised absence. Members felt that the accompanying standard letters were unsympathetic in tone and were not adaptable to every situation, but Jim said that the school was obliged to use them for legal reasons. He was planning to put together a booklet of advice for parents and could include an explanatory comment about this issue.

Staff News

Jim reported the recent death of Emma Webster, Educational Welfare Officer, at the age of 27 and the Council expressed its condolences to her family.

Heather Boag, one of the two Staff Members of the Parent Council, had decided to stand down. The Council wished to thank her for her contribution. Two other members of staff were interested in joining the Parent Council and one of them would be selected to take her place.

Fire Damage

Work had started on repairing the fire-damaged science store and it was expected to be ready for use again after the February break. The aftermath of the fire was having an impact on the science department but staff were trying to minimise the effect on examination preparations. There had been a delay regarding the insurance aspects, but this had now been resolved.

Break-in

There had been a break-in on 22nd January at 2.30am. Two projectors had been stolen and substantial damage had been done to 2 classrooms. The police were investigating the incident and Jim planned to talk to the pupils about it.

School Meals

The City Council was carrying out research into school meals, with a view to improving them, and wished to talk to a focus group of parents as well as pupils and staff. Caroline, Gwen, Lesley and Arthur volunteered to come into school at lunchtime on 28th January to take part in this survey.

Budget Cuts

Jim tabled a paper on the proposed budget cuts and their projected impact. The school faced a combined cut of 3.5%, which amounted to £100,000. This would be equivalent to losing 3 members of teaching staff and there would be a number of other negative consequences, such as bigger class sizes and scaling back of extra-curricular activities. Jim was due to meet Councillors Norma Hart and Ian Murray on 26th January to talk about the cuts.

7. Curriculum for Excellence

Jim gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Curriculum for Excellence. The school had its own interpretation of this, as it was felt that a more sophisticated model was needed to take into account the different requirements of a range of pupils, from the more able to vulnerable learners.

8. Publicity and Promotion

The “*South Edinburgh Echo*” newspaper planned to run a feature on the ministerial visit which the school had hosted in December.

The Parent Council had an obligation to seek ways in which to find out parents’ opinions and be representative of as many parents as possible. This issue would be kept on the agenda for future meetings.

Members to think of ideas for encouraging wider parent involvement.

9. Issues Raised by Parents/Staff/Pupils

No issues had been raised by any of these groups.

10. Any Other Business

Parent Membership

Arthur said that he would be standing down as a Parent Member at the end of the summer term, as his son would be leaving school.

Resignation of Clerk

Caroline announced that she was resigning as Clerk, so there would be a vacancy for this position. Bob thanked her for her services to the Parent Council and previously the School Board.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 2nd April 2009 at 7.00pm