

GRACEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING
HELD ON 10th September 2012



Present:

Lesley Gibson Eaglesham	Chair
Ken Gregor	<i>Depute Chair</i>
Ian Duncan	<i>Parent Member (Treasurer)</i>
Kevin McCabe	<i>Parent Member</i>
Lewis Patterson	<i>Acting Head Teacher</i>
<i>John Sode-Woodhead</i>	<i>Parent member</i>
<i>Lesley Warner</i>	<i>Parent member</i>
<i>Susan Gill</i>	<i>Parent Member</i>
Heather Livingstone	<i>Staff member</i>
Norma Austin Hart	CEC Labour councillor
Bill Cook	CEC Labour councillor
Nick Cook	CEC Conservative councillor
Kenny Macaskill	MSP SNP

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Lesley welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked our two new members for coming along. She then invited the council members to introduce themselves. Apologies were given on behalf of Andrew Graymuir, Gillian Fitzpatrick and Tom Buchanan.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

In item 4, page 2, the word cheque to be changed to BACS payment.

In list of those present, Norma Cook is to be changed to Norma Austin Hart.

3. Report from Chair

CCWP (Consultative Committee With Parents)

Over previous years the Liberton HS Parent Council Chair has been a representative on behalf of both themselves and Gracemount High

School. From now on this role will be shared by both Marion the new Parent Council Chair at Liberton and Lesley. A meeting is due to be held on 11/09 and Lesley asked if members had anything which they would like raised.

The low turnout for parents evening was suggested, with Lesley Warner asking if it was possible to move this event to another point in the year, to encourage attendance.

Susan Gill put forward the idea of bringing in an MBA student from one of the universities or colleges to focus a piece of research on the reasons for the low turn out and this idea was very well received by Lewis. Susan will supply Lewis with some details .

Lesley also added that usually the school budgets are discussed at the CCWP meetings towards November time, so if anybody on the council would like to make a specific point about what they want to see conserved when budget cuts are being made by schools, she would be happy to raise this.

4. Report from Treasurer

Ian advised that the current balance for the PTC is £957.49. He added that a donation of £217 had been received from BT, thanks to Ken applying to his place of work, on behalf of the PC.

Lesley mentioned the idea of looking into charitable status for the PC but Ken pointed out how complicated and challenging it can be to apply for and then maintain such a status.

The possibility of a cluster of schools applying together, in order to spread the cost and time, was suggested, but, again, it seemed this would not be likely to hold many benefits for the PC.

Ian has received a copy of the 2012 Parent Council Financial Guide. In previous years the clerk would be paid by the council but this will now be coming directly from the PC'S own account. Ian mentioned slight concerns about NI and taxes concerning this which he would report back on, should there be any issues, after reading the financial guide.

5. Report from pupil member

No pupil member was present, although Lewis was able to report that, Lauren would be present later if at all possible.

6. Head teacher's report

Exam results

Lewis was able to report that amongst the 4th years there had been a substantial increase in the number of pupils getting a standard grade in English and Maths. He also mentioned that the number of pupils achieving a foundation grade and the number achieving 5+ credit passes had increased, though those obtaining general had shown a slight dip.

The trend across 5th year was an overall decrease in grades. In 6th year there was an overall increase in the number of advanced-highers obtained.

- Kenny Mcaskill arrived at 7.40pm

Ken asked if Lewis could tell them how this stood up against other high schools, to which Lewis was able to respond that he had only just received the disk with that information and was therefore at the moment unable to comment. Ian asked whether any subjects had fared particularly badly with Lewis responding that he wasn't at liberty to discuss this but where there were issues he will be tackling them.

Heather Livingstone added that assertive mentoring pairing a 4th year pupil with a member of staff, had had a very positive impact on the results achieved.

Staffing

There is a long list of new staff beginning at Gracemount High School this term.

Management restructuring is at the final phase of being tied up now.

Anne Robertson has officially left the post of Head of Modern Languages. The post will be advertised once the pool of ex PTs has been referred to for suitable candidates.

Guidance and support for learning

Currently the school has 3 pupil support (PS) leaders and one support for learning (SFL) leader. Initially the SFL post had been offered to Anna Gray who declined in order to accept a post at Broughton. Covering the post temporarily is Morag Dickie. In the next week or two, an advert for the post of permanent SFL leader will be launched nationally.

End of Lewis's secondment

Pauline Walker will return as head of Gracemount High School on the 29th of October. Lewis wished to offer his thanks to all members of the PC for their support during his time in charge. When asked if he felt he had achieved any significant change during his time as leader, he added simply that within the short period he was here, he was looking simply not to drop the ball and keep everything running smoothly. He feels there is more of an air of settlement amongst staff and pupils now, following the changes during the year, and he is pleased about this.

7. Issues from Staff/Pupils/Parents

a. Staff

Heather Livingston reported no issues raised by staff. She was able to report that, in line with what Lewis had said, despite all the unsettled times, the staff are really being positive and powering through and things are getting better. She wished to offer heartfelt thanks to Lewis for all of the work he has done, during his time in the school, to help ensure this was the case.

Curriculum for Excellence is still adding more work to an already difficult period of time, but the feeling is that Gracemount is faring better than many schools, having put more into place in preparation for the changes which were to come. This has allowed a more natural progression.

Lewis agreed with this adding that as a secondary school they had been designated a number of extra in-services this year, to allow greater time to organise the transition to the new curriculum.

b. Pupils

No issues were raised by pupils.

c. Parents

Ken had received two emails from parents. The first was concerning the protocol when a pupil is off sick. Once the parent has phoned in to alert the school that their child will be off, is it then required that they give the child a note to back this up, on the child's return to school? Lewis explained that the policy for this would say yes and that this simply needs to be clarified for all parents and registration teachers. The suggestion was made, and well received, that perhaps office staff

could remind parents of the need for a note, when the parent makes the initial phone call.

The second email was concerning the goals on the football pitch. A parent reported that they were rusted and fell apart when moved. This falls within the remit of AMEY, rather than the school itself. Lewis had visited the pitches with Jonathan Else, the head of PE, and was able to report that whilst they weren't perfect they were in a workable condition and safe to use. He explained that every time they are used a dynamic risk assessment is made, by a member of the PE staff, as to whether or not they are safe to be used.

Kevin McCabe who also uses the pitches said that they were fine though one set could do with being re-welded. Susan Gill asked whether there was not some way in which they could further the process by contacting AMEY. Kenny Mcaskill offered to do this, as he felt the issue to be of great import. In addition Norma Austin Hart would contact Billy McIntyre at the CEC to clarify the position.

9 Any Other Business

School role

Ian asked for a report on the school role and Lewis answered that the role is 630 pupils with approximately 106+ first years. 650 is the maximum role possible within the school.

Celebration evening

This was highly commended by all parent members present and many thanks and commendations were offered to Lewis, the rest of the staff and Pupils for their hard work on this.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday the 19th of November 2012.