

**Minutes of the Grantown Grammar School
Dynamics Meeting**

Held at the school on 14th May 2014

Apologies

Liz Amphlett
Jaci Douglas

Present

Debbie Strang	Vice Chair, Dynamics
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
Anne Sullivan	
Zoe Cooke	
Catherine McAuly-Brand	
Jo Blair	

1. Welcome and Apologies:

Debbie introduced the meeting and her new role, standing in for Ene. Apologies for Jaci and Liz were given.

2. Matters arising from last meeting 13th November and not otherwise appearing on the agenda:

a. Standards and Quality report – as far as the group was aware there had been no further feedback passed to Irene.

b. Constitutional Changes - this is now for the Parent Forum to agree.

c. Drugs events – The talks took place in Kingussie, Aviemore and Grantown and were really well received despite low attendance. It is thought that the police will be visiting Kingussie a second time with their drugs dogs before their first visit to Grantown in either June or August/September time. The school currently has a zero tolerance attitude towards alcohol and drugs in school and is considering at how much Harm Reduction should be promoted as a message to children. A new information pack is currently being developed by NHS which should be coming to the school to use in the future and Irene said that she would welcome feedback from the Parent Council about how and when we might use this. It was agreed to keep this on the agenda for future updates.

Action KS

Karen Smith offered to write a letter to the Strathy to raise awareness about the value of the events and encourage more people to attend in the future.

d. Jo Blair – Further funding from the Raddery Trust. Jo has received a further £1005.18 for the school. She had priced up a list of equipment that she suggests the money could be used for (703.18). She hopes that it can be purchased through Amazon using the GGS account, therefore earning more money back to the Parent Council. She asked that the outstanding amount of £302 could be sent by cheque from the Parent Council to GGS School Fund for a further 3 items. Irene said that Jo should first check costs with the Council's approved suppliers before going to Amazon, and if there was a big cost difference then Highland Council could be approached to highlight the issue.

e. Jo Blair – Job Connect funding shortage. Jo informed the meeting that the school has supported pupils towards a transition to employment through placements offered by 'Job Connect'. As they no longer have core funding the opportunities for our pupils are significantly reduced.

3. Careers Fair

Debbie had spoken with Fiona Fraser from Nairn Academy who has already organised a very successful careers event. They will be holding a second event in September and have invited Debbie and a few others to come along. It was agreed that until this event happens the Parent Council will put on hold making any further plans and decisions about the Grantown fair.

4. Mobile Phone Rules

Originally mobiles were permitted in class when required but over time the policy was abused and the school imposed a blanket ban on mobile use within school. Over time this has relaxed and children are being allowed to use their phones with the teacher's permission during lessons time eg for internet searches, listening to music etc. However despite their use, the abuse has not returned. Irene wanted to hear the opinions of the attendees with regards to future policy. It was agreed by the group that the policy should be – 'If you are given permission by your teacher, then it is acceptable to use your phone'. If abuse of this re-occurs then the blanket ban will return.

5. English and S5 Pupils

It is currently compulsory to continue with English into S5 level unless special permission is sought. Irene would like to consider a change in the policy so that it becomes an option for those pupils with their parents/carers involved to appeal to not take English further than S4. After a full discussion it would then be at the school's discretion. All members of the group were keen that all pupils should be encouraged to continue with English to the highest level possible, but a realistic approach for those reaching their limit at S4 was one to pursue,

6. AOB

Staffing – Irene was happy to announce the appointment of a new permanent maths teacher, Dr David Miller, who would be starting in June, and three new probationers in science, PE and French. The roll for next session is currently expected to be 366.

The school budget is still in the red.

Irene and Claire are attending an Additional Support Needs meeting to discuss staffing. Debbie asked that the group be kept up to date with this matter and to see if they can help in any way.

Ruaridh said that the school has applied for a 'Champion' to come and talk to the children about sport and how they focus on their sport. This may or may not be attached to a Careers Event.

Irene mentioned a 'Celebrate' project whereby the school is applying for funding to help 'Celebrate the Commonwealth countries'. The Art department have put in a bid for funding to build a totem pole in the woods to be decorated with messages from people who have visited or come from Commonwealth countries.

Catherine asked Irene how the Extended Home Study Leave had worked this last year with the new exams. Irene and Claire said that there needed to be a review as it was clear a large number of pupils had been away from school for a significant amount of time, (up to 3 weeks in some cases). It had been hoped that Inverness College would have offered 'Taster Days' for pupils to take part in, but these had not taken place. Although the timetable had worked for some pupils, greater thought and planning was required next year, and this included managing staff time and availability, many of whom are required to be an examiner in a subject at a different school.

There is likely to be a review of National 4 and National 5's and hopefully there will be an opportunity for feedback from the PC.

Anne also asked if the school was doing anything to recognise the centenary of WW1. Irene indicated that Highland Council had a group looking at this and she had invited Mr O'Brien to link up with this group.

7. Date of next meeting

It was decided that a date would be set for the next meeting once the Nairn Careers event had taken place, probably be towards the end of September.

Irene mentioned that the next P7 Parents Evening will take place on 25th June. As before, the Parent Council should use the opportunity to encourage new parents to join the group.

It was also agreed that there will be another Open Forum which will be promoted at the Parents Evening on the 2nd September at 7pm.

The meeting ended at 8pm.

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