

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MINUTES

St Thomas of Aquin's Parent Council – Annual General Meeting

19th May 2016

PRESENT:

Juliet Harkin (JH) – Chair
Brenda-Anne Cochrane (BAC) –
Vice Chair
Angela Wilson (AW) - Treasurer
Dee Armstrong (DA) - Secretary

Staff:

Peigi Macarthur (PM) – Supporting Headteacher
Christopher Santini (CS) – Acting Headteacher
Isabelle Jean Pierre (IJP) – Acting Depute Headteacher
Megan Gardner (MG) – Acting Depute Headteacher
Sandra Murray (SM) – Teacher Rep
Jo Ritchie, Business Manager
Fr Peter Scally – School Chaplain

Parents

Kors Allan, Simon Armstrong, James Boardman, Fiona Bradley, Yvonne Brooks, Stuart Brown, Karen Brownlee, Kitty Bruce Gardyne, Angie Bryce, Gaye Cleary, Angelo Deponio, Geraldine Deponio, Natasha Durkin, Smeera Farooq, Dominic Fergus-Allen, Deirdre Fitzpatrick, Catherine Gray, Tamasin Gray, George Harte, Caroline Johnston, Jo Kennedy, Jason King, Nancy Little, John Macfie, Andrea Manning, Grant McCall, Callum Mcrone, Colleen Mccrone, Catherine Midgley, Jonathan Midgley, Eugene Mullan, Edele Murphy, Lesley Nangle, Naomi Neilson, Shona O'Brien, Stephanie O'Donohoe, Yvonne Pryor, Montserrat Santandreu, Cluny Sheeler, Denise Simpson, Mary Stevenson, Diane Watters, Shelagh Yildram

Apologies

Austin Flynn, Jill Lynn, Arlene Maiden, Daniella McAfferty, Mary Nicholson, Julie Slater

1. Welcome and prayer	ACTION
JH welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Fr Scally to lead an opening prayer.	
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2016	
2.1 Clarification was requested on the circumstances in which part of the Parent Council meetings might be held in private, i.e. only PC members present. The example was given of dealing with a tendering process. It was agreed that the constitution needs to reflect what the circumstances would be and that it would be a rare occurrence.	
2.2 Number of periods of RE – there was further discussion on whether 2 periods of RE a week was mandatory or recommended. A parent had followed this up - the Scottish Government has stated it is a requirement based on guidelines from the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) – however, the SCES say it's only a recommendation. There are no documented guidelines and it appears that the	

<p>Scottish Government document has used the word 'requirement' in error. Concern was expressed by some parents about the quality of RE lessons in school and CS responded that staff had been making efforts to improve quality. It was agreed that the issue needed further discussion and would be put on the agenda of the next meeting.</p>	<p>DA</p>
<p>2.3 It was noted that Colleen McCrone's statement on curriculum concerns had not been appended to the minutes as had been agreed. DA would arrange this.</p>	<p>DA</p>
<p>3. Report from the Acting Headteacher</p>	
<p>CS gave the Acting Headteacher's report.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exams - there had been a newspaper article expressing concern about the National 5 Maths paper. CS had been told it was a fair paper and was expecting our pupils to have coped well. A parent thanked CS for his presence at all exams • Meaningful May - a programme of learning experiences for S4 pupils had been organised. • CS fed back on various events including the S3 geography and Duke of Edinburgh field trips, the S2 food truck, upcoming trips to Iceland (S3 June), Lagganlia (S1 June) and Rome (S1-S6 Autumn). • Staffing - CS reported that Mr Madden (RE) was leaving for a post in Fife, Ms Cairney (RE) was leaving to work in Kenya, Mrs Callion (Chemistry) was going on maternity leave, Ms Gardiner (Modern Studies) was now Acting Depute and that Mrs Nicholson was acting into Ms Gardiner's post. There were vacant posts in Maths, Physics and RE which had all been advertised with closing dates at the end of May. Recruitment to the permanent Depute Headteacher post was being arranged by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). CS said that he expected the school would have a full complement of staff in time for the start of the new school year in August. • Strategic planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there would be a curriculum leaders' meeting next week and feedback would be given to the PC at the June meeting - timetabling had been completed - the themes for improvement planning had been identified with PMc and were now with curriculum leaders and faculties for consultation - CS had met with Gaye Cleary to discuss parental and parent council input to the school website, a web designer has been selected, staff are being consulted and it was hoped that the site would be live by the end of September 2016 with a month to 'test drive it'. CS will update the PC again in June. • There had been two newspaper reports relating to (i) a security breach and (ii) an incident involving senior pupils . It was agreed that it was very frustrating when the school gets poor press coverage and it was acknowledged that other schools had had similar incidents, which were not reported. There was a lengthy discussion about press coverage and it was acknowledged that sometimes it takes time for an organisation to pass out of the spotlight again. Efforts would be made to generate positive news 	

stories.	
<p>4. Report from the Chair</p> <p>JH gave the Chair's report. She acknowledged that it had been a difficult year for the school. She asked the PC going forward to allow the school time to develop and implement its action plan.. JH thanked Angela Wilson for her service as treasurer over the past 4 years.</p>	
<p>5. Report from the Treasurer</p> <p>AW reported that activities run by the PC had raised a total of £233.39 from the proceeds of the beer and wine tasting event. The PC had also received £903.56 funding allowance from CEC including £240 to fund a clerk. A payment of £200 had been made to Jo Ritchie for the meetings she had clerked. The new clerk, Dee Armstrong, had donated her outstanding payment and any subsequent ones to the PC fund. The PC donated £700 by way of small grants to various clubs and organisations. The leavers' ceilidh was funded at a cost of £179.37 There were sundry expenses of £10. The current balance as at 19th May 2016 was £602.06.</p>	
<p>6. Election of Office Bearers</p> <p>The roles of Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer were elected as follows:</p> <p>Chair Jo Kennedy – nominated by Juliet Harkin, seconded by Brenda-Anne Cochrane Vice-chair Fiona Bradley – nominated by Jo Kennedy, seconded by Naomi Neilson Treasurer Catherine Gray – nominated by Colleen McCrone, seconded by Eugene Mullan</p> <p>Jo Kennedy continued the meeting as Chair.</p>	
<p>7. Nominations for the parent council</p> <p>JH invited anyone who wished to be considered for nomination to the Parent Council to complete a slip of paper. As there were more nominations than the 22 spaces on the Parent Council and spaces needed to be allocated to ensure representation of the various years groups, the slips were taken away so that a draw could be organised.</p> <p>Pupil representation needed to be arranged – CS would discuss and arrange this.</p> <p>A community representative would also need to be arranged.</p> <p>It was agreed that the PC constitution would be reviewed. A sub-group would be convened to do this.</p>	<p>DA</p> <p>CS</p> <p>JK</p> <p>JK</p>
<p>8. Update on the improvement plan and action plan</p> <p>PM circulated a draft of the school's ongoing improvement plan that covered the 4 key strategic priorities for all schools from 2016 to 2019. In brief, these are (i) improving attainment (ii) closing the attainment gap (iii) improvements in health and wellbeing (iv) improvements in employability and 'positive destinations'.</p> <p>As well as the improvement plan we also have an action plan in relation to the specific concerns at our school. PM was still in the process of developing the key</p>	

<p>threads for the action plan, which included curriculum, leadership, communication. Getting staff meetings right was important and this would be discussed in detail with staff. PM had led a meeting with the pupil council which was a first step in ensuring the pupil voice was heard. It was also important to consider what communication improvements parents needed including newsletters, website improvements, accessible PC minutes, parent information meetings and a speedy response to parents from all departments in school. Parents thanked PM for her summary and asked how she wanted to receive parent's feedback? PM replied that she would receive feedback both via the parent council and directly from the wider parent forum via email. PM fed back from the meeting she had held with S1-S3 pupils – it was a positive meeting and PM was impressed with how articulate the pupils were. Pupils had openly shared with her both their positive and negative views about school and she would be feeding those into the action plan. PM would be meeting pupils again in June when senior pupils would be present and confirmed that there would be on-going engagement with pupils. CS said that an enthusiastic teacher was being sought to take the teacher role in the pupil council and said that he was committed to the pupils having a strong voice. Parents said that they were glad the pupil voice was starting to be heard.</p> <p>PM would feedback further on the action plan at the next meeting.</p>	<p>PM</p>
<p>9. Minutes of the special general meeting on 26th April 216</p> <p>Comments on the draft minutes of the special general meeting were still being received and further comments were welcomed. These would be finalised in time for the next meeting, which it was agreed would be held on 15th June. A parent asked for an update on the curriculum changes at that meeting and CS agreed.</p>	<p>CS</p>
<p>10. Any other business</p> <p>10.1 A parent mentioned a recent study that highlighted that 80% of 15 year old girls were reporting school related stress and said that parents were concerned about this. IJP said that awareness would be raised amongst all staff and that these issues would be discussed at the August inset day. Another parent asked for clarification on the named person initiative and this was explained.</p> <p>10.2 A parent commented on the progress school was making and that she was starting to feel reassured. She also noted that the school had lost a longstanding member of staff this year who had died and she expressed the sympathies of parents for the teacher's colleagues.</p> <p>10.3 It was confirmed that the 33 period week would be starting on 6th June.</p> <p>10.4 Parents asked about the process for selecting the pupil senior leadership team. There was a discussion about whether the process was as transparent as it could be and about whether the process needed to be changed to allow a vote from S6 pupils. PM confirmed that the process would be reviewed.</p>	<p>IJP</p> <p>PM/CS</p>
<p>11. Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting would be held at 6:30pm on Wednesday 15th June.</p>	

Dates for meetings in the next school year would be agreed at that meeting.	
---	--