



Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Meeting

Wednesday 2 February 2022 (via Zoom)

- Present:** Marie Anne Jackson - Chair, George Docherty – Head Teacher, Kirsty Broadfoot – Minute Secretary, Robert McLaughlin, Cllr Bob Pollock, Cameron Jack, Jake Murray
- Council Members:** Jackie Lennox, Susan Forsyth
- Forum Members:** Carolyn Adams, Kirsty Lee, Pamela Foster, Caryn Mair, Judith McCaughey, Arlene Milligan
- Apologies:** Lindsay Campbell – Secretary, Hilary Ramage, Kate Dunn, Lindsey Connell, Shafiq Ali, Maria Calcagni, Cllr Craig Mackay, Jeff Lawlor.

1. Welcome and apologies

Marie Anne welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. Captain's report

Cameron and Jake presented the Captain's report. They confirmed that the prelims were underway for S5 and 6 pupils and there had been positive feedback so far from the pupils and the invigilators. The main roles have been given out for the school show. There was a Holocaust memorial in school aimed at the younger pupils. Some pupils had the chance to visit a Synagogue. Some pupils have been enjoying 'Hot chocolate Thursday' – they are nominated by their head of house for this reward. Pupils in S2 to S5 will be picking their options soon and two careers evenings have been arranged to provide parents and pupils with information. These will take place on 3rd February for S2 and 8th February for S3 to S5.

3. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved by Jackie Lennox and seconded by Judith McCaughey.

Matters arising from the minutes were discussed. George provided an update on the swimming/cycling initiative, noting that great progress had been made. PC Harrower and Gill Scott met on 28th January with Cllr Mackay and Rory from the Active Travel Hub. The school have been able to purchase new bikes through the hub and there may also be access to further funding for additional bikes. Alistair Mutch is organising the swimming lessons. We have organised a booking for 2 lanes at Troon pool between 25th April and 6th June and the lessons will either take place once or twice per week. George thanked Cllr Pollock for his assistance with getting this up and running. Marie Anne will feed this back to the other parent council chairs at the next meeting. Pamela felt it was great that the school is organising these schemes. George then mentioned the virtual parent's evenings, noting that there had been an overall positive response from S4 parents who had taken part in the first event. Robert asked for feedback on the Sway presentation which had been emailed to parent council members. Jackie felt it was very informative, just spotted one typo which Robert will correct.

4. Covid update – George Docherty

George advised he had received updated school guidance from Scottish Government on 1st February and was expecting an update from South Ayrshire Council on 7th February. He noted

that the parent council meetings could once again be held in the school as well as via Zoom. Other changes are that the staggered lunches can be removed, extra-curricular activities can be resumed and visitors can be allowed into school on a needs basis. George advised that teachers would be looking at introducing more group work. George will send a letter to parents next week outlining the updates.

George confirmed that the school had received 36 CO2 monitors aimed at checking ventilation levels within classes. These will be rotated round the classes to begin with but will be installed permanently over the coming weeks. Marie Anne asked about the situation with the school having to pay for masks. George confirmed the spend is still around £1,000 on them and the school continue to remind pupils to bring their own mask to school. There has not been any update as to when masks will no longer need to be worn.

Jackie then asked about SQA revision guidance. George attended a webinar last Wednesday. A PowerPoint and virtual assembly will be held in early March, giving information on each subject and what exams to study for, focussed revision in March/April. For advanced higher chemistry, pupils can take in notes to support them in the assessment. George confirmed that information will be sent out to S6 parents along with the PowerPoint once the teaching staff have been updated on the process.

5. Career and Options Evening – update

Robert updated that the first event for S2 pupils was being held tomorrow – 3rd February and being organised by Mr Reid. 100 pupils/parents had signed up. Robert has edited the Sway presentation following feedback from Marie Anne. He confirmed that the options have been updated on the website. Jackie enquired about drama not being an option this year. George confirmed there is no drama teacher this year.

George then updated the group that the post within the English department has been filled. The teacher is very experienced and will start on 28th February. The school is now fully staffed.

6. Parent's Evening feedback

George confirmed that the first online parent's evening had gone well. There were a few teething problems with sound and the teachers concerned have been shown how to adjust volume settings ahead of the next evening. George gave a presentation on the 40 survey responses that were received following the event. The feedback was positive overall with parents saying the system was easy to use. A few people felt it wasn't long enough, but George noted that the timing for parent's evening has to be set in advance to tie in with the working time directive. Jackie felt the experience was very positive and the countdown timer was useful. Pamela asked if pupils needed to attend. George said there was no set guidance but that children should be encouraged to take part. Caryn asked if the online system allowed for appointments for all parents. George confirmed that as it is only 2 hours long this may limit the numbers able to attend. A reminder email was sent out to those parents still to sign up to the S2 event, so far 61% had signed up.

7. Next month's agenda items

- Presentation on literacy and numeracy. Looking to promote this to the parent forum. Lindsay/Kirsty to promote on parent council social media pages. ¹
- Update on exams.
- Jackie would like to get a sub-committee organised for the show. George will get in touch with Liam Baillie – possibly organise a Zoom call with him after school. ²
- Marie Anne will provide an update on any relevant business following the parent council Chair's meeting.

¹ LC/KB promote on social media.

² George to email Liam Baillie.

8. AOCB

A discussion took place regarding an incident with some S1 pupils last week. George advised that he had also spoken with pupils to address a drop in standards concerning uniform, litter etc. In the latest checks on uniform, 91% of S1s and 83% of S2s were wearing uniform. The numbers have picked up since December. George went on to discuss the recent letter regarding energy drinks, noting that it seems to be a serious problem in school. Some S1 pupils were seen at a local shop with cans of Monster drink and pupils found with them in school have had the drinks removed. George is speaking with Cllr Pollock and other councillors about the matter. Trying to engage with local shops but getting a mixed response. Cllr Pollock confirmed he had emailed the local MSP to see what could be done at government level about the problem. He also suggested an article in the next Going Out newsletter. George advised he had received two emails from people regarding behaviour of some Marr pupils. This has been passed to PC Harrower. Marie Anne felt the playing fields were very bad with litter from pupils passing by after lunchtimes. Perhaps the council's waste services team could speak with the children? George said that the community clear ups had started again and this was being done twice a week. Hopefully this will help to alleviate some of the litter problem. George advised that it was hoped that house assemblies could return after the February weekend and some external speakers would be invited.

The next meeting of the parent council will take place on 2nd March and this will be both in school and via Zoom. Caryn noted that there was a sound issue for those taking part via Zoom last time. George asked if some of the clerk fees could be used to buy a decent microphone. This was agreed.³

³ George to look at purchase of new microphone.