

Hutchesons' Grammar School Association

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at Beaton Road on Monday 23 May 2011.

Present

Mrs Lindesay MacFarlane (Chair) (LM)
Mrs Anita Simmers (AS)
Mrs Susie Rodgers (SR)
Mrs Elaine Lonergan (EL)
Mrs Rohma Akram (RA)
Mrs Fiona Godsman (FG)
Mrs Lynda MacBride (Minutes) (LRM)
Mrs Fiona McCrae (FM)
Mrs Sheila Galbraith (SG)

Attending

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

Apologies

Mrs Helen Smith (HS)
Mrs Claire Macaulay (CM)
Mrs Alina Zahoor (AZ)
Mrs Audrey Mathers (AM)

1. WELCOME

Lindesay MacFarlane welcomed committee members to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted as above.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 28 February 2011 had been circulated in draft form. Dr Greig proposed an amendment to the draft minutes namely that under the section AOCB, the reference to school uniform discussed at assemblies be altered to read that uniform standards are regularly discussed at assemblies. The draft minutes including Dr Greig's amendment were approved as follows:-

Proposed: Mrs Sheila Galbraith

Seconded: Mr Brian MacBride

4. MATTERS ARISING

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

LM reported Jim MacDougall (Depute Rector) has now confirmed all pupils who have applied to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme will have a place and they can now apply online.

The committee continued discussing various aspects of the new changes to the way HGS is offering the DoE Award Scheme.

- FM advised she felt offering walking as the only option would be a disadvantage to pupils. The various options previously available offered personal challenges to suit a variety of levels. This experience makes for a more mature, well developed and well rounded pupil.
- Dr Greig advised that a quarter of the pupils who registered for the Scheme only complete the expedition section and do not complete all three parts. FG commented that many S4's struggle to start the volunteering section due to their age. KG advised that completion rates of the present S6 is less than 20% of the numbers who originally registered - only those pupils committed to the Scheme achieve the Gold Award.
- LM commented the ethos of the DoE is that pupils give a commitment to complete all sections of the award by the age of 25 and the school should not force pupils to complete the Scheme whilst at school. KG felt that the school should reiterate the importance of completing the Scheme to the pupils looking to take part.
- LM asked KG how many pupils had registered. KG replied that it was not clear at present, DoE teachers are still as yet to report back to him with final numbers.
- LM suggested pupils register early next year to ensure the school can book sufficient places to meet demand. KG advised the Centre needs to discuss with the School how many places are available, the logistics, the cost and whether the School send the pupils to the centre in three batches. EL asked that parents be fully informed and kept up to date with the changes. A committee member advised that a parent felt decisions were being made without any consultation with parents. KG commented this is an internal School matter.
- LM suggested the information booklet given to pupils could be improved. More emphasis could be given to the importance of completing the

Voluntary and Service parts of the Scheme and separate Silver Award and Gold Award booklets would be useful.

LM informed the committee a request had been made for School Association minutes to be made available to the Board of Governors. Due to the timing of School Association Meetings and Board of Governors Meetings our minutes are often in draft form awaiting approval. It was suggested we submit draft minutes. David Dobson recommended only approved minutes be sent to Governors. The committee agreed.

5. RECTOR'S UPDATE

KG advised the committee this has been a difficult term due to the timing of the Easter holidays, May holidays and the extra holiday to celebrate the Royal Wedding but this was totally outwith the School's control. Dr Greig advised we have now entered a period of settled school time.

LM reported she had been approached by an S3 parent concerned with the reduced teaching time in this period prior to external exams. They were requesting the School consider supported study over the Easter holidays. Several East Renfrewshire schools and a couple of local Glasgow state schools were known to offer this facility. KG replied that extra classes have been available to pupils which commenced after the prelims. LM felt that parents should be made aware of these additional classes which operate in a different way i.e. at lunchtimes and after school clubs. KG advised that if a pupil has a poor prelim result, the School will insist on their attendance at these clubs

SG questioned the amount of exam leave as pupils are used to routine to keep on top of their studies – too much exam leave can give a negative result. KG responded the School have looked carefully into the question of exam leave and try to keep it to a minimum. CK advised teachers were very flexible and used many different methods to keep in touch with pupils. She gave an example of a pupil sending past paper answers by Blackberry which she corrected and returned on the same day.

LM asked if teachers were available to be contacted over the Easter holidays. KG advised the Chemistry Department ran a session and any pupils were free to attend. CK advised she was aware after school tutorials were available for Maths. FM advised she had been told at Parents Meetings these clubs were available for pupils.

KG advised the Drama Studios should be finished by the October week holiday.

The Rector reported school applications for next year are good and have exceeded the target. Some staff are moving on and, as a result, there will be nine new teachers at Beaton Road. KG further advised he is very heartened by the calibre of the applicants. Miss Graham is retiring from Kingarth Street and Joyce Beattie has been succeeded by David Campbell. There have been 12 internal applicants for the two Year Tutor positions.

Kingarth Street Report

Redevelopment of the playground is underway. New toys have been added and cones have been used to create separate areas. Ball play, skipping and quiet areas have been put in place to be tried out and children have been asked for their feedback.

CH advised the area behind the After School Club is to be utilized as a quiet area. At present this space is full of weeds but will be cleared during the summer break.

P7 classes are off to Newlands Adventure Centre on 31st May at a cost of £370 per pupil. FM questioned whether Rassie was close to reopening but KG thought it would be another 2-3 years.

CH discussed the format of School Reports and advised the current style will be used for the last time in June 2011. The 5-14 curriculum is no longer available and the current School Report format is not reflecting the Curriculum for Excellence now used at Kingarth Street. CH will seek parents' views on the new style of report and is interested in having their feedback regarding the layout and use of language.

6. CAREERS CONVENTION - Wednesday 9th March 2011

CK advised the Careers Convention had been a great success. She has emailed all the pupils who attended asking for their feedback of the event and so far, 85% of pupils who replied found the evening particularly useful. 60-70% felt that the evening was rushed not having enough time to move from one appointment to another and similar feedback was received after last year's event.

CK advised that next year we would trial five 15 minute meetings with the consultants as opposed to six.

FG advised that of the 92 consultants who attended the event, 93% completed feedback forms and 100% felt the event was well organised and agreed to come back next year if they were able to attend. Some consultants requested longer

time slots if it was feasible and they suggested speaking to a number of pupils at the same time.

CK advised the date for next year's Careers Convention would be Wednesday 7 March 2012.

LM added we should continue to be selective when choosing prospective consultants to ensure we target the best people to enthuse pupils.

LM thanked CK for a well organised evening and CK passed on her thanks for the support from all members of the committee.

7. SOCIAL EVENT

EL advised there had been 38 family tickets sold and we need to sell 50 tickets to break even. EL would have a meeting with CH to send out a letter to parents to drum up support. The event will be mentioned at the Parents evening on 31 May 2011 and again at the P1 induction evening.

This will be a relaxed evening for new and existing parents to get to know each other.

LM offered the help of committee members and asked EL to take photographs of the evening.

8. 1957 GROUP UPDATE

RG advised two events had to be cancelled due to lack of interest - Ladies Night and the Ceilidh.

Events coming up-

2nd June afternoon talk to P1 parents.

4th June- Junior Sports day.

The annual Uniform Sale will be held on 11th June from 9am to 10.30am.

The Annual Quiz night will be held on 15 September 2011.

RG reported £20K of funds raised by the 1957 Group is to be made available to the School to provide seating in the new Drama Studios. She will be meeting with KG shortly to discuss future projects which could be supported by the 1957 Group.

RG advised the committee that the stock of old style sports clothing is to be donated to Blytheswood Care who in turn will arrange for the clothing to help communities overseas.

9. AOCB

LM reported an S3 parent felt it would be better if school trips were advertised at the same time. Currently they were experiencing a continuous stream of options. This wasn't allowing pupils or parents to select the best ones to apply for as often the time scale for applying was very short. Often parents are asked to provide a cheque for applying for a school trip but there is no detailed information available. KG responded that sometimes teachers put out a note to parents asking for names of pupils who may be interested in taking part. LM further commented this parent was told of the travel arrangements much later on in the process/ after paying. If the full details had been available earlier they may have chosen a different trip.

KG advised the committee of some appointments – Maria Campbell will be taking over from Karin Woods as Editor of the Hutchie Herald.

LM advised the AGM has been rescheduled for Tuesday 11th October 2011. LM requested all committee members encourage parents in their year group to attend.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 12 September 2011