

Dalkeith High School Parent Council
Tuesday 10 November 2015

Present: Allyson Dobson (AD), Caroline Pearson (CP), Bill McQueen, Morag Ryan, Julie Bones, Anne Murray, Marianne Flockhart, Jane Richardson, Stephanie Heasman, Chantal Bruce, Jess Alexander, Carolyne Ross, Lorna Docherty, Julie Macdonald, Colin Beattie MSP, Councillor Lisa Beattie and Deborah Slater (DS)

Apologies: Donna Lothian and Anne Williams

Welcome: Chair welcomed everybody especially parents who are new to the PC.

Approval of previous minutes and update: AD reported back to the meeting that the downloads of the school app stand at 444 with the number of followers on Twitter slightly less than this. All opportunities will be taken to further promote the use of website, app and Twitter.

Notification of AOCB: absentee notification process

PTA: CP explained the difference between the Parent Council and PTA for the parents new to the school

Stained glass update: since the last Parent Council meeting the artist (Kate Henderson) invited parents to view the final design for the window in the Art Dept. and meet the S2s involved in the project. The design was very well received and can now be viewed on the school website. Installation will happen in Dec / Jan. Steve Kelly is liaising with BAM on this. Once installed there will be a formal opening and perhaps a temporary exhibition on the noticeboards nearby showing the progress from first artwork to final design.

Promotion of PTA/ Parent Council: would be good to have photos on Parent Council section of website rather than just minutes and agendas. Colin Beattie suggested a Parent Council visit to Scottish Parliament to provide a good photo opportunity. This idea was well received and may be followed up in the New Year.

Marianne Flockhart offered to look into having a Parent Council Facebook page to promote events, etc. DS brought up that SPTC holding social media training courses at the moment so Marianne offered to find out more about this too (*since the meeting Marianne tried to sign up but the next course is full, she is on the waiting list*)

Fundraising: a number of suggestions were made including a quiz and curry night, Spring Fair, Dalkeith High's Got Talent and a Ceilidh. It was decided that just one event would be good to start with. As two years since the last Ceilidh then this idea was most popular, this time it will be a family ceilidh.

Since the meeting AD has booked the assembly hall for Fri 18 March and CP has booked the ceilidh band; Julie Macdonald looking into hiring a bar via Eskbank Trading. HE depart unable to help with catering at that time of year due to practical exams taking place so another catering solution is needed

Colin Beattie suggested looking into having charity "like" status for the Parent Council to aid fundraising **Action point: CP**

AD asked if the Parent Council would provide refreshments for the Christmas Concert again this year (Thu 10 December). *Since the meeting Nadine Milne has been in touch to thank us for offer but not needed as Home Economics pupils are providing refreshments*

Head Teacher update:

- Battle of Bands held on 29 October, great night with five bands, the winning band was Martin Place
- This year's school show has been cast and is Hairspray. About 80 pupils are in it with the performances scheduled for 22 – 24 June.
- P7 Open Evening was held on 2 Nov and went very well, expected to have about 150/160 S1s next year compared to a low intake this year of 112. The PC had an input at the P7 eve in the hope that it helps attract parents to PC for next years S1
- Learning visits: currently teachers are going into other classes to observe colleagues in action as this is a good way to share practice. AD would like to open this opportunity up to parents too starting in the week beginning 23 Nov. AD and DS to liaise re parents wishing to take up this offer (*since the meeting the first three learning visits for parents have been set up*)
- Issue with bandwidth in the school has delayed the introduction of mobile technology in the school. Also need to work out how to make the best use of this technology when we do have it
- Education excursions: recent trips to Jarnac for French Exchange and Senior football team trip to Salou, Spain for training. AD highlighted the need to have a good balance between excursions and being in school so for part of the school year no excursions will be planned for senior years

AD gave presentation on proposed senior phase curriculum:

- need to get away from two term dash to Higher
- new senior phase would be made of stages not ages
- six subjects in each year so 18 qualifications possible in total
- more vocational options available
- in the future more flexible pathways possible, e.g. two years leading to Higher
- YASS (Young Applicants in Schools Scheme) – modules taken through OU
- possible to do Higher in S4 if able to achieve that
- more flexibility for the size of the school
- presentation to the wider parent body will take place on Thu 19 November at 7pm

Request for feedback from Colin Beattie re spending of education budget: Short discussion, Colin Beattie to provide link to relevant budget figures

AOCB: One parent expressed concern that the absentee reporting system is not working well as contacted on three occasions re daughter being absent when she was in school; other parents in the meeting echoed this. AD to investigate.

The meeting was closed.

Parent Council meeting dates 2015/2016:

12 January 2016; 23 February 2016; 12 April 2016; 17 May 2016