

Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Meeting



Wednesday 26th April 2017

Present – Duncan Beckwith - 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, Julie Cotter, Karen Dunlop, Kate Dunn, Katie Atkinson, Katy Purdie, Kaye Matthews and Stuart Harris

Apologies – Ady Allan, Alan Blackwood, Lindsay Campbell, Lisa Rossi, Mark Fitzpatrick and Cllr Bill McIntosh

	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>Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising</u> The minutes of the meeting of 1st March 2017 were approved. Proposed by Kate Dunn and seconded by Katy Purdie.</p>	
<p>3. <u>School Captains</u> The captains presented an overview of their successes over the course of their year in office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition into the new building went very smoothly and students adapted to the new facilities very well. Prefects provided additional support for the captains throughout the transition. • Open day in February was a great success and there was lots of help from S6 and S2. Many positive comments were received and a total of 1400 people attended. • Fundraising has been a huge success with over £7000 raised, beating last year's total, through events such as the sponsored walk, Children in Need, Christmas jumper day and Comic Relief, with the latter being the most successful. This can be attributed to the fact that the whole school was involved in the activities. Focus groups took place following Children in Need which proved very informative and effective. Areas for improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encouraging people to donate rather than making it compulsory. ○ Communication, especially for the younger pupils, is a problem. Going round classes is the best way to keep everyone informed but is very time consuming. <p>Recommendations for next year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having 8 captains works better than 6 in terms of sharing the workload. • Make the most of the prefects and other 6th year students as it's impossible to do everything without their help. <p>The captains gave thanks to Elaine and John Allison and all the teachers and office staff who have helped them fulfil their duties.</p> <p>Duncan felt that the captains had covered a vast amount over the year especially with the new building and congratulated them for the amount of effort they had put in. He hoped that they take forward the lessons they have learned in the future.</p> <p>Elaine commented that they had been a very special team and have all done well in their own right. She has been thoroughly impressed with them and will be taking them out to lunch to thank them for their efforts.</p>	
<p>4. <u>Building Works – Rae Anderson</u> Rae advised that a substantial amount of work had been done over the Easter holidays and provided an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new road layout at the school entrance is on schedule. • The Kier site cabin has moved so that the road can be developed and more space released to create the car park. Current car park will be reinstated to the cycle path and the basketball courts etc. will be located there. • Rae still meets with Kier twice a week to check over everything and make sure it is all on track. • Health & Safety working with the fire marshal and looking at fire evacuation. The overall fire plan will be different but getting lots of support with this. 	

- More furniture is being delivered including chairs and tables for the canteen and new couches for the snack bar. Also new custom made booths for the learning plaza.
- PE building still on schedule.
- Karen asked about builders parking on Harling Drive and whether this was due to the development of the road within the school. Rae explained that there are a lot of sub-contractors who work with Kier who have been told where they should park, i.e. the pavilion, but this cannot be fully controlled. This was raised again on Friday as the road into the cemetery is also being used which the SMT are uncomfortable about. SAC are aware of this.

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

Elaine provided an update to her written report.

CAMHS/NHS Pilot Project

A 2 hour session will take place tomorrow looking at a plan for the school and these services and how it will be developed.

Campus Police Officer

PC Shivas is pregnant so has left the school for a period of time. This is quite a loss as she does a lot of diversionary work with the children, however PC Andy Harrower is starting on 8th May and he has worked at the school previously so will be a good addition. This is a temporary measure as it is a maternity leave appointment.

Curriculum for Excellence

- Assessment benchmarks were meant to be published before Christmas but have only just been released, however some are not completely finalised. This is about standardisation of assessment and making sure it is the same across all schools.
- Curriculum/timetable will commence on Tuesday 30th May for S1-3. Induction will take place for the S5s on 5th June.

Staffing

- Graeme Hobson, DHT, has been off work after being involved in a serious car accident. Elaine is currently covering his duties.
- This week a new PE teacher was appointed who will start as soon as possible. Rae and her panel interviewed 11 candidates out of a total of 34 applicants before making this appointment. The successful candidate is already a NQT and is interested in running Hockey at the school.
- John Allison, DHT, has resigned and is going to another school. This position is being advertised and Elaine is looking for representation from the Parent Council for interviews which will be held on 26th May.
- Mrs Donnelly, head of Chemistry, was the first Scottish runner over the line at this year's London marathon.
- Catherine Owens, librarian, is off on long term sick. There is no replacement or back fill for this role and Elaine is looking at how this can be addressed.

DYW

Marr has been successful in putting forward two bids for funding and Elaine gave credit to Stuart McNeill who has worked hard on this and achieved all the funding he applied for. The first bid was for targeted students to attend two different college courses in Construction skills and Hospitality. The second bid was for funding for the school's Hospitality area so that industry standard equipment can be purchased. Lisa Anderson has helped with the introduction to Buzzworks whose head chef has been into the school and is happy to deliver training using the Marr kitchen, which is of a better standard than they one they have. Along with the £750 from Troon Decides this money will be used for a smoothie/barista bar. This was the choice of the children after filling in questionnaires about facilities management. Colin Blair has put the school in touch with a designer to plan this area and the drawings are looking great. Skills Development Scotland is coming in to speak to the school about this next week. Parents in the community can also think about how they might be able to utilise the space.

Marr Cluster and Transition Programme

- Elaine and Fiona Young will be co-ordinating this programme with enhanced sessions on 3rd and 5th May for some P7 students.
- There have been 33 new placing requests since last August in the school.

Reporting

- S1 Learning Reviews begin on 8th May.
- Following input from the Parent Council and students a whole school evaluation will be carried out and draft templates will be issued in due course.

School Show

- Logo for the Wizard of Oz production has been created.
- Gaiety staff will be coming along to stage manage at no cost along with parent, Timothy Wight.
- Will use money to buy 12 roving microphones.
- Katy met with Kirsty Walker who is looking for help with fundraising. Last year the school show was managed through school funds but this year more funds are required. She is going to try and organise a bag pack and was hoping to get some of the cast members to go into Troon with collection buckets and promotional leaflets, perhaps at the next street market in May. Will also require help for Front of House as this was covered by the Gaiety last year, as well as people to help backstage.
- Elaine asked Angela if she could speak to Mr Tognini of Kilmarnock Schoolwear to see if he could help with a deal on plain t-shirts that can be printed at school for the cast – approximately 30-40. Angela will send him an e-mail.

SQA

Elaine expressed her disappointment about the numerous fire alarms that were being activated in the school and has spoken to every year group about this. The culprit has been reprimanded and has been charged and prosecuted by the police as it is illegal and very disruptive for the school. With this in mind, coupled with the noise of the building works, Elaine made the decision to hold the majority of exams in Muirhead Activity Centre, with the exception of Music and Modern Languages. A letter was sent out to parents and children have had an assembly about it. Taxis will be organised for children from Dundonald after the exams. There are 2 exams on Monday 29th May (bank holiday) and staff will be present to support students. The SQA has been informed and they are satisfied with the change of venue.

Student Activities

Elaine highlighted a selection of some of the activities of Marr students:

- U15 football team won Ayr and District 'Gould' cup last night for the first time in its 97 year history.
- Innes Cameron has been selected to play football for Scotland U17 team in Croatia and will therefore be sitting some of his exams in Croatia. These will take place at the exact same time as they do here.
- S1 pupil Amy Nixon is going to the World championships for Irish dancing.
- Lucy Grieve is going to Sheffield in the summer as she is Scottish champion at butterfly in her age group.
- Young Enterprise Group won Ayrshire finals last week and raised £1968 profit which will be put into the school. Final takes place in Hampden Park on 6th June which Elaine will be attending with them.
- Jack Strang volunteered in Malawi last year and is set to do it again this year. He has raised almost £500 towards a school room in Malawi which will be named Marr.
- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze expeditions take place in May with 60 children taking part.
- S3 English trip to Stratford on Avon takes place from 18th-20th June.
- Study leave starts on Tuesday 1st May with Friday being the last day for S6. Elaine and Rae have asked S6 to be respectful in terms of the new building and other students. They are coming in for breakfast and to say their goodbyes on Friday morning. Elaine hopes it will be a good day.
- Estimates for exam results went into the council last week and Elaine feels positive.

6. **AOCB**

- Duncan gave a vote of thanks to the councillors who have come along to the meetings over the years. He also mentioned a number of parents who are stepping down due to their children leaving the school – Catriona MacGarvie, Janet Wylie and Katy Purdie and expressed appreciation and thanks for their service to the Parent Council, in particular Katy who was Secretary for many years.
- Some parents had queried why Easter school did not go ahead this year. Elaine advised that last year there were 90 hours over Easter, however children had asked for extended sessions which have been put in place rather than Easter school. Not many staff were willing to come in over the Easter break because of the noise of the building site. Depending on the results of the final exams it may be decided to reinstate Easter school next year.
- Hilary noted that she had passed on the receipt for the monies awarded by Troon Decides to Angela for accounting purposes. She also passed on a letter to Elaine for completion with regard to how the money will be spent.
- Elaine wished to make a statement, about which she did not wish to take questions at this meeting but is happy to discuss at the next meeting.

There was a media story published recently about Elaine which was very personal and slanderous. She believes that this article went one step too far. As Head Teacher she cannot respond to it herself, however it has affected her personally and professionally more than any other article. It was based around the Community Council and her alleged failure to respond to letters. Elaine had printed out copies of the minutes of the Community Council, in which it itemises correspondence out and in. In the September minutes, it was suggested they wrote to Marr College Head Teacher about student representation. In October, it states they sent a letter. Elaine did not see a letter but it must have come to the school and she has not responded. There is nothing else minuted about anything to do with Marr College and at no other time has any other letter been received. In the article it states that TCC were on the 4th letter and they would come to see the 6th years on their own if they did not get a response.

Elaine received an e-mail back from the Chair on 21st April and is meeting her next week. Elaine thinks that some people need to stand up and say this is not right as it reflects badly on the school and she does not want anyone thinking she was standing in the way of students being on a Youth Forum. However, she will not coerce them into doing something they do not want to do. She highlighted that out of the two students who attended in 2015/16 the girl was named and misrepresented in the Ayrshire Post and was very distraught about it. If children want to attend they must be 16 years old and be comfortable being questioned by adults in that type of forum.

7. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 31st May at 7.30 pm.