

# Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Forum Meeting



## Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 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, Karen Dunlop, Kate Dunn, Katy Purdie, Kaye Matthews, Stuart Harris, Timothy Wight & Cllr Peter Convery

**Forum Members** – Ady Allan, Carolyn Calder, Gillian McGowan, Jane Bell, Karen Kelly, Katie Atkinson, Lisa Rossi, Maggie Boyd, Nicola McClure & Shona Elder

**Apologies** – Catriona MacGarvie, Debbie Ross, James Morgan, Janet Wylie, Lindsay Campbell, Mark Fitzpatrick, Wendy McKenna, Cllr Bill McIntosh, Cllr Nan McFarlane & Rae Anderson

	<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> Elaine introduced the new Head Boy &amp; Girl – Jack Donnelly and Ella Kennedy. They provided an overview of what they have been working on so far.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new team of captains consists of 8 members rather than 6 and will work as 4 teams of 2. They hope to involve junior captains in some of the meetings.</li> <li>• Student development plan is being finalised and will be presented at the next meeting.</li> <li>• Work has commenced on organising fundraising events and decisions made on which charities to support, in the hope of exceeding last year's amazing accomplishment.</li> <li>• Helping Mr Harris with establishing the Malawi partnership (see [7] below) in order to strengthen links between the two schools.</li> <li>• Next year's Prom has been booked and will be held at the Brig o' Doon Hotel.</li> </ul> <p>Elaine commented that the captains had made a very good start to the year. It is proposed that different captains will attend Parent Council meetings on a rotational basis to give them all the opportunity to present the areas they have been working on. Duncan wished them every success in their new roles.</p>	
<p>3. <b><u>Building Works – Derek Yuille, SAC</u></b> Derek presented an update on the building works to date and advised that everything is going to plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presented computer aided images of new building compared with actual photos of how the building looks so far.</li> <li>• Some of the spaces are now starting to be fitted out, e.g. art rooms, science labs. Flooring down and walls painted in technology wing.</li> <li>• Main hall has been levelled and new sound and lighting systems will be installed.</li> <li>• Build programme is well on target for completion by the end of 2017.</li> <li>• By January, new technical wing will be finished as will zone 1 of existing building and school will be decanted into this new space. Temporary accommodation will continue to be utilised for the first part of the year.</li> <li>• By August the school will have the entire existing building back. Temporary accommodation will have gone and gardens reinstated. Contractor will still retain a large area until December 2017.</li> <li>• Derek outlined that there are opportunities to deliver the project earlier. This could be achieved by using the main hall and refectory for exams, which would be preferable to using the existing PE block as they are away from the building works. Kier would take back the PE block in January, therefore the team is currently looking at different alternatives to</li> </ul>	

<p>deliver, e.g. by using a combination of Muirhead Activity Centre, main hall and outdoor spaces. If this proves feasible, the school would have everything except the PE block back by 11<sup>th</sup> August, including parking. It would then only take the contractor until 6<sup>th</sup> October to completely finish the job, saving 11 weeks of the build programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaine pointed out that it is only 69 working days until the decant, however plans are well ahead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 22<sup>nd</sup> December - school closes for Christmas at 12.00 noon</li> <li>○ 9<sup>th</sup> January - staff return</li> <li>○ 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> January - move into new building</li> <li>○ 11<sup>th</sup> January - lower school returns</li> <li>○ 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> January - Prelim diet commences</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Hilary asked whether the demolition of the Strathclyde building would impact on either the prelims or actual exams. Derek confirmed that there will be a 'soft strip' first before the noisy element of the demolition work starts in February. Elaine advised she would have no qualms about holding exams in the main hall/refectory as they are a distance away from the building works.</li> <li>• Duncan asked whether there would be a cost saving due to the time saving. Derek is in discussions with the contractor on this to see what can be achieved for the school in terms of cost savings.</li> <li>• Timothy asked whether extra steps were being taken to ensure the quality of the build given the shorter timeframe. Derek confirmed that the council has looked at all building projects to assess quality and the standards are extremely high.</li> <li>• Claire asked where changing facilities would be if there was no PE block. Derek looking at different options. Part of the main hall has 2 changing rooms for drama and there are changing facilities at Muirhead. He also advised that the path across the golf course would be re-opened by December solely for school use and consideration will be given to ensure children have enough time to get to PE lessons; providing transport if necessary. Elaine will need to look at numbers, feasibility, etc before any decisions are made.</li> <li>• Elaine stated that the results of Marr did not suffer due to the building project; in fact, Marr achieved the highest results in South Ayrshire. She commended Rae Anderson for the great job she is doing in co-ordinating the build programme.</li> </ul>	
<p>4. <b>Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising</b>  The minutes of the meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016 were agreed as being correct. Proposed by Hilary Ramage and seconded by Katy Purdie.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>4) School show – Duncan commented that the school show was an excellent production and Elaine confirmed that there will be a school show again next year.</p> <p>6) AOCB – Duncan advised that as Ann Cowan’s son is now going to university she has stepped down from the Parent Council and he wished to acknowledge thanks and appreciation for her services over the years.</p>	
<p>5. <b>Head Teacher’s Report – Elaine McGregor-Sloman</b>  Elaine provided a further update to her written report.</p> <p><u>Awards Ceremonies</u>  Both were very well attended and it will be nice to have them in the school next year.</p> <p><u>Leadership Capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the key priorities in Scottish Education at the moment is to review Nat 5, Higher and Advanced Higher as there is still an element of 'bedding down' required. Marr has already started revisiting/revising its Broad General Education courses in S1-S3.</li> <li>• Elaine advised that this is the year of acceleration with a focus on improving the leadership capacity in the school in order to raise attainment and close the gap. The areas of improvement are within the School Improvement Plan and Elaine presented a proposed model of how this will be achieved in her report. This will provide opportunities to develop leadership capacity at all levels, and those staff highlighted as leaders are undergoing coaching at the moment. She would be happy to meet with a group of new parents to go</li> </ul>	

<p>through this in more detail at a separate meeting. By providing this information it allows parents to see exactly what the priorities are for the school and how they are going to be achieved. Hilary will put out an email accordingly and let any other first year parents know.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duncan asked whether colours had been awarded for the last session. Elaine said the colours should have been given out in June, however they will be given out before the September weekend. Next year they will be awarded in early June.</li> <li>• Aiming to keep senior prize giving in August so it can be based on actual exam results. Duncan said that some of the students could not be involved due to holidays or courses starting. Elaine said that usually those who are going to attend are aware of it and can plan accordingly. Duncan also mentioned that the time was changed as the start time had overlapped with a rugby fixture - Elaine said that should not have happened and there will be no sports fixtures organised on the day of prize giving in future without the knowledge of the Head Teacher.</li> <li>• One parent pointed out that her son received no thanks for volunteering his time to do the sound and lighting for prize giving. Elaine felt that John Allison gave a general vote of thanks however would be happy to speak to her son to thank him personally.</li> </ul>	<p>EMS HR  EMS</p>
<p>6. <b>Review of Discussion Topics for Future Meetings</b> Hilary had sent out an e-mail prior to the meeting with suggestions of topics that parents may like to hear more about at future meetings. A couple of these topics were discussed:</p> <p><u>6-6-6 model</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claire felt that some of the subject choices students were given to make up their 6 subjects were a waste of time when more time could be spent concentrating on subjects where they might be struggling. Elaine felt that the 666 model was definitely worth reviewing but it is too early to say whether it has affected the students and resulted in an increase in Highers.</li> <li>• Hilary asked whether bi-level teaching was effective, e.g. having National 5 and Higher students in the same class. Elaine advised that classes are assessed to make sure they are viable but after only one year it is too early to say whether this model has helped with timetabling.</li> </ul> <p><u>Duke of Edinburgh</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per the presentation by Bruce Harris of Educational Services in February Elaine advised that DoE will continue but will be run a little differently and they are still seeking parental involvement for this. Anyone interested should contact Bruce at <a href="mailto:Bruce.harris@south-ayrshire.gov.uk">Bruce.harris@south-ayrshire.gov.uk</a>.</li> <li>• Bronze DoE will continue to be timetabled.</li> <li>• Kate enquired about the number of days students were allowed out of school for DoE expeditions as one is scheduled to take place during a school holiday – Elaine advised that this expedition is only taking place during the holidays on this occasion due to it being organised by an external company and this is the only time they are available.</li> </ul>	
<p>7. <b>Partnership with Malawi – Stuart Harris</b> This year the school will be establishing a partnership with the community of Ntenjera in Malawi and Stuart provided an overview of this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a well-established history between Scotland and Malawi and there is a bilateral agreement between our two governments.</li> <li>• Last year former 6<sup>th</sup> year student Kirsty Pattison enrolled herself in a project to work in Malawi for a year; through this connection Stuart met Tony Begley who runs a charity in Glasgow called 'Classrooms in Malawi'.</li> <li>• On 20<sup>th</sup> September Tony will be going to Malawi and will hand deliver an introduction from Marr College to Ntenjera. This will include a profile of the school put together by a group of 6<sup>th</sup> years.</li> <li>• In addition, a letter has been sent to parents advising them about this partnership and inviting young people to write letters about life at Marr College, a selection of which will be sent to Malawi. Any replies received will be posted on the website.</li> <li>• Currently Ntenjera school is very basic – there are 100 pupils and one classroom. It is proposed to communicate with the young people via WhatsApp as Malawi has mobile technology.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the moment we are establishing links of friendship but hope to build a pupil exchange in the future, mainly for senior pupils (S4/5/6), which will need to be supported by fundraising. More information can be found on the website <a href="http://www.scottishmalawipartnership">www.scottishmalawipartnership</a>. There will also be parents' information evenings and a stall at parents' evenings.</li> <li>• Information about schools from Scotland who have been to Malawi and details about what has already been achieved can be found at <a href="http://www.classroomsformalawi">www.classroomsformalawi</a>.</li> </ul>	
<p>8. <b>AOCB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hilary advised that she has copies of all documents related to the health &amp; safety checks that have been carried out by SAC for the all-weather pitches.</li> <li>• James Morgan had raised the point that the 20 mile/hour lights on the main road outside the school are not operational at the moment. Cllr Convery agreed to deal with this issue through the Council.</li> <li>• Alan advised he had spoken to Cllr McFarlane who had discovered that it is illegal for dog owners to take dogs on to playing fields and there is now going to be a consultation about it. Cllr Convery was unsure whether this legislation meant that it was illegal at any time or just when the playing fields were in use, however Cllr McFarlane will be able to clarify this at the next meeting.</li> <li>• Duncan invited the new S1 parents to get involved in the Parent Council and Hilary would provide forms to anyone who was interested in becoming a committee member.</li> </ul>	<p>PC</p> <p>HR</p>
<p>9. <b>Next Meeting</b> The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October.</p>	