

# AGM MINUTES

## St Thomas of Aquin's Parent Council

Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019

### **PRESENT:**

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

### **Staff:**

Christopher Santini (CS) – Acting Headteacher  
Jo Ritchie (JR) - Business Manager

### **Parents**

Carole Bienek, James Boardman, Lesley Broadwood, Kitty Brice Gardyne, Helen Field, Andrew Gillies, Catherine Gray, Jason King, Andrea Manning, Jennifer McKenna, Louise McSorley, Alice Musamba, Andrew O'Brien, Stephanie O'Donohoe, Dorcas Owen, Jo Phillips, Denise Simpson, Lindi Smith,

**1. Welcome** – JK welcomed everyone to the meeting and there was a round of introductions. The standard business of the PC meeting would be carried out first and then the AGM part of the business including election of new office bearers and members would be dealt with.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

2.1 It was agreed that the community police officer who was now working at school would be invited to the next meeting.

### **3. Recruitment**

JK noted that a lot of the PC's business this year had been concerned with recruitment – there had been the successful appointment of a permanent headteacher after a long delay which was extremely welcome. The PC was pleased to have recruited Mr Santini into that post. In addition parents had been involved in the recruitment of a new deputy headteacher, who had been offered a post a few days ago, and there had also been the recruitment of the CL for Computing Science recently. Any parents wishing to become involved in recruitment need to attend the City of Edinburgh Council's recruitment training – dates are regularly circulated.

### **4. Update of SE Locality Group**

DA had recently attended the SE Locality Group on behalf of the PC. Issues discussed included:

- the replacement of Edmodo as a homework / communication platform. There was ongoing discussion city wide about the best way forward – access for parents and compliance with GDPR are difficulties that need to be resolved. Some schools are using Sharepoint. CS commented that this was part of the St Thomas' improvement plan.
- It was agreed that attendance at the SE Locality group was important. A number of parents were prepared to take part in a rota to attend and feedback to the PC. We can also discuss at our meetings any issues we wish to put forward to the Locality Group.

## **5. SLT Report**

CS presented the SLT report which is attached in full at Appendix 1. In particular he noted:

5.1 Probationer teachers had been appointed in Geography and Modern Studies & would cover Mrs Stark's maternity leave

5.2 There were currently vacancies in Support for Learning and Modern Languages.

5.3 There was a discussion about the over-subscription of sciences in S5 for the coming year. There had been a huge demand for Higher Biology and Chemistry and some pupils were being asked to rearrange their choices - a letter had been sent home from school to affected pupils. CS commented that there was the option to study some subjects at neighbouring schools if timetabling allowed and one parent commented that this can work well - that her son had had a good experience of studying Higher History at Boroughmuir. CS also commented that the Scottish Government team for Curriculum and Assessment would be visiting the school next term.

**6 School improvement plan** – CS gave out copies of the school improvement plan and various aspects were discussed:

- communication with parents about schoolwork, homework etc – a parent thought there was inconsistency between departments. A decision about an Edmodo replacement would help with this. Maybe the new CL for Computing Science can get involved in this. There also remained room for improvement on the different subject pages of the school website.
- CS would be getting Leaver Destination data ready soon
- A parent commented that the timescales on the school improvement plan were all a year away but CS reassured the PC that there would progress reports along the way
- Parents welcomed the inclusion of pupil wellbeing on the plan and commented that staff wellbeing was also obviously very important. Parents were willing to help in school with various projects e.g. the design of a drama set and had put on a lunch for staff on the last

inset day. This had been successful and would be repeated. JK thanked all staff for their support to pupils during the exam period and acknowledged the significant extra workload at this time.

- CS told parents about the new school app which allows parents to access much of the information from the school website in an accessible format.

## **7 Fundraising**

7.1 There would be a **family quiz night** on 13<sup>th</sup> June with food and BYOB. Details were on the school website and had been emailed to parents.

7.2 The 50:50 club draw winners were announced.

## **8 Parent Survey and Diversifying the PC**

FB commented that the PC had been considering this year how to improve diversification and had been trying to understand the different ways parents want to engage with the school. She and SO'D had devised a draft survey to be sent to parents, as had been done in the past. There was a discussion about what amendments to the survey should be made. FB and SO'D would incorporate the changes and then arrange for the survey to be distributed.

# **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

## **9 Chair /Vice Chair's Report and Treasurer's Report**

JK and FB presented the report of the Chair and Vice Chair – this is attached in full at Appendix 2.

TG presented the Treasurer's Report which is attached in full at Appendix 3.

## **10 Appointment of Office Bearers**

Jo Kennedy (Chair), Fiona Bradley (Vice Chair) and Dee Armstrong (Secretary) would all be stepping down at this meeting after 3 years in their roles. Tamasin Gray had kindly agreed to continue as Treasurer. Parents had previously been invited to consider putting themselves forward for these roles. Lesley Broadwood had offered herself to be considered as Chair prior to the meeting and had met with JK to discuss the role prior to the meeting. She said a few words about her background and experience. Andrew Gillies offered to take the role of Vice Chair. Helen Field offered to take the role of Secretary. All three were duly nominated and appointed.

## **11. Thanks**

TG offered a vote of thanks to the outgoing office bearers, Jo, Fiona and Dee, and they were presented with gifts of flowers.

# APPENDIX 1

## Senior leadership team report May 2019 Parent Council – action point areas.

I would like to thank the superb work of Jo, Fiona, and Dee over the last 3 year as Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk of the Parent Council. Your work has been invaluable to the improvement of St Thomas ‘and I wish you all an enjoyable “retirement” from the posts.

### Staffing:

- Permanent Head Teacher – Christopher Santini
- Permanent Depute Head Teacher – Congratulations to Stefania Mariani from the Royal High School
- Permanent Curricular Leader of Computing Science and ICT - Congratulations to Lauren Stalker from Dunbar Grammar School
- Permanent Support for Learning Leader – Congratulations to Carolyn Bendall
- Permanent fulltime Support for Learning Teacher interviews will take place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June. I am interviewing 6 candidates for the full-time post. Roseanne Teasdale retires as permanent Support for Learning Teacher – interviews for her post are on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June and I am interviewing 5 candidates for the part-time post.
- Sonya Callion returns to her permanent full-time Chemistry pots in August – Thanks to Neil Duncan for his temporary post in Chemistry.
- Katie Main returns to her permanent full-time Modern language post in August
- Acting Pupil Support Leader Ashley Stark leaves for her maternity on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June and will be replaced by Margaret Winders until Christian Taylor (permanent PSL) comes back after the October break.
- Kevin McCormick retires as permanent Pupil Support Leader in June and the post is to be advertised. Allan Whyte will act up as a Pupil Support Leader until the interview takes place and a Maths supply teacher will be recruited.
- Peter O’Connor finishes his 23 month secondment as Acting Curricular Leader of Modern Languages on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June and I am awaiting Rachel Roberts intentions on returning to St Thomas. I would like to thank Peter for all of his work in the Faculty.

### 2019-20 school improvement plan – please see the draft school improvement plan

**The plan will be completed by August 2019 & shared with all stakeholder via email & website**

- The 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the school improvement plan has been completed. For the last 3 years the school have used continually assessment and evaluated the school improvement plans and communicated this with all staff and parents. Next steps are identified in senior leadership, leadership, pupil, parent council meetings and Key Adult classes.
- The improvement areas below are specific examples of how the pupils and parents of St Thomas’ voice have been articulated in the 2019-20 school improvement plan.
  - Parent Council to audit pupil wellbeing through use of school values
  - Update Faculty plans & information on school website to support pupil and parental understanding of the broad general education and senior phase.
  - Positive Destination statistics: University, College, & world of work statistics summary for website to support identifying the very good positive destinations statistics
  - IST, RE, Science Faculties to update Call to Love programme with the use of SCES in line with PSE HMIE advice

# APPENDIX 2

## Parent Council AGM May 30 2019

### Chair and Vice Chair's Report

This is the final report of the year from us: after three years it is time to step aside to make way for new voices and a fresh approach. We are proud of what the Parent Council has achieved this year and over the last three. This report outlines the year's highlights and some of the ongoing challenges that a new team may wish to pick up.

### Highlights of the Year

#### 1. Recruitment

We began our stewardship of the Parent Council at a time of turmoil in the school. One of our main aims was to ensure a strong and inclusive parent voice throughout the process of Tommy Hughes ceasing to be the Headteacher of the school and the recruitment of a replacement. We are delighted that parents' views have been represented throughout the process of recruiting Christopher Santini to the post. Parents were involved in the advertisement for the post; the sifting, longlisting and shortlisting of candidates; the drafting of questions; the first and second interviews; the careful discussions after each interview; and the final, unanimous selection. We can be sure that the process was fair and competitive, and that Christopher Santini was the best choice for the job. We are sure that the Parent Council will continue to support him as he devises and implements his strategy for leadership of the school as its permanent headteacher.

We were pleased also to see parental involvement in a number of other key posts this year, including both Depute Head Teachers, the Pupil Support Leader, the Support for Learning Lead and the Curriculum Lead in Computing Science.

#### 2. Understanding and supporting our children's education

We have continued to gain insight into the education our children are getting through reports and presentations to the Parent Council made by the School Leadership team. The curriculum sub-group has completed a piece of work looking at capturing outcome and achievement data and this, together with the curriculum policy, is on the website. The group has been re-formulated as the attainment & outcomes group and will be looking at issues including leaver destinations; how the curriculum addresses the needs of all pupils; how IT can be used to support learning; and asking pupils their views on whether we are getting it right for them.

We continue to offer support to the school in whatever way we can. This year parents who speak Spanish or French have been able to volunteer with pupils undertaking their oral exams.

### **3. Fundraising and events**

We have had another successful year. Overall, nearly £3500 has been raised and £2700 donated through the Parent Council, and we have enjoyed some great social events. Particular highlights include the annual beer and wine tasting; the fireworks party, a new multicultural event involving some wonderful home-cooked food and inspirational drumming (and rather less inspirational but supremely enjoyable dancing!); the chess event café and a new lunch made by parents for staff on the inset day at the start of the new term after Christmas. The 50:50 Club is up and running, and together with easyfundraising provides a different way for parents to support the school financially.

### **4. Communication and Presence**

We try to make sure that we communicate as much as possible with parents both through the school mailing list and our own PC mailing list as well. We have tried to make sure that we have a presence at all school events including parent/teacher evenings so that parents can find us and talk to us about issues which are important to them. In some ways this feels like the most important work we do.

## **Ongoing Projects and Challenges**

### **1. Health and Wellbeing**

We have made a start on looking into the work going on in the school in this area, including a happiness survey, work being done by IJP on vision and values, and more, that needs to be consolidated together under the banner of health and wellbeing and tied into the school improvement plan. We feel that we are beginning to map the landscape.

### **2. Diversifying the Parent Council**

We have begun work to look at how best to ensure that all the voices of the rich and diverse mix of parents with children at the school are heard. It may be that not everyone wants to come to Parent Council meetings (representation is not the same as inclusion) – some people may feel that attending social events, parent consultation evenings, information events or one-to-one meetings with teachers are the ways they prefer to interact with the school. We have devised a survey that could be sent out to try to find out more and suggest a way forward in this area.

### **3. Sport**

We have tried to facilitate the involvement of parents in sport at the school. This is an ongoing challenge.

### **4. The website**

Much has been done to ensure that the website is functional and great improvements have been made by the school. However, the process for updating it is unwieldy, involving going through the school, and we have not been able to keep the parent section of the website as up to date, interesting and relevant as we would like.

### **5. Careers**

Several parents have put their names forward to support Jo Ritchie with the School Careers Fair later in the year.

### **Thanks**

We have been proud to have worked together as Chair and Vice Chair and with Dee as Secretary and Tamasin as Treasurer of the Parent Council. Helping to help parents support and constructively challenge the school is a rewarding task, and we have made many friends while doing it. Thanks are due to an enormous number of people, including Dee and Tamasin; Catherine, Kitty, Colleen, Pauline, Nomi, Shona, Christine, Jo and Alice on fundraising and events; Callum, James, Jason and Cluny on attainment and outcomes; Denise on recruitment and for liaising with the diocese with us, also Simon and Joanne on the faith group; Stephanie on surveys and data analysis; Louise for her HR expertise and help on recruitment. We will have missed some people out – it's been a long and rewarding year, and thank you to everyone who had made it fun as well.

And, of course, all the teachers and the School Leadership Team, Isabelle, Peter, Jo and Christopher for all the hard work they have put in over the last year on behalf of our children and to Lorna Sweeney at CEC for supporting us through the recruitment of the Headteacher.

We feel that the Parent Council is in a good place. We are communicating well with each other and with the school; and we have a good sense of what can be achieved when we work together for the collective good of our children and our school. We have loved getting to know so many parents and teachers, and we look forward to continuing to support the Parent Council and the school as active members of the community over the next few years.

**JK/FB May 2019.**

# APPENDIX 3

## St Thomas of Aquin's Parent Council Financial Report – Year ending 1 June 2019

	£	£
<b>OPENING BALANCE</b> 2 June 2018	<b>2041</b>	
<b>INCOME</b>		
<i>Council Funding</i>	897	
<i>Easyfundraising</i>	391	
<i>Fireworks</i>	480	
<i>Beer &amp; Wine tasting</i>	310	
<i>Blazer sale</i>	17	
<i>Chess Café</i>	808	
<i>50:50 Club</i>	534	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>3437</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<i>Expenses</i> <i>Printing etc</i>		42
<i>Refreshments</i>		52
<i>Kitchen let for multicultural event</i>		65
<i>Head teacher TES ad</i>		799
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>958</b>
<i>Donations</i> <i>PC monitors</i>		500
<i>Cinema trip</i>		36
<i>Graphic novels</i>		150
<i>Physics circuit boards</i>		480
<i>Pipettes</i>		140
<i>Gardening equipment</i>		100
<i>Library film books</i>		150
<i>Mandarin club</i>		100
<i>Home economics crockery</i>		57
<i>Centrifuge pledge</i>		375
<i>Cinema club</i>		120
<i>Hardship fund</i>		500
<b>Total Donations</b>		<b>2708</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>3666</b>
<b>CLOSING BALANCE</b> 1 June 2019	<b>1812</b>	

