



# Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Meeting

## Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 (via Zoom)

- Present:** Hilary Ramage - Chair, George Docherty – Head Teacher, Graeme Hobson – DHT, Neil McLean – DHT, Kate Dunn – Treasurer, Jackie Lennox - Vice Treasurer, Lindsay Campbell - Secretary & Katherine Woodhouse – Minute Secretary
- Council Members:** Ady Allan, Angela Malcolm, Clair Milne, Katie Atkinson, Kirsty Broadfoot, Lindsey Connell, Susan Forsyth Cllr Craig Mackay & Cllr Bob Pollock
- Forum Members:** Arlene Milligan, Caryn Mair, Emma Inglis, Jacqui Hillan, Patricia Rowley & Susan Graham
- Apologies:** Cllr Peter Convery

	Action
1. <b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b> Hilary welcomed those in attendance and apologies were noted.	
2. <b><u>Captains Report</u></b> Kathryn and Robyn provided an update from the Captains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prom – date has been changed to 18<sup>th</sup> August and confirmed with Brig O'Doon. The photographer and DJ are available on the new date. Bus hire now needs to be organised.</li><li>• Leavers' hoodies – these were delivered to school on 22<sup>nd</sup> February and will be delivered safely to students on their return to school after Easter.</li><li>• Yearbook – deadline to finish editing is 1<sup>st</sup> February. An up-to-date photo with S6 students in their leavers' hoodies is to be taken and final checks made on everyone's page.</li><li>• Purple Friday took place on 26<sup>th</sup> February to show support for LGBTQ+ and to raise money for LGBT Youth Scotland. This involved a house quiz and students demonstrating their involvement on Twitter.</li><li>• World Book Day was on 4<sup>th</sup> March which involved Twitter contributions (what was the first book you remember reading?), promoting reading at home, book recommendations for all stages and encouraging involvement with World Book Day with Penguin Books.</li><li>• Return to school – some students have been back at school to complete practical work. Covid testing at home has been introduced for those who are in school regularly. Now helping to support the transition to get more people safely back in school.</li></ul>	
3. <b><u>Approval of Minutes</u></b> The minutes of the meeting held on 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2021 were approved by Lindsay Campbell and seconded by Ady Allan.  <u>Matters Arising</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hilary attended the Parent Council Chairs meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February – a copy of the minutes has been shared by Lindsay. The next meeting is 19<sup>th</sup> May.</li><li>• Hilary will revert at the next meeting regarding the required numbers to form a parent quorum.</li><li>• P7 transition – Graeme Hobson drafted a letter to be sent out from all primary schools in December. He has since sent a letter out regarding the transition evening (see below).</li></ul>	HR

<p><b>4. P7-S1 Transition – Graeme Hobson</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be 4 transition evenings, the first one being 9<sup>th</sup> March over Zoom at 6.30pm. Information will be shown about life at Marr and include a virtual tour. George confirmed that the take up for this meeting has been very popular.</li> <li>• Another evening in mid-May will be specifically for pupils with additional support needs in place of the enhanced transition day.</li> <li>• At the end of May/beginning of June there will be 2 evenings to ‘meet the departments’ with presentations each evening.</li> <li>• The transition evenings usually provide an opportunity for the Parent Council to speak to new S1 parents about the role of the Parent Council at Marr. As this will not be possible, Graeme asked whether the Parent Council would be willing to work with Parent Councils from each of the primary schools to set up uniform pop-up shops in their schools so that there could be a dialogue with the new parents. Hilary suggested speaking to Ayrshire Schoolwear to see if this is possible as it has not been done before. She advised that the Parent Council would again be organising a second-hand blazer service and asked if the school could put out a communication about collecting blazers. On this note Lindsay asked if anyone would be willing to co-ordinate this process and if so, to let her know.</li> <li>• George asked if anyone from the Parent Council would be willing to join the meeting next Tuesday to say a few words or prepare a pre-recorded video or presentation. Graeme will publicise the Parent Council’s new e-mail address in any case. Hilary agreed to take part but is conscious that she will only be on the Parent Council for another year. She will speak to Graeme separately about arrangements for this.</li> <li>• Graeme would ideally like to invite the P7s to come into Marr and is hoping this might be possible as restrictions start to relax, however they will not be able to meet their new classes as before. There is the potential to have young people come up from each primary school for a day in June. This cannot be done any earlier as the needs of the senior students have to be prioritised in terms of completing all their work for their National exams. Graeme asked that the Parent Council support the school on this decision.</li> </ul>	HR GD ALL HR
<p><b>5. School Holiday Proposal</b></p> <p>A letter from SAC had been shared with parents regarding proposed school holiday arrangements for 2022/23 with 2 different options proposed:</p> <p><b>Option 1</b> – Schools close on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and re-open to pupils on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February. Schools close on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and re-open to pupils on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> - Schools close on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and re-open to pupils on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Schools close on Friday 26th May 2023 and re-open to pupils on Wednesday 31st May 2023.</p> <p>Parents were asked to vote for their preferred option with the majority choosing option 2. George will submit this feedback to the Authority and see if that is in line with what other schools have opted for.</p>	
<p><b>6. Senior Phase Return</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most recent announcement from the Scottish Government was to give all pupils access to school one day per week from 15<sup>th</sup> March. Arrangements have been passed on to schools to decide how this should be organised and the Local Authority are not stipulating how this should be done. George stated that the focus has to be on the senior phase, however S1-3 are equally important, and he is keen to have young people in BGE in school for face-to-face learning some of the time before Easter.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has been tasked with submitting a formal plan by Monday. George confirmed that they have been working on a plan but it is not yet finalised.</li> <li>• For the senior phase the intention is to go back to the blended learning model which was in place for June. There will be a 50% split – half the class in with the teacher Monday/Tuesday and half Wednesday/Thursday. Friday will be reserved for those students who need to complete practical work and no BGE pupils will be in on a Friday.</li> <li>• George advised that classes will be impacted because of distancing so will be much smaller. When students are not in school they will still have some home learning to do and teachers are confident they can continue to provide remote learning. The aim is to have 40% of the school in with an additional 10% caveat for the senior phase. School buses will be at 40% capacity also.</li> <li>• Katie felt this was a good option. Mental health and wellbeing can be addressed down the line but having face to face education is more important. Caryn felt that having pupils back in school would help with their mental health anyway.</li> <li>• Hilary asked how groups will be split. George advised that the model follows the timetable but with only a proportion of pupils in at a time so this could be done alphabetically or split by house with a greater proportion of time given to the senior pupils.</li> <li>• Katie asked what the Council's view was on this. Cllr Pollock felt that the model suggested by George sounded like a good option and would 100% support having more students in school as on-line learning is not ideal. Cllr Mackay feels schools need to do whatever works for them and Marr has been leading the way with sharing best practice in online learning.</li> <li>• If George gets the go-ahead on Friday he will contact Hilary and Lindsay to provide an overview and will issue a letter to parents outlining the plan, then a bespoke letter later in the week advising which days young people will be attending.</li> <li>• With regard to testing, more staff are required to issue the kits. All students and staff have to wear masks throughout the day which will be a change for them. Lunch will need to be spent outside as plazas will be used for learning and teaching, and there will be no going out of the school at lunch time.</li> <li>• Katie asked about potential absences due to testing and the need to self-isolate. George advised that the classroom set up would be very tight and the 2m distancing will be maintained at school, but if students walk together to/from school in close groups they will be asked to self-isolate if one of their friends tests positive. This is going to be difficult, particularly as their previous experience of being at school during Covid was having everyone in school with no distancing.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. <u>School Staffing 2021-22</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• George advised that the projected school roll for 2021-22 is 1042 which is an increase from the previous 2 years and includes a lot of placing requests. There will be another large S1 intake in August of 2022. Hopefully this will put Marr permanently back over 1000 which means there is an increase in staffing to 70.4 FTE, which is around 13 additional teachers since George took post. A number of posts have been advertised and the closing date was Sunday. Due to being able to advertise early, there has been a good response to all the vacancies. These include teachers of Biology, English, HE, Maths and Music, with more appointments coming soon.</li> <li>• Some improvements have also been made in the school recently – 3 new IT rooms have been created with new PCs provided by the Authority which will accommodate 30 pupils in each class. Painting has been done and repairs to leaks and doors have been carried out.</li> </ul>	

## **8. Update on SQA and Reporting – Neil McLean**

- Neil shared the SQA's Alternative Certification model for 2021 which provides a timeline for assessing National exams.
- There will be a consolidation period to settle young people back into school and get them up to speed before launching into assessments after Easter.
- There will be a quality assurance process during April and May, then from the end of May towards the end of June provisional grades will be finalised. A couple of days will be used for assessment support days to moderate and verify the marking and work provided.
- At the end of June provisional grades will be submitted to the SQA and shared with the young people. There is a significant process to undergo before arriving at a grade for a young person.
- Departments are planning and preparing for delivering assessments to SQA. Some moderation documents have been developed in Marr which will be used across South Ayrshire.
- Katie asked how everything that has happened this year is taken into consideration. Neil advised that the guidance from SQA is for demonstrated evidence which is best achieved later on in the course. It is difficult to know how this will be taken into account, however parts of courses have been removed to factor in the extenuating circumstances.
- Jacqui asked if class tests are to be given as part of the key assessment process. Some subjects are advised to use SQA prepared question papers. Hilary asked if students would get more than one opportunity to sit an assessment. Neil will be raising this with SQA; it is not an exam so if a student were to do 4 assessments and only did well in 3, or did not do as well as the teacher expected, he hopes there may be an opportunity to re-sit that particular assessment. George raised this issue at the Head Teachers meeting and quality meeting as he does not want young people disadvantaged this year. Guidance is required from the SQA on this.
- Sue asked whether the assessments that were done before Christmas are taken into account. If the school has a piece of key evidence from earlier in the course George does not see why that cannot be taken into consideration. Sue also asked whether students would be sitting their assessments at the same time. Neil said that it is likely they will be done at different times but these are assessments and not exams and are evidence of that young person's attainment. There needs to be an element of flexibility in terms of when students are ready.
- Jackie queried the fairness of sitting assessments at different times in subjects such as maths as information about the content of the assessment can be shared. Emma agreed that it would be better if it could be consolidated at the same time as effectively these class assessments are very important. George advised that they would all be under the same conditions – every member of staff has a box for phones, teachers will be invigilating, etc, but this will be taken into account and the gaps between assessments minimised. Neil pointed out that students still need to be able to demonstrate their own capabilities.
- Hilary asked if more capable children would sit the assessments earlier and other young people will have the advantage of more teaching time before sitting theirs. George advised there needs to be an agreed cut off point amongst the secondary schools so that this does not happen, but they also have to consider situations where children are self-isolating.
- George has spoken to staff about offering supported study and this will start after Easter. All the young people will be back on 19<sup>th</sup> April and it will be the full class as there will be no distancing required.
- George is considering holding an SQA information evening towards the end of the month (w/c 22<sup>nd</sup> March) as the situation is evolving all the time. It was agreed that this would be a good idea. Hilary suggested putting something

<p>out in advance to ask if parents have any questions that can be covered on the night.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• George has tracking reports ready to go but there were a few classes he was concerned about in term of grades. He had asked staff to take the whole learning into account when giving grades. These will be finalised and sent out with a covering letter. He has asked staff to prepare a written report for S4-6 on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, however this will be difficult as teachers have not seen the children face to face.</li> <li>• Patricia asked if it was worth trying to put young people into groups and concentrate on those who have not engaged with remote learning otherwise it may be a waste of time for those who have been engaging well. George felt that last August pupils returned to school and picked up the pace really well. Also any vulnerable learners have already been brought back into school and this has been picked up on. It would be very difficult to create classes based on how well a child had engaged. The school will support any individuals who require help and take them out of class.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>9. <u>Next Month's Agenda Items</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement planning.</li> <li>• Stuart Harris – skills development presentation.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>10. <u>AOCB</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• George advised that the Positive Destination figures across Scotland have been issued. Graeme Hobson oversees this in Marr and Marr was up at 98.5% for positive destinations with 93.36% being the national average. He is delighted with this result which means SAC is at the top of Scotland for positive destinations. This is a great achievement and he congratulated everyone involved.</li> <li>• Katie asked about Advanced Higher business as it is not an option at Marr and does not seem to be available anywhere else. George confirmed that Business, Spanish and RE did not run anywhere in the Authority. Foundation apprenticeships run at Marr which may be another option to consider.</li> <li>• Lindsay advised that Kirsty Broadfoot is now a member of the Parent Council. There is a new generic Parent Council e-mail address and if anyone wants to receive information or be on the distribution list they will need to be added on.</li> <li>• Emma asked whether DoE Silver would be going ahead. Neil will ask Jen Maxwell although she is off work at the moment but there are some other DoE co-ordinators who might be able to help. There is also information on the DoE website about another type of achievement award available for those who have not been able to do the expedition.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>11. <u>Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7pm via Zoom.</p>	