

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MINUTES

St Thomas of Aquin's Parent Council

AGM on 1st June 2017

PRESENT:

Jo Kennedy (JK) – Chair
Fiona Bradley (FB) – Vice Chair
Catherine Gray (CG) - Treasurer
Dee Armstrong (DA) - Secretary

Staff:

Christopher Santini (CS) – Acting Headteacher
Peigi Macarthur (PM) – Supporting Headteacher
Megan Gardner (MG) –Depute Headteacher
Isabelle Jean Pierre (IJP) – Acting Depute Headteacher
Sandra Murray (SM) – Teacher Representative
Jo Ritchie (JR) – Business Manager

Parents

Ivan Babuscsak, James Boardman, Gaye Cleary, Kitty Bruce Gardyne, Mimmi Demitri von Pezdd, Tamasin Gray, Callum McCrone, Colleen McCrone, Tamasin Gray, Jason King, Andrea Manning, Colleen McCrone, John MacFie, Jonathan Midgley, Alice Musamba, Lesley Nangle, Stephen O'Brien, Stephanie O'Donohoe, Denise Simpson, Julie Slater, Joanne Thin, Yvonne Pryor

Guest from Holy Cross PC Natalie Wilson

Apologies: Jo Beech Brandt, Naomi Neilson, Fr Nick Welsh

	ACTION
<p>1. Welcome & Prayer</p> <p>JK welcomed everyone to the meeting and DS led the prayer. There was a round of introductions.</p> <p>2. Constitution</p> <p>FB brought a final draft of the revised constitution document showing all the tracked changes for discussion and approval. Points discussed included:</p> <p>Whether something should be inserted around the PC's role in recruitment. It was agreed that this would be better put in the 'job description' for parent members.</p> <p>Quorum. It was agreed that the quorum would be 4 members or 20% of members whichever was lower.</p> <p>Whether office bearers were included in or additional to the 22 members. It was agreed that the roles of chair, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary should be included in the membership, bringing the total membership maximum to 26.</p> <p>It was agreed to reinstate the paragraph about how to arrange a special general meeting which had been removed in error.</p> <p>The constitution document with these changes was formally approved.</p> <p>3. Appointment of Office Bearers</p>	

<p>Jo Kennedy agreed to remain as Chair. Fiona Bradley agreed to remain as Vice Chair. Dee Armstrong agreed to remain as Secretary. Catherine Gray stood down as Treasurer. Tamasin Gray was nominated and seconded as Treasurer and her appointment was approved. Catherine Gray will stay on and lead the Fundraising Sub-Group.</p> <p>4. PC Membership</p> <p>Angelo Deponio and Eugene Mullan had both indicated they wished to stand down as PC members. Catherine Gray moved across from the Treasurer role into one of these spaces leaving a space for another PC member. Attenders of the meeting were invited to put themselves forward but no-one wished to do so. The spare place will be offered to the S1 parents at the transition evening coming up later in June where office bearers would be attending to explain the role of the PC.</p> <p>5. Chair and Vice-chair Report</p> <p>JK and FB delivered the Chair and Vice-chair report which is appended to these minutes – see Appendix A.</p> <p>6. Update from City of Edinburgh Council</p> <p>Andy Gray had written to JK to confirm that the Acting Headteacher role had been extended until 31st March 2018. Parents asked whether a substantive appointment to the headteacher role would be made and CS replied that this would happen after due process.</p> <p>JK reported that a response had now been received by the parent concerned to the complaint from the dossier that had been investigated to Stage 2 of the CEC complaints procedure. The parent was willing to share the response - any PC members interested in seeing it should contact DA.</p> <p>A parent asked about the meeting JK & FB had had with Councillor Melanie Main – JK reported that MM had followed up on the overspend issue with council officers.</p> <p>There was a discussion around how CEC had responded to the PC’s concerns. Points raised included:</p> <p>The length of time the process had taken– almost a year.</p> <p>That the previous PC had not adequately represented the views of parents that CEC had treated parents at St Thomas’ with a lack of respect in the style of their communications</p> <p>It was noted that CEC was short staffed and had had to deal with major issues around the physical fabric of other schools in the last year.</p> <p>JK agreed to review correspondence with CEC and consider whether further action such as a letter would be effective.</p> <p>7. Report from Treasurer</p> <p>A summary report of the year’s fundraising activities and accounts were presented. This report is attached at Appendix B.</p> <p>8. Senior Leadership Team Report</p> <p>The SLT report is attached in full at Appendix C.</p> <p>8.1 CS discussed the school improvement plan and asked for feedback on it from</p>	<p>DA</p>
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<p>parents by the beginning of August 2017.</p> <p>8.2 IJP discussed the key adult system and explained that going forward there would be weekly meetings between teachers each with a vertical group of 15 pupils across all year groups in a house system for 20 minutes between period 4 & 5. The role of the key adult would be to share school communications, deal with attendance / lateness issues, and review progress on a 1:1 basis after reports. There would be a mentoring system by senior pupils within the groups.</p> <p>8.3 There was a discussion about Parentpay which would be going live from August. There was some concern about the 1.5% commission which could amount to a significant extra charge for some things. JK had discussed ParentPay with another local school who were not protesting about it. It seemed that primary schools were not passing on the surcharge to parents for smaller items, only for school trips. There was concern that parents were being asked to absorb the extra costs of ParentPay despite the fact that CEC would be saving money by implementing it. There was also concern that it raised issues of equality. It was agreed that the PC would formally write to the CEC Education Committee once it had been convened to express its concern.</p> <p>8.4 MG reported that the exams had just finished and that arrangement seem to have gone well. All the staff were thanked for their extra commitment and work during exam time running revision sessions in the Easter holidays etc.</p> <p>8.5 SM stepped down as teacher representative to the PC and it was reported that Caroline Bendall would be the new teacher rep going forward.</p> <p>9. Minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2017 were approved.</p> <p>10. Feedback from Sub-Groups</p> <p>10.1 Faith – DS reported that the Faith Sub-Group had just finished their piece of work and had produced a report and a summary. They had met with CS to have an initial discussion about the report and get his comments and would present it in detail to the next meeting of the PC.</p> <p>10.2 Curriculum – JB reported that this group would be meeting next week to discuss issues around the S1-S3 Broad General Education. Any parent who has anything they wish to input to that topic should contact JB.</p> <p>10.3 Sports – CMcC reported that this group was just getting started and had only two members at the moment. Any parent who is interested in working with the group on school sports issues is invited to come forward. The group would be starting by looking at extra-curricular activities and active schools clubs. They would also be meeting with the PE department.</p> <p>10.4 Fundraising – this group would be concentrating on organising fewer events next year and focusing on those that had worked well last well eg beer and wine evening, Christmas fayre. There would also be a new fireworks event at the end of August organised alongside the Home Economics Department. Details of this would be emailed out to parents shortly.</p> <p>11 Any Other Business</p> <p>11.1 <u>Request for old lego</u>- SM reported that the science department was asking for old lego and other items to help with an S3 physics project early in the new academic year. There is a list of the wanted items on the school website.</p> <p>11.2 <u>Parents Evenings</u> – There was a discussion around whether or not young</p>	<p>JK</p> <p>AGENDA</p>
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<p>people should be encouraged to attend parents evenings with their parents. There were various views expressed, and CS said that all pupils were very welcome to attend but that it was an individual decision for families and young people.</p> <p>11.3 <u>School trips</u> - A parent asked if school could do some more forward planning and publicity about upcoming school trips. It was easier for families to plan going forward if they knew what trips were going to be coming up in the next 2-3 years. It was also agreed that there need to be a range of trips in terms of duration, destination and cost to ensure inclusivity. CS said that there is a trip booklet which will shortly be updated by the Business Manager, Jo Ritchie.</p> <p>11.4 <u>Duke of Edinburgh Award</u> – a parent asked about spaces on the D of E award expedition. There appeared to be a reduction to only 20 spaces for the silver award. SM explained that there was a need for parent volunteers and the school usually experiences a significant fall of in demand from pupils between bronze and silver.</p> <p>11.5 <u>Research on online bullying</u> – IJP reported that a PhD student is carrying out research at the school into empathy and online bullying. Pupils would be asked if they wish to participate in the research and would be incentivised with book tokens. A letter had already been sent home to parents asking for consent to take part.</p> <p>12 Thanks</p> <p>On behalf of the Parent Council, Denise Simpson offered a formal vote of thanks to Jo Kennedy and Fiona Bradley for the huge amount of work they had done in the last year. Denise acknowledged that there had been difficult circumstances and a high degree of responsibility but they had been tenacious and had offered significant time, commitment and discipline in working for the best interests of the school community. The parents wanted to take the time to say a huge thank you to them both.</p> <p>13 Dates of next year’s meetings</p> <p>Wed 20th September 2017 Thurs 30th Nov 2017 Tue 30th Jan 2018 Wed 21st March 2018 Thurs 24th May 2018 - AGM</p>	<p>CS/JR</p>
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APPENDIX A

Parent Council AGM June 1st 2017

Chair and Vice Chair's Report

It has been a good year for the Parent Council, lots of people have got involved and because of that we have managed to achieve a lot.

This report outlines the highlights, how we got here, the ongoing challenges and some of our plans for next year.

Highlights of the Year

Over the past year there has been a real sense of solidarity between parents and between parents and the school leadership with whom we have a really good working relationship. Parents don't always agree, and we don't always agree with the school leadership, but we know that we can communicate openly and work through any disagreements.

There have been lots of contributions, from lots of different parents. The Parent Council has full membership, with representation across all year groups, and from several different associated primary schools.

Overall we have a much greater understanding of the education our children are getting through reports and presentations to the Parent Council made by the School Leadership team. The Curriculum subgroup are feeding into the school leadership team and helping us to keep track of the ongoing changes in the curriculum.

Fundraising has been a huge success this year. We have raised over £3600. Fundraising activities, like the Christmas Fayre, also contribute to sense of solidarity in the school community.

The Faith subgroup is really helping us to work out what it means to be a Catholic school which is serving a mixed faith/no faith community and we will have a presentation from them about their work, at the first meeting of the next school year.

We have been involved in recruiting the Acting Headteacher, the Deputy Head and the Curriculum Lead for Modern Languages. This has been an inspiring and energising process and we believe that we have made great appointments each time!

How have we got here?

Our achievements are founded in much stronger communication at all levels.

We have regular meetings of the Parent Council, of the subgroups and of the PC office bearers with the school Senior Leadership Team.

We are updating our pages on the website to make us more accessible.

Whilst the school has been setting up a school email list, we have been compiling our own so that we can communicate with more parents more easily – and they can communicate with us. We won't need our own now that the school one is set up.

We have made sure that we have a presence at all parents' evenings which gives us a chance to talk to more parents about what we do and how they can make their voice heard if they want to.

We have also engaged with new parents both during transition week and when they first look round the school.

We have surveyed the parents to find out what their priorities are, and tried to work on these. And we will be running another survey in the new school year.

As well as trying to communicate more effectively we have set up a subgroup structure enabling more parents to get involved and contribute in purposeful ways.

Currently we have 4 subgroups: curriculum, faith, fundraising and sports.

And we have updated the constitution so that we have a solid foundation to work from.

Ongoing Challenges

There is continuing uncertainty about the leadership of the school. What we know is that Christopher Santini has been appointed as Acting Headteacher until the end of March 2018.

We know that we are still not reaching lots of parents, particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds, so we can't be confident that they know how to get their voices heard within the school.

Plans for Next Year

We plan to repeat the survey.

We will continue to seek clarity from the CEC.

We will continue to reach out to more parents – particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds who may not find it so easy to access the Parent Council.

We will continue to work through the subgroups on the things which matter to parents and are setting up new subgroups on recruitment and equalities.

We will continue to raise money for the school and work with the school leadership team to find other ways in which parents can contribute.

We want to thank in particular

Dee, who has spent many hours talking with parents, putting their details into our database so that we can communicate better, and writing up the minutes. None of our work would be possible without her. Catherine who has transformed the fundraising potential of the Parent Council. Tamasin, who has supported the fundraising and is taking over as Treasurer. All those who have been involved in the fundraising including Christine, Andrea, Kitty, Pauline, Nomi and Colleen who have agreed to take forward the sports subgroup

The faith subgroup – Denise, James, Joanne and Simon.

The curriculum subgroup – Callum, James, Jason and Cluny.

Gaye and Austin for their support working on the constitution.

Stephanie for her work on the survey

Yvonne and Julie for lots of support, for turning up and for the uniform recycling.

And most of all, all the teachers and the School Leadership Team, Megan, Isabel, Christopher and Peigi for all the hard work they have put in over the last year on behalf of our children.

JK/FB June 2017.

APPENDIX B

Treasurer's Report 1 June 2017 AGM

Catherine Gray

In the last year PC activities raised a total of £3620.58 net of expenses.

Fundraising Event	Proceeds
Beer & wine	£363.16
Fayre proceeds	£1,204.00
Calendar sales & adverts	£1,180.00
Film night	£45.00
Teas & coffees	£51.10
Quiz Night	£201.80
Easyfundraising	£575.52
Total Fundraising	£3,620.58

In addition to this we received £903.56 funding allowance from the City of Edinburgh Council.

The Parent Council donated £1,631 by way of small grants to various clubs and organisations.

PC funded S6 leavers' Ceilidh at a cost of £190.00

Running costs were £56.00

The current bank balance at 01 June 2017 is £3,299.

Funds at AGM May 2016	£602.06
Money in bank at 01 June 2017	£3,299.00
less £50 advert 2018 calendar	<u>£50.00</u>
	£3,249.00
Funds available for IT equipment at 01/06/2017	£2,384.00
PC Funds available at 01/06/2017	£865.00

APPENDIX C

Senior Leadership Team report – Parent Council AGM June 1st 2017

1. School improvement plan 2016-7: evaluation

Curriculum: The school has a S1-S6 structure in place with clear progression routes for learners. A coursing timeline has also been adapted to support meeting school deadlines.

Next steps: All faculties to share and update S1-S3 curricular course lines

Developing Scotland's Workforce: The school has in place JET programme/S4 work experience/ Career Academy opportunities/College Transition groups

Next steps: Implement standards for Career Education and skills development for learners.

Tracking & Monitoring: S1-S6 spreadsheets have been shared timeously throughout session to support pupil progression and interventions. Learner conversation good practice shared.

Next steps: Ensure that all pupils experience learners conversations systematically throughout session.

Key Adult: Draft Key Adult plan shared & adapted. Key Adult coordinators in place. Timetable and programmes of work shared in May

Next steps: Implement Key Adult programme and system in 2017-18.

Pupil Voice: Monthly Pupil Council meetings. Take 5 sessions with Acting HT. S6 Leadership Team identifying and planning pupil activities. Pupils supporting staff interviews.

Next steps: Audit of how Faculties use Pupil Voice

Better relationships, better learning, better behaviour: Staged intervention and positive behaviour cylinder drafted – shared with pupils, staff, and Parent Council. Implemented June 2017

Next steps: Restorative practice CPD. Develop positive reward system & Seemis referral system.

Equalities & Ethos: Draft Equalities intervention poster and policy completed.

Next steps: August Launch for Policy. Diversity week planned.

Attendance and late coming: Attendance and late coming good practice shared.

Next steps: Attendance policy to be drafted.

Strategic priorities for schools 2017-18

- Improvement in children and young people's attainment/achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people

2. Draft 2017-18 school improvement plan key priorities - CS

- Revisit the school's vision and values
- Update Broad General Education curriculum plans
- Learning and Teaching – enhance inclusive practice and Co-operative learning
- Tracking and Monitoring – learning conversations embedded in reporting cycle
- Implementation of Key Adult programme
- Literacy, Numeracy, and HWB sharing good practice shared through staff meetings
- Developing the Young workforce for Career Education – Curriculum pathways
- ICT refresh implemented 2017-18
- Policy updates in Curriculum, Learning and Teaching, Meeting Learners' Needs, Better relationships, better learning, better behaviour, Equalities, Attendance and Late coming

See Draft School Improvement plan 2017-18

The Standards and quality Improvement plan which I will complete for June 30th will provide the school community an evaluation of where we are in terms of the National Improvement Framework/strategic priorities for schools

3. Pupil Equity Funding – CS

Secondary Schools will receive £1200 in 2017-18 for each child in S1-S3 who is eligible and registered for free school meals. The funding must provide targeted support for children affected by poverty, HTs can use their professional judgement to include other children. The funding should be focused on activities & interventions that will lead to improvements in:

- Literacy:
- Numeracy:
- Health and wellbeing:
- Family learning opportunities

Closing the Gap – what works best? Identify a few targeted interventions which focus specifically on closing the gap. Aim for a range of activities both within and beyond the classroom, working in partnership. Very high quality learning and teaching closes the gap.

Draft St Thomas' Pupil Equity Plan

PEF assertive mentor position

A youth worker based in the school from lesson 1-7 Monday to Wednesday

ICT support plan for pupils

An inclusive breakfast plan

4. Staffing 2017-18 – CS

Curricular Leader of Modern languages Rachel Roberts is taking a 2-year sabbatical from St Thomas. Peter O'Conner from James Gillespie's High School has been appointed Acting Curricular Leader for the next 2 years.

Teacher of Maths Steve Maher will be retiring from St Thomas in June. A re-advert for a permanent Maths Teacher closes on Wednesday 31st of May. Interviews will be held on Tuesday 6th

Matt Wilson is the successful candidate for the permanent Teacher of Chemistry post.

Sylvie Berthelot will be returning to St Thomas' from her 2-year sabbatical on a part-time basis. Alison Sinclair is the successful candidate for the permanent part-time Teacher of Spanish and French.

A part-time permanent English post is being advertised.

Acting Headteacher's position will continue the full 23-month secondment and will finish on 31st of March 2018.

5. School Budget - CS

The school overspend at the end of session 2015-16 was £105,000 approx.

The school overspend at the end of session 2016-17 now stands at £8,000 approx.

This means the school has managed to save £97,000 in session 2016-17.

The carry forward statement I received from Finance states that:

£94, 000 has been saved from Employee costs and

£3000 from Transport costs.

I have asked Finance to come into school to take me through the savings made in Employee costs. I would like to meet with Finance before I give further details on how the overspend has been decreased.

6. Key Adult programme – IJP

7. Parent Pay – JR

8. SQA Exams - MG