

# Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Forum Meeting



## Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016

**Present** - Duncan Beckwith - Chair, Alan Blackwood - Vice Chair, Rae Anderson - DHT & Katherine Woodhouse - Minutes

**Council Members** – Ann Cowan, James Morgan, Lindsay Campbell, Mark Fitzpatrick, Wendy McKenna & Stuart Harris

**Forum Members** – Jennifer Cron & Joy Paul

**In Attendance** – Bruce Harris - Educational Services, SAC

**Apologies** – Elaine McGregor-Sloman, Angela Malcolm, Catriona MacGarvie, Clair Milne, Hilary Ramage, Janet Wylie, Julie Cotter, Karen Dunlop, Kate Dunn, Katy Purdie, Kaye Matthews, Lindsay Gwynne, Shirley Macpherson, Carol Pritchard, Cllr Bill McIntosh & Cllr Nan McFarlane

	<b>Action</b>
<p>1. <b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b> Duncan welcomed those in attendance and apologies were noted from those unable to attend.</p>	
<p>2. <b><u>Captains Report</u></b> Corrie and Campbell provided an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christmas week was a huge success and comprised of stalls every day in the canteen, raffles, competitions, Christmas jumper day and the Christmas dances. Over £1400 was raised for the selected charities (SSAFA, Text Santa and Hansel).</li> <li>• Marr's 'wall of fame' is being introduced on the temporary wall outside the office where certificates, team photos and other achievements can be displayed in photo frames sourced by the captains. It is also intended to display photos of each year's dux. In addition 2 wall planners will be displayed for the junior and senior school to denote any key events in a bid to improve communication.</li> <li>• Plans for the S6 prom and yearbook are beginning to take shape with photos being taken for the yearbook.</li> <li>• Student council meetings are ongoing and well attended.</li> <li>• A number of S5 &amp; 6 students took part in an initiative run by Mr Harris called "Living on one" which involved living on £1 a day for a week – around 40 students took part but only 14 managed to see it through. Students were kept motivated throughout the task by messages on the plasma screens and Twitter.</li> </ul>	
<p>3. <b><u>Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme – Bruce Harris</u></b> Bruce Harris introduced himself as the co-ordinator within Educational Services responsible for managing Duke of Edinburgh (DoE), Award of Ambition, Dolphin House trips and Active Schools. He provided some background to DoE and his proposal to sustain the award going forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every secondary school in South Ayrshire is offered DoE with Marr always attracting a lot of young people and, more recently, more than any other school in the area.</li> <li>• No other authority in Scotland is doing as well as South Ayrshire, even Glasgow, with almost 40% of all 16 year olds taking part in DoE. The number of new entrants and awards gained has continued to grow since 2010. It is a large undertaking and relies heavily on volunteer teachers within schools to support the statistics. This success brings increasing pressure in terms of how to deliver the award as the number of volunteers does not match the expectation. It is now reaching crisis point and the number of new entrants may have to be capped.</li> <li>• In order to overcome this a couple of local authorities have come up with different ways of running DoE – Perth &amp; Kinross have an 'association' – a charitable organisation which</li> </ul>	

<p>helps to run the award, whereas Edinburgh run a 'Friends of the award' scheme which is set up on a charitable basis but run like a company with grants, funding, etc. DoE are quite guarded about who runs the award and do not like the local authority to off-load it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal in South Ayrshire is to set up a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation). The most difficult part of the award is to provide and expand the choice of expeditions, therefore the school would still run the award but the SCIO would be set up to offer a range of expedition places. Bruce felt that this was the best solution and the only way to sustain the growing number of young people who want to take part - the local authority maintains control of DoE as the school would still administer it, but the SCIO would take control of expeditions. This would help to regulate the cost of expeditions (which are relatively good value when compared to some school trips) as a SCIO can apply for different grants and funding than the council.</li> <li>• As yet there is no company set up and no-one appointed to be on the board of that company. To this end Bruce asked if anyone would be interested or know anyone who had the relevant skills or experience to take this forward. A meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March and Bruce welcomed any interested parties to come along.</li> <li>• Rae advised that the school supports DoE in terms of the number of staff they are able to offer however this cannot be sustained if numbers continue to grow.</li> <li>• Should anyone wish to get in touch for further discussion or information, Bruce's e-mail address is <a href="mailto:Bruce.harris@south-ayrshire.gov.uk">Bruce.harris@south-ayrshire.gov.uk</a>.</li> </ul>	ALL
<p>4. <b>Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising</b> The minutes of the meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 were agreed as being correct. Proposed by Mark Fitzpatrick and seconded by Alan Blackwood.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>(4) <u>Parent Support/involvement</u> – Wendy highlighted that there seems to be some discrepancy about whether students should go to school and not take study leave during prelims. Rae advised that this is only the second year of no exemption for South Ayrshire children and is still challenging to monitor, however guidance staff will be speaking to any children who did not attend school during this time which may result in parents being contacted.</p> <p>(7) <u>AOCB</u> – Duncan asked whether there was any update on the sports trophies – Rae advised that Craig McPike had now received the trophies from storage and they were in the hands of the engravers.</p>	
<p>4. <b>Head Teacher's Report – Rae Anderson</b> In Elaine's absence Rae provided the Head Teacher's report.</p> <p><u>Curriculum</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S2 learning review week commences next week where parents will have 20 minutes with tutors and young people to go through all aspects of their learning. So far the uptake has been good.</li> <li>• Options choices were discussed at 3<sup>rd</sup> year assembly. Deadline for having everything signed and returned is 2<sup>nd</sup> March.</li> <li>• Dance, drama, STEM and Developing Scotland's Young Workforce are going to be included in the Curriculum for S1 and 2. Rae looking at what accreditation can be incorporated into the curriculum, e.g. skills options for 3<sup>rd</sup> years, leadership plans for higher up the school.</li> <li>• Gillian McTaggart has started the timetable for next year and there will be a new curriculum update on the website.</li> <li>• Personal entitlement, e.g. tutor time, will continue next year.</li> <li>• Inspection follow up has taken place and parents will receive a letter from Education Scotland outlining the progress that has been made. Elaine currently working on a draft plan.</li> </ul> <p><u>Parent support/involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graham Hobson and Alan Blackwood have been working on a parents' information booklet (see AOCB below).</li> <li>• Tracking information for prelims will not be available until next Wednesday – feedback will be provided at next meeting.</li> <li>• A study skills presentation will be offered at S5/6 parents' evening half an hour before appointments start. This will be set up in the classrooms. Study guides will be available to</li> </ul>	EMS

<p>purchase in the evening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaine has set up a parent group for parents who have asked for extra support which started this week.</li> </ul> <p><u>Staffing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergoing a staffing exercise at the moment, looking at staying on numbers but do not know entitlement as yet.</li> <li>• New ICT Technician, Chris Kelly has started on a temporary contract until the summer and is a good addition to the staff.</li> <li>• Stuart Harris is having exploratory discussions with a charity that works in partnership with schools to try and find a suitable community in Malawi that the school can work with in order to help the school to establish international links. Stuart is attending a meeting with Kirsty Pattison (S6) on Saturday to find out more, however if a partnership could be established it may be possible to take a group of 25/30 pupils to Malawi every year.</li> </ul> <p><u>Students</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S4-6 supported study sessions will resume next week and there will be Easter school provision – details will be on the website. General supported study sessions will be available in the library as well on a Wednesday evening.</li> <li>• STEM skills event aimed at S1 and P7 pupils will take place at Ayr Campus.</li> <li>• Joy asked if there was any intention for 3<sup>rd</sup> years to take part in Columba this year – Rae advised that funding was available to go at the end of February. John Allison is looking into this and Rae will ask him to report back.</li> </ul>	<p>SH</p> <p>RA</p>
<p>5. <b><u>Building Works – Rae Anderson</u></b></p> <p>Rae provided an update on the building works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concrete frame of the rear of the building is almost complete. Rae would like the children and staff to go out and see how the building is progressing as it is starting to take shape. Rae has requested photographs electronically so she can put them on the website in order to share the progress that has been made so far.</li> <li>• The restoration work in some of the rooms in the Marr building has been fabulous. Levelling the floor in the assembly hall is now taking place.</li> <li>• The next decant will be in January 2017 into the other half of the Marr building and the brand new technical wing. Existing PE facilities will remain available and it has been decided to retain the temporary accommodation as there will be a shortage of classrooms. This is only until the other half of the building is finished and the cost of keeping this accommodation had already been factored into the budget. As this decant takes place mid-term it will be a crucial time - Elaine is in consultation with SAC about how best to manage it in order to avoid putting the children at any disadvantage. She will also be speaking to all Principal Teachers to ascertain their plans for the decant. Rae has asked Kier for their support on this.</li> <li>• PE department will be demolished in May 2017 after the last exams.</li> <li>• Rae has spent a lot of time asking people to stay out of the building site and there has only been one incident so this has been very successful. Currently working with Kier to try to use this as an outside classroom to tie in with aspects of the curriculum.</li> <li>• The all-weather facilities are proving very popular with lets. Rae had been made aware of an incident a couple of weeks ago where the police were called to the car park, however each visiting team now knows where they should park. Potholes in the car park have been partially fixed and Rae has raised lighting issues.</li> <li>• Duncan mentioned a few 'snagging' issues with the pitches which he had raised back in June as well as at the sports hub meeting but which have not yet been addressed. Previously it was understood that Kier would remove the huts outside the sports pavilion and lay hard core to increase the parking, however Derek Yuille has now advised that this was never promised. Rae clarified that Derek is the Project Manager for the school build and there is a very strong partnership. It may be that this issue needs to be directed to someone else. Duncan also pointed out that the grass area around the hockey pitch had become dangerously muddy as this is the route to the grass pitches - he proposed that some form of pathway should be put down around the all-weather pitch. Rae agreed to speak to David Strang about these issues.</li> <li>• Rae confirmed that children should be taking the safe route to the sports pitches and not along Dundonald Road, however they are still permitted to walk across the playing fields. Duncan advised that there had been an incident involving a local resident who had told the children they could not walk across the playing fields. PE staff are now doing their best to</li> </ul>	<p>RA</p> <p>RA</p>

<p>accompany the children when walking to the pitches.</p>	
<p>6. <b><u>Chairman's Report – Duncan Beckwith</u></b>  Duncan provided feedback from a recent meeting run by the Education Department for Parent Council Chairpersons from all schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Douglas Hutchison spoke briefly about a project to allocate Language development officers to all primary schools in the cluster to offer languages including French, German, Spanish, etc. as early as nursery and P1 in the hope it will encourage children to throw themselves into learning a different language.</li> <li>• Scottish Government announced a £1.5m fund to improve attainment nationally.</li> </ul> <p>Duncan also gave an update on the recent sports hub meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that 12 Marr pupils are involved in Active Schools and primary schools.</li> <li>• There will be an Easter programme in the Marr gym halls this year.</li> <li>• Looking at another event in August to promote activities as well as re-vamping golf event which is held in the summer.</li> </ul>	
<p>7. <b><u>AOCB</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duncan advised that 2 alternative dates for school Christmas holidays for 2017/18 had been proposed – either Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December to Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January, or Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December to Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January. All those present agreed that the first option would be preferable.</li> <li>• Alan provided an update on his meetings with Graham Hobson regarding Parental Support/Involvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Alan felt the Parent Council should be more involved in providing a link between parents and the school. It was suggested that the best way to do this was to introduce an information document for parents. At the moment there is no link to feed out information from the Parent Council to the wider parent body other than minutes of meetings, which are not always available on the website.</li> <li>○ The proposed document would build on Graham's draft report on Student Support and Development, but would also provide information on what the school is about and be in a brochure format that parents could keep handy. It would include details of subjects, sports, clubs, etc. as well as a section on assessments. He also felt that Parent Council members who attend events at the school could take pressure off the teachers and give advice about the school using this document.</li> <li>○ Ann asked if this would be available electronically as well as she felt that many parents would be more likely to look for information on the website rather than keep a paper document. Alan confirmed this should be possible.</li> <li>○ Wendy asked where the funding was coming from – Alan advised this could be produced in house by the ICT department and by children in the junior school.</li> <li>○ With regard to the Student Support aspect, Alan felt that there should also be some provision for children who are considered 'highly able' and that they should be assessed in the same manner as those with, for example, dyslexia. This is not something that is currently addressed in Graham Hobson's initial document. Mark was concerned that the Parent Council should not become too involved in the educational side of how the school operates but rather leave that to the experts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Alan advised that the target for completion of the document is June.</p>	<p>DB</p> <p>AB</p>
<p>8. <b><u>Next Meeting</u></b>  The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 at 7.30 pm.</p>	