



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KELSO HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 2ND JUNE 2014

Apologies: Kay Burton, Simon Mountford (Councillor), Tom Weatherston (Councillor), Gillian McFadyen (Parent Rep for SBC meetings)

Present: Chris Mowat (Chair), Gavin Innes (Treasurer), Ruth McKay (Headteacher), Barbara Thompson, Andrew McEwan, Colin Henderson, Alistair Martin, David McCann, Kerry Innes, Alec Nicol, Diana Blaylock, Richard Armitage, Lynn Young

Minutes of the last meeting: Approved

Chairman's Report:

Meeting scheduled on Monday 28th April 2014 did not go ahead.

KHS Leavers' Evening - 5th June 2014:

A request has been received from DHT Judy Brotherton for Parent Council to provide floral displays for the event however after no response it was suggested that funds are used to buy the arrangements. JBR advised she is happy to arrange if the Parent Council are happy to cover the cost. Chris Mowat to email JBR to go ahead and arrange the flower as required.

KHS Summer Concert - 9th June 2014:

CM has spoken with relevant individuals regarding refreshments for this event.

P7 Visit Parents' Evening - 10th June 2014:

CM, Kay Burton and Andrew McEwan will all be in attendance at this event and will help out with refreshments as required.

Meeting of Parent Chairs:

CM and Gillian McFadyen unable to attend the meeting held on 29th May 2014, awaiting information from Lisa Anderson at SBC.

Communication with Parents:

AMcE attended the Communication Evening on 1st May 2014 and was given procedures, guidelines and advice from SBC in respect of the use of social media (Facebook) by KHS Parent Council. AMcE felt the information was confusing, contradictory and dictatorial. It was noted that the Parent Council should set themselves up as a page not a profile, given clear guidelines which it was felt was just common sense.

SBC documentation states to "actively encourage likes and actively discourage comments", CM feels the main point of social media is to promote active communication. CM feels that no action needs to be taken unless advised by SBC. Parent Council to continue to actively monitor activity to ensure comments are satisfactory.

Ruth McKay suggested it may be beneficial to invite Lisa Anderson from SBC to a Parent Council Meeting to discuss the document in more detail and the approach taken to deal

with the requirements. CM confirmed he is happy for Lisa to attend a meeting and if anyone has any questions or queries regarding the SBC policy they can be brought to Lisa and discussed.

The Parent Council use their page to engage with parents, publicise meetings, display agendas and minutes. It allows an open discussion in regard to consultation on various items e.g. 33 period week / asymmetric week.

A Martin asked if the Parent Council could get the engagement via the schools weekly update? Facebook can be difficult to moderate and has the potential to get out of hand very quickly. SBC have a legal obligation to protect pupils, parents, staff and the public. There have been incidents in the past. RMcK has reservations but again highlighted the benefit of a visit from Lisa Anderson to discuss and make changes as necessary.

Lynn Young suggested that something was needed, a forum that catches the views of people who do not engage at school meetings. Facebook can be open to issues as highlighted. Would it be possible to have a closed forum?

CM advised that a statement will be added to make it clear that comments will be moderated, school staff should not be mentioned, and that for individual issues concerning parents the school should be the first point of contact.

CM expressed his thanks to Sarah Griggs for all her hard work as Clerk; this role has been taken over by Suzanne Cowe.

Treasurer's Report:

Report 02/06/2014

Gavin Innes noted that it has been very quiet on both accounts since last meeting.

Main Account:

Incoming cheque from Easy Fundraising for £55.92

Outgoings

Cheque to Sarah Griggs

Cheque to KHS Photo

Balance as of 02/06/14 is £2501.99

3 Ball Lottery Draw Account:

One winner of prize fund of £309 in April.

The cheques for that winner and for two £500 winners have cleared

No winner for May draw, and prize fund for June 2014 will be approximately £300

Balance as of 02/06/14 is £4274.86

Headteacher's Report:

An additional INSET day has been added to the calendar on Monday 20th October 2014 for Secondary only.

It is a very busy time of year and the new timetable started today. This is an interim timetable prior to the changes to the school week in August.

Staff Changes:

Due to the falling school roll, significant changes have been made to staffing for the coming year:

1.0 has been removed from Business Education (this post has been vacant this session)

1.0 has been removed from Maths (this post has been vacant this session)

1.0 has been removed from English (Mr Charles is moving to Peebles HS)

0.6 has been removed from Faith & Philosophy (Mrs Tansey is moving to a school in Morpeth)

0.4 has been removed from PE (Mr Ralph is leaving to teach overseas and will be replaced by a 0.6FTE post)

0.2 has been removed from SMT (Mrs Oliver is reducing to 0.8FTE)

0.5 has been removed from CDT (Mrs Cuthers is moving to Jedburgh GS)

It is very difficult to lose staff in this way, however due to the current budget / financial situation due to the falling roll there was no choice but to reduce staffing. The priority has been to reduce staffing in such a way as to create minimal disruption for learners.

In addition, Mr King from our Computing Department is retiring after many years service to the school. Dr Guy Warner has been appointed as his successor.

Mrs Brotherton is retiring from her post as DHT after almost 10 years in the school. Her position has been advertised and the closing date for applications is today. We also require a DHT Pupil Support. Both DHT posts will be permanent posts however there is a hold on recruitment due to potential redeployment. In the longer term, there will be two DHTs in KHS. The additional capacity has been maintained due to the demands of the new school project.

Mr Macklin from our Chemistry Department has been appointed to the PT Science post at Jedburgh GS. A Teacher of Chemistry will therefore be recruited.

A joint approach to the PE vacancy is being considered with local primaries.

School Roll:

School Roll has fallen as anticipated and Ruth confirmed she has seen the current P1-P7 pupil numbers and anticipates that next session will be the lowest point in the decline.

Budget cuts are still to come into place in the following years and the challenge faced by KHS is to maintain choice at each level and subject which will not be easy.

LY asked if there is parental involvement in the DHT recruitment process? Ruth confirmed there was. In line with SBC policy. Individuals involved must have undergone the necessary training.

CfE Monies:

The school have received further funds towards the implementation of the new higher courses. KHS has been awarded £2288 from the Scottish Government. Departments within KHS have put in bids for this money; the total amount back from all departments is £9268. The level of bid varies around the school as in some of the curricular areas the new courses are significantly different from the current courses. Ruth confirmed she will have some money to put towards the shortfall however would be grateful if the PC would be able to donate some money as well. The PC donated money last year for this purpose. It was suggested that other schools are considering the possibility of charging pupils for textbooks. It was felt that the government changed the course so they should be responsible for providing the necessary resources.

KHS were been awarded £3000 from CBAH. Ruth confirmed that donations from CBAH have previously funded Tree of Knowledge training courses which have benefitted pupils hugely. If this money is used for resources, it will not be available for other things.

Department budgets have remained the same for years they have not even kept pace with inflation. Ruth confirmed that photocopying is a major expense for departments. 87% of the school's budget is taken up by staffing and there is very little money left over to absorb the demands of the new courses.

CM stated that the PC should discuss what their money is to be used for. RM recalled an idea to purchase projection facilities for the hall in the new school which could be used for community film screenings as well as school events. This might offer a sustainable funding source.

It was decided that the PC would donate £3000 towards the CfE bids and Ruth confirmed she would be able to cover the shortfall. It is to be advertised that the PC have made this donation and why they have had to do this.

Asymmetric Week:

The outline for the new asymmetric week will be:

Monday to Thursday:

Start - 8:50am

2 x 50 min Lessons

Break (15 mins)

3 x 50 min Lessons

Lunch (50 mins)

2 x 50 min Lessons

End - 3:45pm

Friday:

Start - 8:50am

2 x 50 min Lessons

Break (20 mins)

3 x 50 min Lessons

End - 1:20pm

Pupils entitled to Free School Meals will be able to get food earlier on a Friday. The primary schools are more flexible in timings as they have a shorter pupil week. Joint timetabling across secondary schools will be considered in the future.

The school is already seeing the benefits of the new structure in the senior curriculum - Queen Margaret University have established an Academies programme which offers courses to S5/6 pupils. This involves attending university, college or a work placement on a Friday afternoon. A transport plan to support this is being developed by SBC.

BSLT are also going to be offering a range of activities / things to do on Friday afternoons and further information on this is due out shortly.

Promoting Positive Behaviour:

At KHS we place great emphasis on promoting positive behaviour as well as having appropriate sanctions in place when behaviour falls below expectations. Recently, we have been looking at our model and how it could be improved. Where behaviour merits a detention, these are currently held daily at lunchtimes and are covered by a member of SMT. Parents are notified if their child has a detention. Detainees are given a reflective exercise linked to the behaviour which caused the detention. After the review it has been proposed that lunchtime detentions will be held on Monday and Wednesday lunchtimes and supervised by staff volunteers. If the pupil fails to attend the lunchtime detention or the behaviour is much more serious then they will be issued with a detention after school which will be supervised by a member of SMT. Again, parents would be informed in advance. It was acknowledged that there may be transport implications for some pupils, but also that the after school detention was likely to be a more effective deterrent. Those present were supportive of the proposal, so this will be implemented from August 2014.

Registration:

KHS operates a period by period registration. A groupcall is sent to parent if child is absent and no contact has been received to ensure pupils are safe and accounted for. As of 2nd June this will happen at approximately 9.45am and 2.15pm and parents will be able to call or text the school back. It is vital that the school has up to date mobile numbers for pupil contacts. If the school does not receive a response from the groupcall, a phonecall home will be made. If there is no reply, a letter will be sent. If no response is received from any attempts to make contact the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If the school have any reason to believe a child is missing or at risk and cannot get a response from parents or from the emergency contacts, then we will contact the police.

Any Other Business:

Change of Uniform:

A question was asked regarding rumours of a change to school uniform. Ruth explained that the KHS Pupil Parliament have been reviewing the current school uniform and have run a consultation with pupils and fashion shows at assemblies. Any change would have a long

lead time for implementation and parents and staff would also be consulted. KHS does not currently have a code for footwear.

UCAS Event:

Colin Henderson highlighted that there is a Higher and Further Education event being held at Springwood Park on Thursday 4th September 2014 with a large number of universities being represented. A great opportunity for S6 pupils to attend and get information / ask questions etc. Ruth confirmed that all KHS S6 will have to opportunity to attend.

Date of the Next Meeting:

Monday 15th September 2014