

**Minutes of the Grantown Grammar School Parent Forum  
General Meeting  
Held at the school on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

**Apologies**

Sally Pilkington  
Ene-Karmen Forsyth  
Jaci Douglas

**Present**

Giles Baker	Chair, Parent Council
Irene Carson	Head Teacher
Claire McGonigal	Depute Head Teacher
Ruaridh Ross	Depute Head Teacher
Karen Smith	Treasurer
Lindsay Coleman	Clerk
Debbie Strang	
Stuart Cockram	
Louisa Cockram	
Anne Sullivan	
Elaine Cullen	
Lynne Stephens	
Naomi Miles	
Zoe Cooke	
Vicky Cowan	
Liz Amphlett	

**Parent Forum Meeting:**

**1. Approval and adoption of the Annual Accounts**

Proposed by Debbie Strang  
Seconded by Anne Sullivan

**Parent Council Meeting:**

**1. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting**

Proposed by Karen Smith  
Seconded by Zoe Cooke

**2. Appointment of Vice Chair (School Dynamics)**

Ene is standing down due to ill health. Debbie Strang is to take her place.

Proposed by Karen Smith  
Seconded by Anne Sullivan

**3. Careers Fair**

Following on from the last Dynamics meeting it was decided to follow through with the plan to recruit representatives from business to come along to help at the Careers Fair planned for January/early Feb 2015. This will be discussed further at the next Dynamics meeting and a small group will push forward with this idea. Claire McGonigal

volunteered her husband to speak at the Fair. The next Dynamics meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May will now take place an hour earlier at 6pm to discuss this matter further. The item will be first on the agenda, those not wishing to discuss the careers evening can come a little later.

**Action: Claire to request a speaker**

#### **4. Proposed Constitutional changes**

A group had met earlier in the year and amended the Constitution in two ways. The first change puts a limit of 3 times that any person can be appointed for positions within the Parent Council.

The second change addressed the issue of potentially problematic Parent Council members. If a member is found to have a criminal conviction they will be asked to leave and if it is a prospective member, they will not be allowed to join the group. Scottish law also prohibits this in a charity.

Irene said that everyone who seeks to work with pupils has to have their criminal convictions disclosed and she felt it important that all office bearers are also 'disclosed'.

The Constitution says that anyone can come to a Parent Council meeting even if they are not a member, but only with the agreement of the other Council members.

The changes were proposed by Karen Smith and seconded by Vicki Cowan. The amendments as circulated will be proposed to the Parent Forum with a recommendation from the Parent Council that they are adopted. This will take place at the AGM in November.

#### **5. Matters from the Communications Sub-Committee**

Naomi Miles gave an overview of the group's work. The new PC website is live and all minutes are uploaded on the site. The blog works but the comments are currently having a few teething issues. Parents can now register to comment on the blog and these comments get moderated by the sub-committee, co-ordinated by Lynne Stephens. The Facebook page is doing well with links from that to the PC website and the school site. Notifications on this page can be emailed to people and these will include notifications of any circulars that go in the school bag.

A competition has been launched at the school with the S1's to design a logo for the website.

Naomi enquired about permission to use photos and Irene agreed to look into this further.

**Action: Irene**

#### **6. Matters from the Dynamics Sub-committee**

a) Careers Fair. Giles suggested Debbie Strang makes contact with Fiona Fraser, Chair for Nairn Parent Council and Irene suggested that the event could take place in Aviemore and perhaps be arranged jointly with Kingussie High School.

## **Action: Debbie**

- b) Constitutional changes – discussed above
- c) The police drugs event will happen in Kingussie before Grantown. However, there will be 3 talks taking place – Aviemore on 24<sup>th</sup> April, Grantown on the 28<sup>th</sup> April and Kingussie on the 15<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm which parents can go to. There will be talks by the Police, Drugs and Alcohol Forum, the NHS and others, and will be advertised soon.
- d) Giles mentioned that Lindsay is available to help Debbie when required.

## **7. Treasurer's Report**

The bank balance currently has funds of £12,704.31. There are outstanding cheques of £1300 leaving available funds of £11,260. Money has come in from the disco, donations, a Highland Council grant to pay for the Clerk, Gift Aid and the Raddery Trust. Money going out has gone to paying for newspapers for the school, the Clerk and £1200 towards new rugby strips. Unfortunately £960 of Gift Aid money may have to be returned to HMRC from the John Muir Award but Giles hopes to resolve this for further years. Irene mentioned that donations that come from the Former Pupils Club could come to the Parent Council as a donation.

## **8. Matters from Fundraising Sub-Committee**

Sally Pilkington has invited the group to her house for an informal night for discussions about fundraising. She will provide food and people are invited to bring drinks. The date was agreed to be Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March to arrive at 7.30pm for an 8pm start. Address is 104-106 High Street, Grantown. Please let Sally know if you can attend by email at [t-pilkington@sky.com](mailto:t-pilkington@sky.com)

## **9. Recurring expenditure funding policy: Renewal**

To summarise:

Transport for pupils -

Parent Council will give a grant of £2600 to go towards costs for extracurricular activities. It was also agreed that the school would outline average costs per pupil for all school trips and give these details in correspondence with parents, asking them for an open voluntary contribution to help with the huge costs that the school has with transport.

Last year the school spent £6600 on transport for curricular activities and £2605 on extracurricular activities.

Prizes and Ceremonies –

The Parent Council will again fund £1600 and it was agreed that they will continue to use Imrays and The Bookmark for cups, medals and prizes.

Affiliation and Competition Entry Fees –

Funding will increase to £450 as costs have significantly increased.

Newspapers

The Council will continue to provide £175 unless Irene is able to secure funding from Highlife Highland.

Kindle Software, Second Hand / Remaindered Books-

The funding for the existing Amazon account will remain at £200 per annum.

## **10. Funding Requests**

Firstly Giles went through requests from Rachel Knight, (Geography / Modern Studies dept), a teacher who has recently gone on maternity leave.

1. World Map wallpaper £39.47 plus varnish £20  
Proposed by Zoe Cooke, seconded by Karen Smith
2. 2 voice recorders - £39.90 each.  
Proposed by Zoe Cooke and seconded by Karen Smith
3. DVD called Arctic, £8.99 and set of 12 books at £2.81 each. Already approved.
4. Giant floor map of the world. Approx £400. It was agreed that the meeting was in favour but to wait until Rachel's return to work.

Claire McGonigal then requested on behalf of Frank the Janitor, £150 for the refurbishing of the planters around the pond. This was agreed.

## **11. Head Teacher's Report**

The budget is in the red which means it is over 3% overspent. In real terms this equates to the school starting next session with a deficit of £63,400. Staffing figures have been corrected to take into account the pay rises in February. Changes to supply staff contracts now make it virtually impossible to get supply teachers; therefore the school has depended on increased internal supply from the Senior Management Team.

The dropping roll means a need to cut staff next year. This year numbers are approximately 370, dropping to 350 next year and 300 in two years time. This causes problems when there is a large senior school compared to a small junior school.

Irene is also unable to find a new Acting PT for geography/modern studies teacher to cover for Rachel Knight after end of April.

Sending staff to training events is also proving to be a large cost for the school, however this is essential with new qualifications.

Irene talked about the arrival of Ruaridh Ross, the new Depute Head Teacher who started in December. It has made a huge difference having a full Senior Management Team again.

The Police Internet Safety talks were helpful and the school has tightened up on mobile phone rules. However there has been a request to relax these rules and Irene would like to discuss this further at the Dynamics meeting in May.

There are new picnic benches made by wood kindly donated by the Sawmill.

The school is now looking for funding for a router which costs £7000. The Strathspey Steam Railway may be helping with some funding, in

return pupils will use the router to make signs for them and the wider community. Jaci Douglas is very supportive of this project. There has been a lot of ongoing discussion around the language used relating to N4 / N5, which is causing confusion amongst pupils and parents. The amount of tests that pupils have to sit was raised by Zoe Cooke.

The school is also considering the current policy that all S5 pupils have to continue with English. This may become a decision made on a pupil by pupil basis depending on further education requirements. Again, Irene would like to discuss this further at the next Dynamics meeting.

## **12. Matters arising from previous minutes**

- a) Janitors House – The change of use has now been approved and plans are being finalised. Funding will probably be used for furnishing.
- b) Projectors – no further news. The preferred option is being developed
- c) Road Safety – School is planning to do a further Driving Ambitions event. The Seat Belt Slider event will not happen.
- d) Teenage Brain – this will take place in May. Ruaridh to give Giles dates available to hold the event in the hall.

## **13. Date of next meeting**

Dynamics Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> May 6pm

Full Parent Council meeting and AGM – 4<sup>th</sup> November 7pm

## **14. AOB**

Vicki Cowan passed on a request from the Craig Maclean Centre to ask pupils not to wear their outdoor shoes inside, particularly on the machines that are breaking due to dirt coming in. Also there have been complaints about cleanliness in the changing rooms. Vicki asked Irene to pass this message on to the school.

Meeting ended at 10pm.