

Hutchesons' Grammar School Association

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at Beaton Road on Monday 28 February 2011.

Present

Mrs Lindesay MacFarlane (Chair) (LM)
Mrs Anita Simmers (AS)
Mrs Claire Macaulay (CM)
Mrs Susie Rodgers (SR)
Mrs Elaine Lonergan (EL)
Mrs Audrey Mathers (AM)
Mrs Rohma Akram (RA)
Mrs Fiona Godsman (FG)
Mrs Alina Zahoor (AZ)
Mrs Lynda MacBride (Minutes) (LRM)
Mrs Sheila Galbraith (SG)

Attending

Mrs Christine Haughney (CS)
Mrs Catherine Keddie (CK)
Mr David Dobson (Chairman)
Dr Ken Greig (Rector)
Mr Iain Keter (Bursar)
Mr Brian MacBride (BM)
Mrs Christine Bingham (1957 Group) (CB)

Apologies

Mrs Helen Smith (HS)
Mrs Fiona McCrae (FM)

1. WELCOME

Lindesay MacFarlane welcomed committee members to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted as above.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 22 November 2010 had been circulated beforehand, and were approved as follows:-

Proposed: Mrs Fiona Godsman
Seconded: Mrs Claire Macaulay

4. MATTERS ARISING

Parking at Kingarth Street

Mr Gibson is helping and parents agree that his presence is making a difference. Junior school representatives asked if there were any plans to extend a presence in the morning. CH advised that it was less intense and staggered in the morning and that there was more room to drop off in the mornings and although some parents are still double parking, she will keep on reminding all parents.

Communication

CH advised she was looking into improving communication with parents at different levels.

Junior School

AS and CH have met to discuss points brought up at the previous meeting to a satisfactory conclusion.

LM advised that, in future, HGSA meeting minutes will not be put up on the infant notice board. Lindesay further advised that the notice board will instead have a note directing parents to the HGSA page on the school website. The HGSA page has been updated to allow parents to directly contact their year group representative by email. Parents are requested to submit issues they would like to present to the School Association at least 10 days prior to the next meeting. This will allow investigation and inclusion onto the agenda. Lindesay asked committee members to pass on any issues as they were received.

Regarding the P1 nomination procedure, LM advised she had written to the unsuccessful candidates.

5. RECTOR'S UPDATE

Snow

The Rector advised that if at all possible he did not want to close the school. On Monday, many parents had contacted their children directly. On Tuesday, by 10am only 25% of pupils had attended school and it was not viable to continue classes so the decision was made to close at 10.30am. School remained closed on Wednesday and Thursday as access roads to the school were dreadful and safety was therefore an issue. School reopened on Friday. There have been positive comments from parents and complaints from a few. Overall it was a difficult situation for everyone.

Parents reported that there was no response when trying to contact the school by telephone. The Rector agreed that this was not great and that, in future, there is a plan to have an answer line. The website will be utilised on this type of

occasion but unfortunately the web server crashed on Tuesday. He further commented that the school has learned many things from the circumstances in which it found itself during the snowy period and hoped that a more structured plan be put in place should the severe snow conditions happen again.

EL commented that although we experienced extreme weather conditions, parents with children at other schools (Kelvinside and Glasgow Academy) were able to receive text messages from their school advising of closures. She felt it should be mandatory that parents subscribe to this method of communication. The Rector would consider this idea when reviewing parental communication.

The Rector advised that web traffic on the HGS website was massive over the course of the week proving this was a good means of communicating with parents.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

A meeting took place with S3 parents apprising them of the changes which were to be made to the scheme this year. The Rector apologised for the confusion and he reported that several parents had contacted him with their concerns which he has now addressed in a letter to all S3 parents.

The Rector reported that for the first time, they have more pupils than places available, but will endeavour to allow all pupils to participate.

LM advised she had been contacted by several parents after the meeting and had forwarded their concerns to Mr McDougall. Their primary concern was that all pupils should have access to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The secondary concern was the lack of choice for the Silver award. Parents also suggested pupils register their interest earlier in the year next year to allow the school to accommodate places for everyone interested.

'Shall Brother Be.....'

Dr Greig advised how proud he was of the pupils who took part in the recent performance at the Royal Concert Hall. AM advised of parents concerns that it was too late for some children in the Junior Choir to be taking part in a performance which concluded at 10.30pm. CH advised that it is a fine balance and that the P5's were only added to the performing choir as the event had a change of location due to the postponement caused by the weather conditions in December. LM commented on the presence of the Pipe Band. Whilst appreciating their performance, she thought it disappointing they played for such a short time. Perhaps the Pipe Band could also have been involved in welcoming guests on arrival.

6. CAREERS CONVENTION - Wednesday 9th March 2011

Catherine Keddie thanked the members for contacting all the Consultants so far. A meeting of the sub committee to finalise arrangements will take place directly after the conclusion of the main meeting. All members of the committee are welcome to attend the Careers Convention.

LM suggested that for next year's Convention it might be worth contacting Former Pupils in order to find enthusiastic and recently appointed consultants. CK thought this was a great idea.

7. SOCIAL EVENT

EL advised that she has booked a band for the Family Ceilidh which is to be held on 26 August 2011. She will require volunteers to help nearer the time. LM offered the full support of the committee. Further details to be discussed at the next meeting.

8. 1957 GROUP UPDATE

CB advised that £20,000 has been donated to fund seating for the new Drama Department. IK thanked the 1957 Group on behalf of the school for the provision of the retractable seating and once again for the support generally which the 1957 Group gives to the school.

The Rector advised that he has emailed staff asking for suggestions for projects which the 1957 Group could support.

9. AOCB

FG raised a couple of questions on behalf of a P7 parent who specifically requested her questions were minuted as follows:

1) Will there be any alteration to term dates to offset the 2 1/2 days that the school was closed in Dec due to the weather?

2) The secondary school parents handbook states-pg48-"no make up may be worn". Why then is the wearing of make up widespread at Beaton Road?

The Rector responded as follows:

(1) There would be no alteration to future term dates. He added, teachers had worked extremely hard to make up for any time lost and to ensure the curriculum was delivered.

(2) The Rector reported he did not think this was a widespread problem. He informed the committee all teachers take responsibility to ensure pupils adhere to the uniform code, including the ban on wearing of make-up. They would ask

offending pupils to report to Matron to remove make-up and those pupils repeatedly failing to meet acceptable standards are disciplined.

A further question was raised regarding pupils extending holidays out with term dates. The Rector reported he had already responded to the parent regarding this matter.

AM reported several parents had questioned why the hockey pitches were unplayable for 2 months and why the astro turf does not have a cover. The Rector replied that our hockey pitch was one of the best in the UK and this allowed more playing time to proceed in our inclement weather conditions than traditional surfaces. IK advised the main problem had been the depth of snow in early December. The cost of underground heating and/or a pitch cover would have been prohibitive for the period of use required.

AS advised the committee of the Glasgow Science Festival which is held 1 – 15 June 2011 and is open to all primary and secondary schools and would be worth HGS making enquiries about attending.

LRM commented upon the wearing of school uniform at formal school functions. In particular the length of the school tie was commented on. She suggested that teachers remind pupils prior to public appearances the importance of presenting themselves appropriately with the ties presented in a conventional manner. Dr Greig responded that uniform standards are frequently reinforced at assemblies.

LM advised the committee that at a recent rugby match at Auldhouse there was a visiting team from Northern Ireland. Mr Lang gave a short speech in the clubhouse and gifts of ties were exchanged between teams. Unfortunately, there were only 4 HGS boys who remained behind for the after match refreshments. LM felt that more emphasis should be made to the boys that on such an occasion it would be respectful to remain and interact with the visiting team. Dr Greig advised he would look into this matter.

FG advised the committee about a way to promote entrepreneurialism within the school. 'Micro Tyco' is where a primary school is given £1 and the deal is to make as much money from that £1 within 1 month. In a recent competition, an East Kilbride primary school raised £4000! – it could be fun for HGS primary school pupils to take part.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 23 May 2011