

# Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Forum Meeting



## Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017

**Present** - Duncan Beckwith - Chair, Angela Malcolm - Treasurer, Elaine McGregor-Sloman - Head Teacher, Rae Anderson - DHT, Neil McLean – ADHT/Computing, John Allison – DHT, Hilary Ramage - Secretary and Katherine Woodhouse - Minute Secretary

**Council Members** – Ady Allan, Claire Milne, Kate Dunn, Kaye Matthews, Lindsay Campbell, Lisa Rossi, Mark Fitzpatrick, Timothy Wight, Stuart Harris and Cllr Peter Convery

**Forum Members** – Gillian McGowan, Joy Paul

**Apologies** – Alan Blackwood, Julie Cotter, Karen Dunlop, Katie Atkinson, Katy Purdie, 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. Duncan advised that James Morgan would be standing down from the Parent Council as he is unable to attend all the meetings due to work commitments which involve him spending a lot of time abroad. Duncan expressed thanks to James for his time and contribution over the years.</p>	
<p>2. <b><u>Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising</u></b>                      The minutes of the meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016 were approved. Proposed by Mark Fitzpatrick and seconded by Kaye Matthews.</p>	
<p>3. <b><u>School Captains</u></b>                      Ella and Lorrie provided an overview of the first few weeks in the new building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new building is still very much 'work in progress' and students need to be reminded of this.</li> <li>• All students have been issued with a locker and there have been assemblies outlining the rules for locker use. Every student has signed a form stating that they will follow the rules. There are 1350 lockers in total.</li> <li>• Following a meeting between Elaine and the Ayrshire Post, a very positive article was published about the new school.</li> <li>• P7 pupils had a tour of the school on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January and were shown round all the classrooms. This was followed by a P7 workshop that evening at which there was a huge turnout. The captains had lots of help and it went well, however they felt that for next year the parents should be divided into smaller groups as it was difficult fitting everyone into some of the classrooms and science labs.</li> <li>• The captains will be reviewing the roles of prefects in the new school.</li> </ul> <p>Other news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prelim exams have now finished and results are being issued from 30<sup>th</sup> January. Junior captains took charge during the prelim period.</li> <li>• The captains want to try and raise as much money as possible through fundraising and hope there is enough time for them to realise all their aims. Comic Relief is the next fundraiser and they are hoping to be able to utilise the new kitchen in some way.</li> </ul> <p>Elaine stated that the captains have been a great asset and have worked hard. They are enjoying the limited time they have in the new school.</p>	
<p>4. <b><u>Building Works – Rae Anderson</u></b>                      Rae provided an update on the decant and a progress report on the building works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of 7 assemblies took place during the last 2 days of school before the Christmas holiday to ensure that students knew what to expect when they came back to the new building for the first time.</li> <li>• The new building was handed over at midday on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December and tours of</li> </ul>	

the school took place for 3 year groups on Wednesday and 3 more on Thursday morning as well as for all staff.

- The decant was very successful – Elaine and Rae worked for 3 full days over the holidays to make sure everything went as smoothly as possible. There was a lot to be done but plenty of support from SAC and staff.
- Wi-Fi was switched on yesterday and is now up and running throughout the school apart from the ICT suites. Neil advised it would be ideal if the school could provide Wi-Fi for the children which could be filtered and provide a safe 'walled garden' - the capacity is there but there are quite a few issues to look at. The vision is to be able to provide access to the school's network.
- Staff have created snagging lists and advised whether there are any items of furniture they need. This has been handed over to Kier to address. Rae still meets daily with the site team to make sure all issues are addressed.
- The next phase involves getting the Marr building back in August, ahead of schedule. Maths and English will move into their permanent home and the PE block will be ready in October. The final phase will be landscaping in November and this is still in the planning stage. Demolition work starts on Saturday with the PE block – a soft strip has been done and the Strathclyde building is now a shell.
- The barrier in the driveway has been hit at some point and is no longer working. There was some debate as to whether the school should pay to have it reinstated. There has been a marked increase in traffic since it came down and Rae asked that all parents still use the preferred drop off point at the pavilion. She is reluctant to reinstate the barrier just for those who break the rules.
- Lindsay asked about those children who wanted to study during prelims but were told the computers were not available. Rae advised that the computers were functioning and they should have been able to find students a place to study if they asked. She was unaware there had been a problem as there were plenty of computers available for use.

- **Head Teacher's Report – Elaine McGregor-Sloman**

Elaine provided her monthly update:

Building

The article in the Ayrshire Post about the new school was good overall, however some of the quotes were not from Elaine, e.g. the statement about staff having to work in a building site was incorrect. Elaine has always maintained that there will be no disruption to learning and teaching and the project has been managed very well.

Fundraising

Elaine outlined fundraising achievements to date including £1560 for Children in Need, £167 from Halloween disco, £550 from Christmas dances and £54 for Poppy Appeal.

SQA

SQA qualifications are changing - National 5 in 2017/18, Higher in 2018/19 and Advanced Higher in 2019/2020. There is no change to the content of the exams but subtle changes which will be documented on the SQA website. Metal and woodworking will have a final exam; PE will now require students to excel in 2 sports and the weightings on level of questions in Maths will be greater. The school is working on this and will continue to do so. Donna Vivers of the SQA is scheduled to meet with all staff on 6<sup>th</sup> March and will talk them through the changes. Elaine is not concerned at the moment and will raise any issues if necessary. This will affect current 3<sup>rd</sup> years going into 4<sup>th</sup> year. The course descriptive booklets that are given out at the options evening on 7<sup>th</sup> February will be the new versions.

Events

- Elaine commended Hilary for the time and effort she has put into the careers/options evening on 7<sup>th</sup> February including timings of appointments for staff. This has involved a huge amount of work and it has really helped the school. It currently looks like there will be about 400 people attending. This has never been done in South Ayrshire before and there are a lot of businesses going to be represented. John Allison added that the school is trying to make sure students are more career ready earlier and linking in with business partners is important. STEM is already timetabled in S1 and 2.
- On 20<sup>th</sup> February Elaine will attend an Equity evening for Head Teachers about deprivation and closing the gap to raise attainment. The money allocated to the school

will be based on a free meal entitlement for S1-3 and Marr's entitlement has reduced to 7.8. This is based on returned forms rather than those who are entitled, therefore she will be encouraging anyone who is entitled to fill in the form. The money will be downloaded from Scottish Government rather than the local authority and they will carry out spot checks. The school must demonstrate what difference it is actually making, i.e. the impact. There are a range of children at Marr from different deciles and it is about how we can make the money benefit them.

- Elaine will be taking part in the Twilight Walk on 23<sup>rd</sup> May for the Ayrshire Hospice if anyone is interested in sponsoring her.

#### Staff

- New PT for Biology, Elaine MacAuley, has already started.
- New PT for modern languages, Julia Richard, will be starting on 16<sup>th</sup> February.
- Mrs Dawson, PE teacher is retiring in March and Elaine advised that she has someone who is quite keen to step into that role.

#### Students

- The final of the YPI takes place on 9<sup>th</sup> February for S5. The winning group is awarded £3000 for their chosen charity and Marr is in the final again. There have been various charities chosen by the children who do projects about them culminating in a presentation to the YPI panel.
- School production this year is going to be 'The Wizard of Oz' from Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June in Marr's new assembly hall. Tickets will be £5 or £16 for a family of 4. Will be reaching out for help from the Parent Council nearer the time and any fundraising initiatives would be welcome. Posters will be going out into the local businesses as soon as possible. The learning plaza will be opened up for people to drop in and watch small acts during rehearsals. John Allison is considering trying to get personal development awards for children who take part.
- Two students are going forward as candidates for the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- Elaine received an e-mail last week from a parent whose child she had congratulated for being selected to be part of Kilmarnock football club's first team squad, however unfortunately there was nothing about this on the website. She reiterated that if anyone knows about anything at all regarding outside achievements that they send details to her so that it can go on the website.
- The P7 evening was well attended. There have been over 23 placing requests since August.
- Prelim results deadline is 4<sup>th</sup> February. Tracking done before Christmas is looking very positive.

#### School Trips

- Iceland trip will take place in 2018 (S3); Malawi trip in 2018. Fifty S3 children going to Stratford on a literature trip in June. John is looking more closely at trips, e.g. Higher Modern Studies trip. Strict criteria from the Director of Education is that all trips must be educational, i.e. Iceland trip will cover biology, environmental science and geography. It was pointed out by some parents that the current S4 year has not had the opportunity to go on any trips.
- The school has been looking into space technology. Two schools in Houston want to form a partnership and link in with local schools and Elaine has put Marr forward. Prestwick has already been chosen because of its proximity to the airport. If Marr is successful, some of the children may get the opportunity to go to NASA. Cllr Convery feels that many other companies from North America/Canada will also come forward with similar propositions.

#### **6. Careers Evening – Hilary Ramage**

- Stuart McNeill has put together leaflets about the evening. Appointments will be going out to all the parents and students soon. Lots of people have already volunteered to help 'meeting and greeting' as well as plenty of student helpers.
- Lisa distributed an Interviewer's pack which she uses at work and which she felt might be a useful resource for the school to purchase and for students to access. The front of each card has a description about a type of behaviour with the structure of the questions you would need to ask on the reverse to ascertain if someone exhibits these traits. She would



11. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 7.30 pm.