

GRACEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL

PARENT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING
HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2007

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>
Bob Perry	<i>Co-opted 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 6 September 2007 were approved.

Caroline Sanderson to ask Scott Mackenzie to post the minutes on the school website.

3. Matters Arising

Co-opted Member (Item 2)

Bob Perry had accepted the invitation to join the Parent Council as a Co-opted Member.

4. Contact List

Caroline Sanderson had prepared a contact list for the Parent Council, showing telephone numbers and e-mail addresses or postal addresses as appropriate, which would be circulated to everybody.

Caroline to circulate the contact list when complete.

5. Report from Chair

Ken Gregor reported as follows:

Proposed Speed Limit

The Council was proposing to introduce a 20 mph speed limit at certain times of day on Captain's Road and Lasswade Road.

School Closures

An article had appeared in the "*Evening News*" on 30 October alleging that the Council was planning a new list of school closures. This had been denied by Marilynne MacLaren, Convener for Education, Children and Families.

Parent Council Communication

It was intended that the main channel of communication for the Parent Council would be electronic mail, with paper copies of documents for anyone who did not have an e-mail address.

Bank Account

Ian Duncan had opened an account with the Bank of Scotland to receive the Parent Council funding.

Ken to e-mail bank account details to the Parental Involvement Unit.

Open Evening

The school would be holding an Open Evening on 15 November.

Ken to organise representation from the Parent Council.

School Review

Ken, Ian and Bob had taken part in the School Review in October.

Cluster Meeting

Ken had attended a cluster meeting at Liberton High School on 1 November 2007.

6. Report from Head Teacher

Jim Cassidy reported as follows:

Parental Involvement

He had received a statement called "Parental Involvement – Next Steps" from Maureen Watt, Minister for Schools and Skills, which he circulated.

Update on School of Ambition

The school had spent around £130,000 so far on the School of Ambition programme, mainly on ICT infrastructure and staffing. It was planned to put up a large sign outside the school, subject to Amey/ESP approval.

There would also be a wall-mounted "School of Ambition" plaque from the Scottish government and this could be unveiled by a prominent local figure at a launch event.

CCP Bid

The bid to the Capital City Partnership had been successful and the school had been awarded £43,000 to support youngsters likely to leave school without proceeding to employment, education or training. About 15 pupils fell into this category each year and it was hoped to reduce this number substantially, benefiting both them and the community.

School Review

The 3 departments under review (Modern Languages, Physical Education and Home Economics) had all performed extremely well. It had been a useful exercise and good for staff morale. Jim would be meeting Sharon Muir, Quality Improvement Officer, the following week and any comments should be sent to him.

Ogwini Visit

A group of 5 pupils and 3 members of staff would be visiting Ogwini High School in February 2008. A local councillor would also accompany them, at her own expense. The appeal for money to sponsor pupils at Ogwini had so far raised over £1,000 and donations were still coming in. Scott Mackenzie was looking into the question of obtaining charitable status, so that tax could be reclaimed on donations.

7. Issues from Parents

Pupil Toilets

The toilet facilities for pupils were unsatisfactory, with broken locks due to vandalism, and supplies of toilet paper only available on request, because paper had previously been used to block toilets. The key to improving this situation lay in involving the pupils themselves, to try to find a sustainable solution. The Parent Council would discuss this again at the next meeting, to consider if it might usefully intervene with Amey.

8. Issues from Staff

Staff Toilets

As a knock-on effect of the above situation, there had been attempts by pupils to use the staff toilets instead. There was also a constant lack of soap and staff had to e-mail to request it.

Evening Classes

There had been complaints from teachers about the way that classrooms had been left by evening classes. For instance, possessions had been touched, boards had been written on and moved around. However, there was a need for give and take, as the evening classes were entitled to use

classroom equipment. School staff should not leave personal property in classrooms, as they were intended for communal use. Scott Mackenzie was in regular contact with those responsible for the evening classes, who responded in a positive way to any issues raised. Teachers with specific complaints should raise the issue through the School Management Chain.

Maths Classroom

An area was being used for teaching Maths which had not been designed as a classroom. There was only a low partition wall dividing this area from the corridor and as a result there were problems with noise and distraction during lessons. Amey had quoted £9,000 to build a full-height wall to convert it into an enclosed room, but the Edinburgh Schools Partnership had rejected this as an unreasonably high cost. The situation had currently reached stalemate and it was agreed that the Parent Council should lend its support to the school.

Ken to write to David Fenton, Head of Infrastructure, to say that the lack of a proper wall is detrimental to the pupils' education.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 17 January 2008 at 7.00 pm