

# GRACEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL

## PARENT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING  
HELD ON 10<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2008

Present:

Jim Cassidy	<i>Head Teacher</i>
Ken Gregor	<i>Parent Member (Chair)</i>
Morag Clarke	<i>Parent Member (Vice Chair)</i>
Ian Duncan	<i>Parent Member (Treasurer)</i>
Arthur Hopkinson	<i>Parent Member</i>
Laura Johnston	<i>Staff Member</i>
Caroline Sanderson	<i>Clerk</i>

1. Welcome and Apologies

Ken Gregor welcomed everybody to the meeting. There were no apologies.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Parent Council Budget (Item 5)

Ken had been told by the Parental Involvement Unit that there was no limit to the amount of funds which could be carried forward at the end of the financial year.

School of Ambition (Item 7)

Ken had written to Amey about the life-cycle costs in connection with the School of Ambition and had not received a reply yet, but the life-cycle cost of £2,500 on the external sign had now been withdrawn.

4. Report from Chair

Ken reported as follows:

### Parent Council Training

Parent Council training would generally be carried out by independent study rather than attendance at courses. The drawback of this was that there would be no opportunity to meet people from other schools, so 2 seminars would be held in early May which would give Parent Council members an opportunity for networking.

The exception to this would be Recruitment and Selection training, which would be offered as a formal course of 3 hours or alternatively 2 hours as a refresher course for those who had already received School Board training in this area.

*Ken to check if only parent members were eligible to attend training courses.*

### Parent Council Chairs Neighbourhood Meeting

Ken had recently attended a meeting of Parent Council Chairs from the Neighbourhood secondary schools (James Gillespie's, St Thomas of Aquin's, Boroughmuir, Liberton and Gracemount). Many issues were common to all the schools but the degree of parental involvement varied considerably among them.

### School Review Meeting with CEC

Ken had attended a meeting of the Educational Sub-Committee on Standards, together with Jim Cassidy, Pauline Walker and Kirsty McSporran, to look at how the school was following up on the School Review. The 3 main recommendations had already been substantially addressed.

### Scottish Parent Councils Association

The Scottish Parent Councils Association (formerly the Scottish School Board Association) had written to ask if the Parent Council wished to join the organisation for an annual fee of £45. It was decided not to take up this option.

### Children and Families Department Reorganisation

The Children and Families Department was currently under review, with the intention of making cutbacks in order to reduce the deficit. Jim tabled a summary of the budget cuts for 2008-2009.

### Parental Involvement

Ken proposed to issue a questionnaire to parents to find out how much they knew about the Parent Council and what issues were important to them. It was decided to carry this out on the night of the Fashion Show (24<sup>th</sup> April) and a prize draw would be held as an incentive to hand it in.

*Ken to speak to Maggie Bisset, organiser of the Fashion Show, about issuing a questionnaire. Ken also to provide a bottle of wine as a prize.*

## 5. Report from Treasurer

Ian Duncan reported that the current bank balance was £226.23, after tax had been refunded and further interest added. The accounts would need to be audited before the Parent Forum AGM.

## 6. Report from Head Teacher

Jim Cassidy reported as follows:

### Staffing

- Irene MacDonald had been appointed as Principal Teacher in Support for Learning.
- Jim Brown, Head of Science, had been appointed as Acting Depute Head Teacher while Pauline Walker was on maternity leave (2<sup>nd</sup> May to 28<sup>th</sup> September).

### School of Ambition

It had been announced that the School of Ambition programme would come to an end in 2010, but this would not affect the funding already awarded for the next 2 years.

### ICT

Ken had contacted BT regarding concerns about the ICT provision, such as the unreliability of the network and the fact that the school had been overcharged. Jim has opened up a dialogue with the Council and it was hoped that some resolution could be found for the problems experienced.

### Ogwini Visit

The recent visit to Ogwini High School had led to renewed interest in the partnership and another visit was planned for next year.

### Parking

Jim and Scott Mackenzie were preparing to write to staff to remind them of their responsibilities and which areas were prohibited for parking. They would also ask parents to observe a one-way system and drive very slowly and carefully in the school grounds.

## 7. Issues Raised by Parents

### School Trips

A parent had asked if it was necessary to issue a separate parental consent form for every school trip, or whether a form giving blanket permission for all trips could be issued at the start of the school year. The response was that the school preferred to have specific consent for each trip and also up-to-date medical information and contact details. However, it might be possible to print the 2 sheets back-to-back in future, thereby saving paper.

### Merit Awards

Ian asked about the criteria for the merit awards scheme. Revised letters would be issued shortly, as the whole system had just been reviewed. The thresholds for the various levels of awards (gold, silver and bronze) had been adjusted for the sake of a fairer distribution and consistency across subjects.

## 8. Issues Raised by Staff

### Health Promoting Schools

It was suggested that Audrey Gillan, Head of Home Economics, might attend the next meeting, to talk about Health Promoting schools and how to get in touch with parents about it.

### Attendance Information

It was pointed out that the information issued to parents about attendance no longer had a key to explain what the various types of absence were and not all parents would understand this.

*Jim to check if a key could be provided.*

## 9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

## 10. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at 7.00 pm (please note change of date)