

# Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Meeting



## Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016

**Present** - Duncan Beckwith - Chair, Alan Blackwood - Vice Chair, Angela Malcolm - Treasurer, Elaine McGregor-Sloman - Head Teacher, Rae Anderson - DHT, Hilary Ramage - Secretary and Katherine Woodhouse - Minute Secretary

**Council Members** – Catriona MacGarvie, Claire Milne, James Morgan, Julie Cotter, Karen Dunlop, Katie Atkinson, Kate Dunn, Katy Purdie, Kaye Matthews, Lindsay Campbell, Lisa Rossi, Mark Fitzpatrick, Timothy Wight, Stuart Harris and Cllr Peter Convery

**Apologies** - Cllr Nan McFarlane and Ady Allan

	<b>Action</b>
<p>1. <b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b> The meeting opened with a guided tour of the new building by Rae Anderson, following which Duncan welcomed those in attendance. Apologies were noted from those unable to attend.</p>	
<p>2. <b><u>Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising</u></b> The minutes of the meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016 were approved. Proposed by Hilary Ramage and seconded by Katy Purdie.</p>	
<p>3. <b><u>School Captains</u></b> Donald, Natalie, Hazel, Jack and Callum were in attendance to provide an update on the captains' activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children in Need fundraiser was held over 2 days and included a non-uniform day and dodge ball tournament. A total of £1559 was raised.</li> <li>Focus groups were introduced in November to discuss various topics:  <u>Reward system</u> - It transpired that a lot of people were unaware of the system and there was a lack of motivation to gain merits. Captains are looking at introducing rewards, e.g. end of year activity day.  <u>School trips</u> - the consensus here was that there were not enough trips. Due to the restriction in taking time out of school the Captains proposal was to introduce school trips that take place at weekends/holidays in the future. These could also be linked into the reward system and used as an incentive. Fundraising could help towards the cost of some of the trips.  <u>Rights Respecting school</u> – it was considered that vandalism and fighting would decrease with the move to the new building. A group of 6<sup>th</sup> years will help to talk to younger students about the negative aspects of violence.</li> </ul>	
<p>4. <b><u>Campus PC Report</u></b> PC Shivas was unable to attend the meeting, however had provided Elaine with information on the initiatives she is working on in school and community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with community safety scheme and started a lunchtime boxercise class which has been successful.</li> <li>Poster campaign introduced on cyber bullying and knife crime aimed at S1/2 students.</li> <li>Talking to classes about violence and fighting through the 'one punch' scheme in PSE and assembly. Discussing various other issues including domestic abuse, sexting, etc.</li> </ul> <p>Elaine advised that PC Shivas is interacting positively with students and is around at lunch and break times. Unfortunately her time in school has been cut – for 2 days a week she has to patrol Troon and one day a month she works a back shift for Police Scotland. Elaine is having a meeting to discuss this as the school will not have the same level of service going forward.</p>	
<p>5. <b><u>Careers Evening – Hilary Ramage</u></b> Hilary had e-mailed Council members about a careers evening organised by Stuart McNeill on 7<sup>th</sup> February to support senior students. Hoping to have as many volunteer parents, consultants and friends of the school who can have one to one meetings with students or hold presentation sessions. The uptake so far has been very good with 17 people having</p>	

<p>volunteered across a broad spectrum of different careers. If anyone knows of anyone else who would be prepared to volunteer they should let Hilary know.</p> <p>Elaine advised that Education Scotland had visited on 25<sup>th</sup> November to assess the school's systems, processes etc. with regard to 'Developing Young Workforce'. The feedback received was excellent and they will use the school's approach as an example of good practice. In addition, Skills Development Scotland wants to go a step further and build this into the curriculum. The school has already had a very successful year with STEM which is now being embedded into the curriculum.</p>	
<p>6. <b><u>Building Update – Rae Anderson</u></b></p> <p>Rae outlined the plans for the decant at the end of term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The move is on schedule and Rae is confident that staff will be ready. There are 1.5 days to pack on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> December; following this there will be no further access to the Strathclyde Building and it will be stripped between Christmas and New Year. Rae and Elaine will be working on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday before school returns. Additional school assistant time has been sourced to help with packing and those departments who are not moving will also be able to help.</li> <li>• All items have been identified as to where they are going – as much as possible will be recycled and it is intended to take some items over to the new building to decide how they fit in. Other items have been earmarked as Legacy for SAC or for charity.</li> <li>• Learning and teaching will not be interrupted during the decant.</li> <li>• 198 computers have already been delivered for graphics and computing labs.</li> <li>• Muirhead activity centre will be used for some of the PE classes and minibuses are currently being costed to transport pupils there. Will be using the upstairs space for table tennis and assembly hall for gymnastics.</li> <li>• The path to the playing fields will be opened and there will be a key for the janitors and PE staff to use.</li> <li>• Orientation will be given to the young people before they leave for Christmas together with new timetables and Rae will hold assemblies with every year group. Due to health and safety regulations, still awaiting permission to allow the young people to have a tour of the new school before Christmas. The job of allocating lockers has been handed over to the school captains and leadership group.</li> <li>• Prelim timetable with details of where exams are taking place will be issued on 14<sup>th</sup> December.</li> </ul>	
<p>7. <b><u>Living on One – Stuart Harris</u></b></p> <p>For the second year the 'Living on one' week is running for S5 and 6 students. Stuart advised that the concept is based on a documentary available on Netflix and is designed to enhance awareness of poverty. Last year 40 students and 2 teachers took part with about half dropping out during the week. It will run from Monday to Friday and participants must ensure that everything they consume costs no more than £1 per day. It's easier to work in pairs and cook meals together to make the money go further. Stuart has organised a drop in session over lunchtimes during the week to support participants. He will report back on how it went at the next meeting.</p>	
<p>8. <b><u>Malawi update – Stuart Harris</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stuart advised that there is now a new Head Teacher at the school in Malawi, however she e-mailed last week and seems to be on board with the link between the schools. Stuart read out some of her letter in which she advised that there were 1,993 learners at the school and 46 teachers. Most of the lessons took place outside under trees but this cannot happen during the rainy season. Photos will be shared on the WhatsApp link going forward.</li> <li>• Stuart has been working behind the scenes with regard to the possibility of taking a small group of pupils over to Malawi; however this has proved difficult as there is a minimum number of 12, which is more than the school had intended to take, and therefore it is looking quite unlikely for next year. He is now working on a 2018 launch and taking a group over at that time (current S4/5) in February. If that goes to plan it will really kick start the project. There is also potential funding available through the Livingston fund which offers £500 per pupil focused on trips to Africa/Malawi for vulnerable learners. This</li> </ul>	

<p>would involve pupils submitting an application stating why they should receive the money. There is no guarantee that they would be successful but it is certainly worth applying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The building contractor, Kier, is keen to offer workshops in painting, decorating, basic brick laying and other practical skills so that when the pupils go over they will have an opportunity to put these skills into practice.</li> </ul>	
<p>9. <b><u>Head Teacher's Report – Elaine McGregor-Sloman</u></b>  In addition to her monthly report, Elaine provided the following updates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the past 2 years Queen Margaret school has had students visiting from Lebanon but is unable to do it this year, therefore all schools in South Ayrshire are being asked if they would be interested in being hosts. The children would live with a host family and would shadow their children at school. A total of 10 children would be visiting for approximately 7-10 days around early June next year. It was felt that there would be enough families at Marr willing to host so Elaine will put Marr forward as an option.</li> <li>• Elaine has had a request from the Health &amp; Food Technology department – in order to use the stoves in the new building they need to have iron based pans as they are industrial standard induction hobs. A full set of pans would cost £1500. The school could raise half the money if the Parent Council could raise the other half. It was also suggested asking local companies in the hospitality sector whether they would be interested in providing sponsorship.</li> <li>• HMIe inspection – Elaine has not received any questions following the letter sent to parents outlining the school's progress since the inspection which clearly indicates the school's strengths and continuing improvement.</li> <li>• Food bank – the school will be supporting South Ayrshire food bank and donations of festive 'treats' can be brought in at any time between now and Christmas.</li> <li>• Litter – children are regularly encouraged not to drop litter however there are those who continue to do so. Photos were taken recently of the 6<sup>th</sup> year common room as this area was a disgrace. Their response was positive as they were told they could not use the area if they cannot look after it.</li> </ul> <p>A local resident had e-mailed Elaine with screenshots of a Facebook post entitled 'Marr litter louts', discussing children dropping litter in the town. Although Elaine felt that this was an unfair comment and does not believe the problem is solely down to Marr pupils, she has organised a community litter pick on 16<sup>th</sup> December together with Health &amp; Safety Officer, Paul Scully, and is trying to publicise this to show that the school is doing something about it and taking action. She would like everyone to reiterate to their children that dropping litter is unacceptable.</p> <p>Cllr Convery added that the council is trying to introduce legislation relating to burger vans that park outside schools at lunchtimes as this also causes a litter problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duncan asked about the school show for next year, however Elaine advised that no decision had been made as yet.</li> </ul>	
<p>10. <b><u>Next Meeting</u></b>  The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February at 7.30 pm.</p>	