



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KELSO HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 19TH OCTOBER 2015

1. Present: Chris Mowat (Chair), Kerry Innes (Treasurer), Ruth McKay (Headteacher), John Bassett, Simon Mountford (Councillor), Tom Weatherston (Councillor), Alec Nicol (Councillor), Colin Henderson, Alastair Martin, Michelle Matthews, Richard Armitage, Christine Brown and Gillian McFadyen.

2. Apologies: Andrew McEwan

3. Minutes of last meeting

Chris Mowat started off the meeting by saying that he feels, in his opinion, that we need to start from scratch. Meetings have been scheduled but not ran due to numbers, we need to engage. CM stated that we need to work a way forward, suggested that another AGM is held sooner rather than later, potentially the next meeting? CM advised that applications for funding have been received; we need to decide what is to be done with the existing monies. We need to look at what has been happening in the school since the last meeting.

Christine Brown, SBC SLO for Cheviot introduced herself and advised of her role. CB stated that AGM's are normally held in September in other places as it is a good time to pull in new blood - parents of new S1 pupils. CM advised that we have always held our AGM in January. Ruth McKay stated that it would really help to have the AGM in September, this would be very beneficial. CM stated that we should start with a blank slate - to be discussed.

4. Chairman's Report:

CM stated that he has been disengaged from PC and expressed his apologies for this and also for there not being a meeting since February. CM reminded everyone that he did step down however there was no-one to take over.

CM asked for an update on the new school. RM advised that we are still awaiting the government getting confirmation from the EU of how the funding is to be dealt with in an accountancy manner. RM confirmed that funding is available and has been ring fenced for this project; the new school will go ahead. The only unknown at this point is when, all the design work has been completed and is ready to go. This is the same situation for another 8 schools, a hospital and the Aberdeen bypass.

CM asked if this issue / delay could have been foreseen?

Tom Weatherston advised that this has come out of the blue and is not within SBC's control. SBC are applying as much pressure as possible but we are unable to move forward until this has been resolved. It is very frustrating.

The new school is scheduled as an 18 month build but there is no prediction of when; the last update was that it would be completed by January 2016.

The new Broomlands PS is being built using SBC funding and the new KHS is being built with government funding.

TW asked if there is likely to be issues with the contractors if the approval for all projects were to come at once and are all changes in materials / costs etc. accounted for? RM advised that in this type of project there is a limit to the how much money the contractors can make.

CM congratulated RM on her new job at Head Teacher at Portobello High School and expressed thanks for all she has done for KHS during her time, we hope for a speedy transition period.

CB advised that SBC are interviewing for an Acting Head Teacher post, information regarding the outcome will be available in the next couple of days. They are confident that an interim head will be in place for approximately 12 weeks.

The permanent post is being advertised as normal and the closing date for this is 4/11. The interview panel has been organised and they are hoping to have the permanent post filled by the end of November. When the successful candidate can be in post will depend on notice etc.

5. Treasurer's Report:

Main Account as of 15/11 - £3152.86

Lottery Account as of 15/10 - £3541.00

There are 59 active members of the lottery which brings in £274 per month. Last won in July, 2 winners each receiving £500.

Kerry Innes asked what are we doing with all this money? To be discussed later in the meeting.

6. Headteacher's Report:

There has been a wide variety of attainment in school recently:

- Lots of sporting successes
- Annual Rotary Young Chef Competition was held at KHS with Michelin starred chef Albert Roué in attendance. This was a fantastic occasion with 16 youngsters taking part from a wide range, some vulnerable. Mr Roué confirmed that he would like to have a bigger link with the school moving forward, he is committed to working with youngsters.
- In partnership with Floors Estates KHS opened the first beehive at the allotments. This is very accessible for pupils, parents and the community.

Staffing:

There have been a number of retirements, staff promotions within the area and there was a high turnover of staff at the end of last session. The new Director of Education Donna Manson held a large, very successful recruitment event at Cardrona which KHS benefitted massively from. This allowed us to start the new term with a full complement of staff. This is very positive for the school, new blood bringing new ideas.

There is unfortunately still an ongoing issue with recruitment within the Maths department. Mrs Atkinson leaving happened at the end of the summer and we were unable to appoint from the event at Cardrona or the recent advert. We are looking to utilise a recruitment agency to recruit from abroad. However the post is still advertised with a closing date of 2/11. We are still able to get specialised supply teachers however the availability is not FTE. RM and CM are continuing to look into these issues, this is ongoing. PT Mathematics Mr Graham has re-timetabled as much as possible so that no year group is disadvantaged. There are after school and lunch time help sessions offered to assist any and all pupils. The department feel that they are on track and we convey our thanks to the department, they have done what they can with what is available.

RMPS Teacher Ms Giles has now retired due to ill health. We have a temporary teacher in post and the advertisement of the position is ongoing.

Deputy Head Teacher Mrs Thomson has been seconded to SBC (CB's team) so there will be a temporary DHT appointed on a 23 month contract and this should be completed before RM's departure.

RM confirmed she has mixed feelings about leaving, she has liked working at KHS but the opportunity was too good for her to pass up. She confirmed she will work closely with the interim / new HT to ensure a smooth transition.

There is an open offer for Donna Manson to attend open event, which should be, after discussion between RM and CM, dealt with by new HT.

RM advised that the school Facebook page has been overhauled and new updates are now being posted regularly, we are getting information out there. The website, weekly update, Facebook everything is moving on and we need to approach it in various ways. RM asked that everyone, if they have not already done so, to 'like' KHS on Facebook.

School of Rugby - what is happening?

CB confirmed she is scheduled to have a meeting this week with Donna Manson and Scott Chalmers, there will be an update after this meeting. KRFC employed Jammy MacFarlane as the Rugby Development Officer and they have made him redundant. The SRU have advised KHS that they will assist with SOR so that we are not disadvantaged. The new PT Sport Mr Brown has picked up rugby (he has a background in rugby) and is doing his best with training etc. along with Mr Gordon and parent helpers. KHS is down a FTE Rugby Development Officer.

7. Fundraising and Funding Applications:

Parent Council funds have been used for a variety of different things in the past. CM advised he has received 3 applications for funding. CM stated he was under the impression that there is a limit on how much could be applied for? It was confirmed that applications can be received for up to 50% of £500. It was noted that we will need to formalise the process and publicise the availability of funding. The PC is to clarify the purpose of the funds (there are other avenues available). We need to assess what is being asked for and who is going to benefit? There was a discussion about keeping money back for a large project for the new school – projector facilities. It was felt that it is a good idea to keep some funds back in case of match funding. It was felt that we need to get the money churning, annual budget available for applications and set quarterly deadlines.

RM discussed the projector system for the new school. High quality projector system to be located in the Assembly Hall would cost in the region of £10,000 - £15,000. However this would be a revenue stream, with the relevant licenses KHS could hold movie events every 2 months. The Assembly Hall will have bleacher seating and by putting on movies and selling refreshments we are offering an amenity to the community - film club. This would be sustainable and not too much work.

Alastair Martin confirmed that if you asked the teachers to put in requests the money would soon be spent. RM advised that teachers / staff can bid to Thomas MacConnochie for funds.

What would the Parent Council fund? We need to be more specific and make sure the funding given is appropriate and benefits not just individuals but groups and the school as a whole. It was suggested that the money could be used for IT projects or the Reward Day (given to the winning house at the end of the year).

Criteria need to be set for the applications. AM suggested that applications are received for necessities rather than extras. RM confirmed that there is money available for necessities and applications should be made directly to her.

CB suggested that a representative go away and put together some ideas for the next meeting. Gillian McFadyen and Kerry Innes to put something basic together for next meeting.

Applications Received:

1. Katy McFadyen and Georgia Buckley – NSEA Championship Finals

Looking for a contribution of £250 towards cost of attending the above event. The trip costs approximately £10,000 for 16 children and 20 ponies to attend. Fundraising has been brought in approximately £7,500 so far through bag packs at various supermarkets and a donation from CBAH.

Agreed contribution of £250 to be made from Parent Council.

2. Mary Weir 1st 11 Hockey Top Flight Tournament 25th – 26th October

Agreed contribution of £250 to be made from Parent Council.

3. Battlefields Trip 2016

The cost of the trip has increased by £15 per head this year and KHS are trying to keep the costs down to ensure that all S3 pupils have the opportunity to attend this trip. John Bassett has kindly donated £1500 from the sale of his book and we are requesting that the Parent Council match this contribution. This is the same amount that was given last year. This money is used to reduce the cost for everyone. Simon Mountford confirmed he consistently gets good feedback in relation to this trip, it is informative and affecting for pupils involved. There is a list of names commemorated at KHS and locations of the graves on the trip, poppies are placed on graves, and this gives a connection to the pupils. Approximately 80% of the year group do attend this trip and find it is a very good life experience. The government does have funding available as well and an application has been made.

Agreed contribution of £1500 to be made from Parent Council.

8. Attainment:

RM confirmed that way attainment information is being displayed is changing and we are currently in transitions from old to new system. Insight website is producing attainment data. The results for KHS are based on pupil's journey by the time they leave KHS.

S6 pupils – 52% left with at least 3 Highers (increase of 10%) and 38% left with at least 5 Highers (increase of 11%). KHS is out performing the local and national average.

When the finalised report is available this will be brought to a meeting and the findings will be shared. RM expressed thanks and confirmed the tribute to staff who work very hard in challenging times.

9. School Improvement Plan:

Information was distributed to all (copy attached) and discussed briefly. RM advised she would be available to discuss further if required.

10. Parental Engagement:

It was suggested to arrange an AGM but to be arranged when new Chairperson in place. Alec Nicol suggested organising an 'event' with Donna Manson and Acting Head Teacher. This will maximise the parental / community interest in the Acting Head Teacher. This will be an opportunity for people to meet the HT but also publicise the Parent Council. We could offer tea/coffee, ask their thoughts and finish with a formal AGM. This could be publicised via Facebook and weekly update, continue to chip away at parental engagement.

Would an Acting Head teach be suitable for this event or should we wait until the permanent post has been filled? This will delay the event however will give us more time to prepare.

Colin Henderson stated that lots of things are going on, everything is changing so now is a good opportunity to act. CB suggested that we pick up on specific projects within departments, possibility of PT's speaking. What does it look like for learners?

Event idea – how to support your youngster?

The event should not be rushed; we will have one opportunity so it should be properly advertised. We need to make it something that people will want to come to. The new HT will draw people in but we do not want to do too much at once.

It was noted that sub-committees should be arranged however we have never managed to crack this at KHS. People shy away from meeting but may be interested in helping in other ways.

It was suggested that another meeting is arranged relatively soon (mid November) and the Acting Head to be tasked with putting together an outline for an engagement evening in January followed by a short AGM. This could be an Extraordinary General Meeting. This will allow the PC to get back on track with an AGM following in September. CB advised she will speak to Acting Head Teacher regarding an outline for the event. It was suggested that we directly invite 2/3 parents that were on the Parent Council (Edenside / Broomlands) for their youngsters that have now moved up into S1.

There is an S1 Parents' Evening being held on 02/12/15 and if there are members of the PC available it would be a good opportunity to catch 'newbies' and generate involvement. We could combine with the S6 Charity Committee serving coffee / tea in an informal setting to generate interest and pick up new ideas. We need to relate to them and their youngster, hook them in. CB advised she would be happy to attend and support.

It was decided that the focus of the next meeting would be arranging the subsequent meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 23/11/15 at 7.00pm