

## Hutchesons' Grammar School Association

DRAFT Minute of meeting of the School Association – Founders Room,  
Monday 23 February 2015.

### **Present**

S3 Kenneth Ritchie (Chairman)  
P2 Martyn Campbell (MC)  
P3 Alan Hair (AH)  
P4 Faiza Khan (FK)  
P6 Wendy Schenini (WS)  
P7 Elaine Lonergan (EL)  
S1 Audrey Mason (AM)  
S4 Shazma Shafi (SS)  
S5 David Hadden (Minutes) (DH)  
S6 Allison Ewing (AE)

### **In attendance**

Ken Greig (KG)  
Brian Williams (BW)  
Fiona Macphail (FM)  
Katy Chisholm (KC)  
Iain Keter (IK)  
Susie Rodgers (SR)

### **Apologies**

Brian MacBride (BM)  
Kenneth Kirkwood (KK)  
Arlene Rennet (AR)  
Sue Redpath (SR)

1. **Welcome** - the Chairman opened the meeting with congratulations to FM on her appointment as Head of Primary and to AR on the birth of her 8lb 10 oz. daughter, Amelie Irene Carruthers Rennet at 2.43 p.m on 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

### **2. Adoption of Minutes**

The minute of the November 2014 meeting was adopted as an accurate record subject to minor corrections within items 3(i) and 5.5 and the inclusion of 2 members details to the list of those present. The corrected minute was proposed by EL and seconded by FK.

### **3. Matters arising from previous meetings**

3(i) VAT on musical instruments – IK advised that no response had yet been received by SCIS from the Scottish Government in relation to this matter.

(Action - IK).

3(ii) VAT on School Uniform – IK had as yet no update for the group in relation to this matter.

(Action - IK).

[*exit The Rector*]

### **4. Matters raised by Parents with Members.**

The Chairman introduced a number of items in respect of which information had been sought by parents via the elected members

- 4(i) School Meals – Kingarth Street – FM and IK responded to this item – the level of charges was justified and unlike schools within funded by local authorities there could be no expectation of free school meals for younger primary school age children. The issue of flexibility (daily v term long tickets) was explained. In order to manage, deliver and meet the demand at a reasonable and consistent cost this element of predictability was both necessary and beneficial. Given the age of the children involved neither FM nor IK could envisage an effective means of managing the provision of

- daily tickets for those in P1 and P2, however the daily option is available to P3.
- 4(ii) Traffic Management/Road Safety – Kingarth Street – a general discussion took place – concern was expressed over the persistent behaviour of some parents who chose to park/pick up/drop off irresponsibly (double parking, parking on hatched areas and even on the pavements). This matter has been discussed with roads and police contacts. Those present agreed that raising road safety through the pupils might offer a greater chance of success than another appeal for parental support from school management. (Action – FM to consider)
- 4(iii) Modern Language Provision – Kingarth Street – this matter had previously been raised and was raised again with reference to the ‘immersion’ arrangements at St Aloysius and that this had recently won a European Language Award. The arrangements at Kingarth Street are considered to offer pupils a better introduction to modern languages and Latin than in most schools. It was noted that there had been significant robust innovation in the course followed and in particular that the identification of language links between and amongst languages is also designed to improve pupils understanding and use of English. This notwithstanding it was acknowledged that the course would continue to evolve and would remain subject to continuing evaluation.  
It was also noted that the modern language arrangements and provision at St Aloysius were subject to exceptional, external funding arrangements. A parent ‘language’ handbook is currently under development.
- 4(iv) New Playground – Kingarth Street – the improvements made in summer 2014 were acknowledged. The financial contribution to the improvements from the 1957 Group was gratefully acknowledged. Reference was made to a second phase of improvements in the infant playground which are being considered by The Property Committee. It is hoped these will make progress soon, subject to acceptable designs and reasonable costs.
- 4(v) Uniformity in PE kit – this matter related to the variety of ‘under-armour’ options and the comparison with other schools which opted for a consistent make or colour. The situation at HGS is that ‘under-armour’ is not prescribed (in an effort to minimise unnecessary cost for some parents) as an item of PE kit, however it is recommended that where used, it is in red, white or blue in colour.
- [*intrat The Rector*]
- 4(vi) Pick up and Departure Times – this matter was raised in relation to returns from Auldhouse and departures for swimming – it was confirmed that the departure times for swimming would not change, however KG indicated he would draw to the attention of P.E. staff concern in respect of the ‘return’ times and the potential consequences for parents where buses were late.
- 4(vii) Timing/Leave – Prelim Exams – KG indicated that school did attempt to minimise the duration of ‘leave’ periods while reflecting the ‘national’ practice for leave during the periods of certificate exams. KG also reminded members that pupils were able to attend school during ‘exam leave’ and that exam leave only means the normal teaching timetable is suspended. In respect of the timing of the preliminary exams it was noted that whilst holidays are acknowledged as important for pupils, the

- scheduling of these exams. after the Christmas and New Year holidays was designed to maximise the amount of teaching time prior to examination.
- 4(viii) In response to a request on how pupils with a particular interest might approach forming a new club or society, KG indicated that pupils wishing to form a new society should attempt to find a staff member sponsor and if that was unsuccessful to approach any member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and in particular Mr. McDougall whose remit includes this aspect of the school programme.
- 4(ix) In response to a question regarding parental concerns with specific teachers, KG indicated that in the first instance, parents should endeavour to address the matter precipitating concern directly with the staff member concerned. However where a problem persisted they should approach the department head, thereafter, if required, the relevant Deputy Head then the Rector himself for any senior school issue, while within the primary school, the extended approach should be to the Deputy Head followed by the Head of Primary.
- 4(x) Music Lessons – it was acknowledged that following a review, the cost of individual music lessons had been reduced with effect from 1 January 2015. Further discussion took place on continuing to manage music lesson costs – initiatives were in place to keep costs as low as practical. In response to a request for ‘shared’ lessons, the school position is that other than for something exceptional such as an introductory taster session, lessons will continue to be available on a 1:1 basis. There was no provision of free instrumental tuition for pupils studying music at certificate level.
- 4(xi) Half Days – KG confirmed that the Spring term would end on a full day while the Autumn and Summer terms would continue to finish at lunchtime.
- 4(xii) Weight of School Bags – in response to this matter, parents and pupils are reminded that bags only need to contain the materials necessary for the periods and activities for one day at a time. Pupils are reminded that sports kit etc can be (and is in many cases) left in form rooms and that wheeled bags and lockers are further options. KG agreed to remind the S1 Year Tutor regarding the availability of lockers.
- 4(xiii) Mid-term Break – February 2016 – it was noted that the scheduled week coincides with English schools mid-term at a time when holiday costs were generally at a premium. KG acknowledged this coincidence but stated the school chooses to schedule mid-term breaks to minimise inconvenience in the timetable and wherever possible the main breaks match those of Glasgow schools as is the case in February 2016.

## **5. Rector’s Report**

- 5(i) The Biggars Music Competition – KG commended the competition which had taken place the previous Wednesday and had been an excellent showcase for music talent in the senior school. KG express hope is to promote next year’s event to encourage a wider audience of parents and friends.
- 5(ii) Rugby Review - KG reported on the work done to look at maintaining rugby in schools; a report on the study had appeared recently in the Scotland on

Sunday. The key outcome of the review was a 2 year trial for secondary pupils starting session 2015/16 – it had been decided there would be 3 conference groups of 6. HGS would join the other Glasgow schools and George Heriots in the 'White' conference. It was recognised that school rugby was not thriving struggling to maintain a foothold and a key aim of this arrangement was to keep rugby sustainable in the secondary school setting.

5(iii) School Inspection – KG reported he anticipates an inspection during session 2014/15 and that as he would have a meeting with Education Scotland representatives at the end of March any inspection would almost certainly be held over till the Summer term. It was expected that parents' views would be sought as part of any inspection.

5(iv) Pupil Achievements – while indicating there were many notable achievement, KG singled out 2 particular recent examples – Sarah Eunson (S4) who had broken the long held Scottish 800m indoor record (previous holder - Linsey MacDonald) and Arun Uttamchandani (S1) who had taken part in the 4 o'clock Show on Radio 4 Extra (the programme was a Junior Version of 'Just a Minute' and was hosted by Nicholas Parsons).

**6. Primary Report** - FM gave members a comprehensive update on some recent and forthcoming events, including, the P7 Christmas Dance, a P6 Scottish Opera Workshop entitled "The Emperors Incredible Army" and P6 Mock Court event in which the P6c group has reached the final in Edinburgh on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. On 6<sup>th</sup> February the annual Scots Verse and Music competition took place with guest judges Mrs McKie judging the poetry reading and Douglas Lawrence the renowned fiddler judging the music competition.

As part of the preparation for transition to the senior school, all the P7 Maths sets were involved in problem solving. P1 pupils will be visiting the Physics dept at Beaton Road; P6 and P7 pupils will once again be involved in Infant reading support; as part of the activities to promote Book week and World Book day there will be visits from authors.

Further forthcoming events planned for the weeks ahead include the annual Grannies' afternoon tea based on the characters for Mhairi Hedderwick's Katy Morag stories and on 20<sup>th</sup> March the P.3 Roman morning for parents where the P.3 classrooms are transformed into ersatz museums and parents will enjoy the Roman Show. Finally FM confirmed that this years' P7 show was to be 'Bugsy Malone'.

## **7. Governors Remarks**

BW gave his first report on the activities of the Governors. In addition to the five meetings of the Governors' throughout the year he mentioned the 'Committee' structure with the 5 sub-group areas of HR, Finance, Marketing, Property and Education which he described as the 'Engine Room' of the organisation. BW reported on some of the topics recently considered which coincidentally considered catering arrangements and music lessons. Topics for consideration in the near future include 'School uniform' – when this matter is considered, the

SMT will be consulted – parental views will also be sought. In describing the structure of the Board BW mentioned the benefit of a mix of nominated and co-opted Governors. At present there are 9 co-opted governors and 11 nominated by a variety of bodies traditionally associated with the school. Recent changes in Governors have seen the introduction of Dr Ahmed Khan as a co-opted governor and Kenneth Ritchie in his ex officio capacity as HGSA Chairman.

Whilst The HGSA is not a sub-group of the Board, BW advised that he had agreed with KR that the minutes of The HGSA should be circulated to the Governors along with other papers in advance of their meetings to avoid the need for the Chairman to report in detail the discussions at HGSA meetings.

## **8. 1957 Group.**

SR updated the meeting on the success of the 2014 Winter Fair which generated income of £6854 with many of the stalls exhausting their supplies. Additional assistance had been available on the morning of the Fair which was most welcome. Based on this income and commitments made and delivered the group accounts currently hold just over £4800. SR also mentioned the recent Quiz Night where 14 teams had competed – again won by the Hutchie Bugs; the evening had generated income of £600 which was included in the balance of £4800

Forthcoming events:

Sports Day will take place on 6 June. This year it is anticipated that the catering will be provided by an external supplier who will pay a fee for the opportunity to attend and trade. This will remove the difficulty which has adversely affected the group's ability to maximise its fundraising in recent years through waste and unsold perishable items. It had been decided that this year there would be no bouncy castle as this had previously failed to generate sufficient funds to meet the hire costs.

WS suggested that she might be able to help arrange a bouncy castle at a considerable lower cost than had previously been available.

The annual uniform Sale will take place on 20 June.

SR reminded members that additional help and support from parents and friends was always welcome and appreciated.

*[exeunt non-elected members and those in attendance]*

## **9. Sub-committees.**

9.1 Social – parents had been canvassed to assess their support for a number of possible events.

The response had been less than enthusiastic despite EL sending more than 100 e-mails she had received barely a dozen responses. This notwithstanding, the group is considering a Ladies' Lunch this year before the end of the summer term and all present considered there remained a possibility of a grander event in Summer term in session 2015/2016. This would require a more concerted effort

on the part of all members of the Committee to generate the level of enthusiasm and commitment to make it a success.

It was observed that other schools provided substantial administrative support to promote and market such events

There was further discussion on the format and scale for a social event and it was agreed this could be remitted to the social sub group

9.2 Constitution – KR advised the Committee why the group has not yet met, that BM remained willing to chair this sub-group and had already undertaken some preparatory work

9.3 Careers Convention – KC and the elected representatives remained after the finish of the main meeting to finalise the outstanding matters for the S4 careers evening on 4 March.

There remained some 14 careers in which pupils had professed an interest and there had, to date, been no success in confirming consultants and others where it was conceded there might be a need for pupils to attend consultations in pairs.

It was hoped that all the identified gaps in provision could be filled in the intervening period prior to 4<sup>th</sup> March.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

11 May 2015