

Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Forum Meeting



Wednesday 5th October 2016

Present - Duncan Beckwith - Chair, Alan Blackwood - Vice Chair, Angela Malcolm - Treasurer, Elaine McGregor-Sloman - Head Teacher, Hilary Ramage - Secretary & Katherine Woodhouse - Minutes

Council Members – Claire Milne, Julie Cotter, Kate Dunn, Katy Purdie, Mark Fitzpatrick, Cllr Nan McFarlane & Cllr Peter Convery

Forum Members – Arlene Russell, Ady Allan, Carolyn Calder, Katie Atkinson, Lisa Rossi & Maggie Boyd

Apologies – Catriona MacGarvie, James Morgan, Karen Dunlop, Kaye Matthews, Lindsay Campbell, Jackie Harvey, Emma Inglis, Nicola McClure, Stuart Harris & Rae Anderson

	Action
<p>1. <u>Welcome and Apologies</u> Duncan welcomed those in attendance and apologies were noted from those unable to attend.</p>	
<p>2. <u>Captains' Report</u> Lorrie Malcolm and Natalie Smith provided an update on behalf of the captains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising – target for the year is £7k. Working with Mr McLean - Children in Need day has been organised as well as an awareness week for Poppy Scotland. • Student council – their target was to encourage more students to take part this year and this has already been achieved in certain year groups. • S1 induction - working on improving the relationship between S6 and S1 and as part of this some S6 students are attending S1 PSE classes to help out and give advice including a forthcoming alcohol awareness programme. • Malawi project - S1/S2 have written letters for the Malawi project and the captains are hoping to organise a big fundraiser for this that gets everyone involved. 	
<p>3. <u>Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising</u> The minutes of the meeting of 7th September 2016 were agreed as being correct. Proposed by Katy Purdie and seconded by Hilary Ramage.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising</u> 8) AOCB – Playing fields – Cllr McFarlane gave an update on the dog fouling issue. A Civic Scotland act to introduce rules banning dogs from playing fields and play parks is going through the initial consultation process, following which it will go through to the council and public consultation. At the moment only 10 enclosed play parks have been named under these regulations (Hosiery Park and the beach play park being the 2 in Troon). Once management rules are in place the council can approach Scottish Government to apply these rules to include Marr College. At the moment dogs are only banned from playing fields whilst matches are being played and therefore owners can only be asked to remove them at other times out of respect. However once the new rules are enforced then owners can be fined for bringing their dogs onto the playing fields. Signs will be displayed accordingly with warnings about the penalties of breaching the rules.</p> <p>Elaine advised that she receives regular e-mails from one local resident about coaches parking in front of his house at the entrance to the playing fields on a Saturday morning (despite him not owning this grassed area). All away teams are sent a leaflet about parking. Elaine does not expect any of the PE staff to ask coach drivers to move their vehicles; similarly, if anyone is parking disrespectfully it is not up to her staff to get involved. She has advised the Council of this problem. Duncan advised this was raised at a sports hub meeting last night where it</p>	

was suggested that buses should perhaps be allowed to drop off at the playing fields then move and park in the school grounds, however it is difficult for buses to manoeuvre at the moment as the compound is closed at the weekend. Duncan asked that parents park sensibly without blocking the through road to the pavilion so that access for emergency vehicles is not compromised. The possibility of laying down hardcore to increase the parking facilities is still being considered.

Cllr Convery added that councillors receive complaints from a number of residents about the parking issue on a Saturday. Currently legislation is going through parliament about not allowing any cars to park on pavements which may have an impact for parking at the playing fields. The Council has advised bus companies that if they cannot use the school grounds they are entitled to use the road at the cemetery to drop children off and pick up.

5) Head Teacher's Report – Meeting with S1 Parents - further to Elaine's invitation to S1 parents to meet and go through some areas of the School Improvement Plan, curriculum, etc, she reported that the first of two sessions had been held last night. Elaine was disappointed with the turnout as only 8 people attended. Hilary advised she had e-mailed all the first year parents for whom the Parent Council had contact details (which is not a comprehensive list) and sent Elaine details of those who had expressed an interest. It was those parents who then received a text regarding the session, therefore this invitation did not reach the entire year group. The only way this could be achieved was if a text was issued from the school to all S1 parents. The next session will be held on 24th October at 4.00 pm.

Some of the issues that arose at the meeting included communication, behaviour, violence and strategies within the school. Lisa Rossi, who attended the meeting, said the session centred around the induction of the first years and the reaction to the violence and fighting that had taken place and the school's strategies for dealing with this. Kate asked if the outcomes from this meeting would be communicated to the rest of the S1 parents. Elaine advised that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss curriculum, general terms about the school and school processes so that new parents could have a better understanding of issues like SQA terminology etc. She had no intention of distributing this information any further and anyone interested in learning more would be welcome to attend the next session. Nevertheless, Kate felt a letter should be communicated to all S1 parents regarding the specific issue of violence that arose at the meeting, as this is being discussed by S1 parents separately and it may be worthwhile having some form of communication from the school about how it is being addressed. Lisa felt that a lot of anxiety was caused amongst the parents after children came home and talked about an alleged incident involving knives and agreed that some communication from the school would be reassuring and would help to keep matters in context. Elaine acknowledged this point and agreed to send out a letter on this issue, however reminded parents that there will not be letters home from school every week as there might have been at primary school due to the fact that she produces a monthly report.

EMS

In terms of the violence Elaine stated she had never experienced a first year group like this one, however it involves a minority of children in the year group. She advised that this is an issue that has not arisen before and a lot of the incidents are not happening in the school grounds. From a parent's point of view, Katy also pointed out that this type of issue has never arisen before during all her years as a parent at the school.

Elaine added that parents were given an opportunity to discuss any concerns at the settling-in appointments with guidance teachers (held during w/c 20th September), however it was mentioned that as these meetings took place during the working day not all parents were able to attend. Elaine appreciates this but advised that she cannot ask staff to stay on any later at night.

PC/NM

8) AOCB – 20mph lights - Cllr Convery had spoken to Ayrshire Roads Alliance about the malfunction of the 20 mph lights and was informed they were working again, however Katy pointed out that she drives this way every day and they were not working. Cllr Convery and Cllr McFarlane will contact Ayrshire Roads Alliance again.

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

School Improvement Visit

Visit from the Authority scheduled for 21st October with the Director of Education, Education Manager, QIO, visiting Head Teacher and visiting depute Head Teacher in attendance to look at the results, SIP etc. Elaine has no reason to believe this visit will not go well.

Students

Elaine meeting with Tommy Stevenson, Director of CAMHS tomorrow as Marr is going to be a pilot school for mental health. More information on this will be provided next month. Mental health issues in this area are on the increase. Will be looking particularly at girls but on the increase for young boys also.

Building

Only 50 working days until the move into the new building. Nothing can move until the new building is signed off and this will not happen until Christmas. Rae and Elaine will be in school 4th/5th/6th January. There will need to be a partial school closure and it is proposed to have a 12.00 noon finish on 22nd December with 9th/10th January being moving days. The lower school will return on 11th January and prelims will start on 12th. Everyone in the school will move so it is a big task to achieve in 3.5 days, however Elaine is quite confident of its success and will try to minimise disruption as much as possible.

5. **Results & School Improvement Agenda**

Elaine presented SQA exam results and provided further information on the School Improvement Plan and agenda.

SQA Results 2016

S4 results were as predicted with an improvement in S5 Higher, particularly at 3 @ 6 and 5 @ 6. These are the best results in the last 5 years and the best across the Authority. The results below only take account of A-C passes:

S4	5 @ 5 – 47%	5 @ 4 – 92%	5 @ 3 – 97%
S5	5 @ Higher – 26%	3 @ Higher – 45%	1 @ Higher – 67%
S6	1 or more Adv Higher – 16%		

- As there are no appeals now based on prelims, criteria had to be set by the school for re-marking submissions (SQA will not consider re-marking if a higher grade was not predicted). Anyone who fell within the criteria was contacted before the paper was submitted as marks can go down as well as up. There were a total of 45 papers submitted for re-marking at a cost of £957; 12 of which were successful. Some schools only offer re-marks based on a D/C borderline. SAC is bringing out its own policy on this but as yet it is not known how this will work.
- Elaine advised that this is the last year of National 5 with units (currently based on 3 units and an assignment). Have yet to be told what is coming in instead and will let everyone know as soon as she gets any more information.
- The current school roll is 874 with 911 predicted for next year. Currently there is one child going out of the consortia and 19 coming in. The capacity for the new school is 1350 and Elaine predicts it will continue to rise.
- Elaine advised that in order to ensure all students are able to choose their preferred subject options, timetabling is no longer done in columns but manually input to get the best possible fit for the children – no other school does this. There is tracking in the junior school and the bottom 20 receive additional support. The Learning Review days are now going into a third year but there is not the capacity to roll this out for S4 and 5. Kate commented that the tracking information, in her opinion, had been very accurate. Elaine said this has been very successful.
- Elaine advised that currently the school has 7 student teachers and will have another 7 before Christmas who are on a 3-4 week programme.

School Improvement Plan

SAC key priorities for SIP 2016/17:

- Raising attainment and closing the gap in literacy and numeracy

- Health and wellbeing (using SHANARRI indicators)
- 2 year plan
- Flexibility for priorities that come in from the Scottish Government
- Data analysis will provide information to enable accurate tracking
- Education service improvement objectives 2016-18 – national, local and school priorities.

The SIP is the responsibility of all stakeholders with priorities being:

- 1) leadership and management of school improvement, culture and ethos
- 2) learning provision
- 3) successes and achievements of all students

Within these strategic priorities there are driver plans and improvement activities to ensure the school realises its vision. These are the responsibility of the leadership group and include all staff. The SIP will be reviewed twice – once at the end of October and again in March. Self-evaluation based on 'How Good is our School' (HGIOS) parts 1-4.

Elaine gave an overview of the key points regarding the Culture & Ethos of the school:

- Respect and inclusion.
- Health & wellbeing based on GIRFEC (getting it right for every child) and SHANARRI.
- Communication – timely, accurate and appropriate. Must be factually accurate.
- Leadership at all levels – students and staff.
- Attendance - expectation is 100% attendance which the school strives to achieve. Average attendance is 91%; if attendance is at 90% this is equivalent to half a day's absence per week (17 days/year). Research suggests that this amount of absence in a school year equates to one level drop in National examinations. All children who achieve 100% attendance are given a certificate.

Concern was raised regarding attendance on the last few days at the end of each term and the difficulty faced by parents in trying to enforce attendance when the children are encouraged not to attend by some teachers. Elaine requested that parents inform her of any members of staff who have told students not to come to school as this is an unacceptable practice which completely goes against the culture and ethos of the school.

The sponsored walk was another example of non-attendance, particularly as the timing of it this year meant that it fell during the last 2 periods before the start of the October break and many students were planning not to attend. Elaine advised that they would be registered before and after the walk.

As always Elaine would welcome any suggestions for improvement or would like to hear about any major difficulties and encouraged parents to get in touch.

6. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd November and will incorporate the AGM. Duncan confirmed that all office bearers are willing to stand again but if anyone else is interested they should inform Hilary.

ALL