

Hutcheson's' Grammar School Association
Minute of the meeting held in The Founders' Room on 18th September 2017

Draft Minute

Present

Kenneth Ritchie (KR) (Chairman)
P1 – Ingrid Jauhar (IJ)
P3 – Julia Lavelle (JL)
S1 – Roy Amner (RA)
S5 – Fazia Khan (FK)

P2 – Lizette Craig (LC)
P6 – Audrey Mathers (AM)

In Attendance

Brian MacBride (BM), President, FPs' Club
Mr C Gambles The Rector (CG)
Miss K Chisholm (KC), Head of Careers

Kathryn Storrie- Chairman 1957 Group (KS)
Miss F MacPhail (FM), Depute Rector

KR apologized for the slight delay in the start of the meeting explaining that he, KS and BM had been meeting with Mr McDougall to discuss more co-ordinated collaboration amongst H.G.S.A. The FPs' Club, The 1957 Group and The School.

1. Apologies

KR intimated he had received apologies from Mr Toma, who was celebrating his birthday and Ms R Walker Chairman of Board of Governors. KR noted that as he had not realised Miss Walker would assume chairmanship in September he had not afforded sufficient notice.

2. Sub Committee Reports

KR confirmed that to allow Miss Chisholm to quit the meeting as early as possible he had, once again, placed the report for the Careers' Convention Sub- Committee as the first item of business.

Careers' Convention Sub- Committee

KC confirmed that the Convention will take place on Wednesday 7th March 2018 and that it would begin at the earlier start time of 7p.m. It is intended to distribute the forms for completion to children in November with anticipated returns submitted by them in December.

It was noted that the consolidation of the group of consultants in a smaller number of classrooms had worked well and would persist. The only change required from the 2017 event would be to ensure that the bell to signal the changes in appointment would be heard by those gathered in The Assembly Hall. The detailed organisation is scheduled for the January 2018 Committee meeting.

KR advised that there would be a need for a new sub-committee chairman as Mr Campbell had now exhausted his term of office as a year representative. There being no further matters raised KC left the meeting

Constitutional Sub-Committee

Mr McBride advised the Committee that he had nothing to report.

CG apologized to The Committee for the further delay as the meeting he had hoped to hold with The Bursar and Mr Martin had been cancelled. He was confident that once this meeting had taken place and consultation had followed with The Chairman of The Board that progress would be made. He opined that realistically this will not happen before The Associations' A.G.M.

Social sub- Committee

Mrs Khan proposed the date for next year's dinner and dance to be 23rd June 2018. CG advised she liaise with Mrs Tooth The Events' Co-ordinator at The School to ensure that this was a suitable date. KR confirmed that as of that morning there was no conflicting event in The School calendar.

KR apologised to the meeting for the absence of photographs from dance on The Website and confirmed with CG that Mrs Belch in The Development Office was the most appropriate point of contact to remedy this omission. KR further noted that he may require some assistance in gathering these and rendering them in a suitable format for submission to Mrs Belch.

The Committee agreed that if possible the same band should be booked as their performance had been very successful, enjoyable and much appreciated.

KR noted that there had been a meeting earlier that day involving Mr McDougall , The Depute Rector with responsibility for Alumni and Development along with KS and BM in their respective capacities. He noted that he had asked that the H.G.S.A. Dinner be allowed to persist without being essentially and primarily a fundraising event whilst noting that on the experience of this year's event fundraising could successfully be undertaken without becoming intrusive or overwhelming. FK who had joined the end of that meeting

3. Business Raised by Elected Members

Primary School

Kingarth Street Parents' Night – In respect of The Primary School looking into facilitating at one of the parents evening each year, or at a separate evening for parents, appointments with the Maths Set teachers F.M. noted that 3 options had been considered extensively and none was considered viable. These options were extra time added on to existing parents evening, meeting maths teacher at a specific Meet the (Maths) teacher evening or extra parents evening. FM explained why she felt there was no need for any of these options as a maths review meeting takes place monthly with teachers and issues raised and passed to Miss Gibson who would inform the parents were that considered necessary..

FM agreed to ensure that the maths written report is spoken about first at parents evenings

If parents remain dissatisfied she suggested there might then be a need to survey parents to establish how many are actually unhappy with current system.

In response to a question on why the published rule in respect of bags was more honoured in the breach than the observance and not enforced FM sought further detail.

It was noted that in Kingarth Street in respect of school bags the parents' handbook makes it quite clear what is expected yet the majority of children appear with every colour of school bags some with commercial logos emblazoned on them. It was asked what The School was doing about enforcement of this.

Discussion took place about lack of consistency in enforcing uniform guidelines especially school bags. FM insisted that this message was communicated to all parents that attended meet the teacher evening, but other opined that in reality it is only briefly mentioned. FM was not sure that there actually was an issue but would look into the matter.

Whole School

Holiday dates

It was noted that holiday dates were published up to Oct 2018 and that the holiday dates until end of June 2019 should be released by end of October 2017. In response to The School two week holiday in October CG noted that this will persist next year as it is believed beneficial educationally for the pupils to have a longer break at this point in the school calendar, but acknowledged that this will be kept under review.

Excursions

In respect of optional excursions organised by The School it was asked if these could be advertised further in advance to allow parents to take these into account when planning family holidays and other commitments and to afford more extensive periods to plan financially particular in respect of trips which although regular were not annual and were often very expensive. CG agreed there is a need to get information better distributed and more timeously advertised.

CG noted in response to an observation that fundraising could be undertaken to support these trips that he would much prefer fundraising activity within The School were directed towards charitable purposes.

Barclay Review

CG noted that Given the recent publication of the Barclay Review of Business Rates and the possible increase in The School's rates bill, The School was unhappy and was aligning itself with S.C.I.S. which is producing a sector response and advised that John Edward, Director of S.C.I.S. had met with the Cabinet Secretary almost two weeks before to highlight key concerns

Currently the school retains its charitable status and not only passes but exceeds the requirements in all of O.S.C.R.'s public benefit tests. He noted that should The School loose charitable status there would be a limited number of ways to recoup monies if the proposed changes to the tax regime were effected. Options might include increasing fees, decreasing bursary provision, employing fewer teaching staff or increase letting facilities or a combination of these options.

He advised that The Board had instructed a draft letter from Chairman of H.E.T.S. or CG be sent to all local M.S.P.s and M.P.s; Further it was suggested a draft a letter to all our existing parents might be sent with the information from the SCIS briefings, updating them on this development and encouraging them to write to their respective M.S.P.s.

RA suggested The School consider the option of judicial review noting that he had experience of this process having been involved in four such processes. He opined that the threat of these was often sufficient to affect a beneficial reversal of policy or implementation and noted that he was happy to discuss directly with Mr. Gambles the possible Judicial Review route.

Communications Survey

In response to a question on the timing of the proposed communications survey to be prepared by Mr Martin for all parents and its initial availability for comment from The Committee, CG advised It will go out via the new parent portal on Firefly and should be piloted in coming weeks. CG was uncertain but hoped the insertion of key dates and events might become available through this medium.

In respect of The School's Firefly platform, Firefly is used from P5 upwards, Ps. 1-3 have "Homeroom" but P4 appears to be in limbo. FM undertook to look at this matter and seek a remedy for the gap.

CG advised that no final decision had been made in respect of the expansion of the use of i-pads and other electronic devices amongst pupils

KR noted that It is 12 years since last an extensive survey was distributed amongst parents and that copies of this had been passed to The Rector and Mr Martin for their consideration when composing any new survey.

PE Issues

The Rector was asked to explain the extant rule in respect of base layers worn beneath prescribed P.E. kit? It was noted that at present there is no specification in the School Handbook and there is no consistency in acceptance or enforcement by P.E. staff.

LC explained that she had been in communication with directly with Mrs. Green, had then pursued this issue with Mr. Lang in May and had been advised there was an imminent revision of the school P.E. kit: the handbook contains no obvious changes or updates on PE Kit.

The Committee noted that this was not an isolated example and that the differences in enforcement highlighted and various examples could be provided to the Rector

CG explained that he had asked Mr. Lang specifically about base layers and stated black is allowed for rugby although it was noted that royal blue was frequently worn and, on occasions, red with match shirts. As the response didn't address or answer all the issues raised CG agreed to revert back to Mr. Lang for further clarification.

Further to this discussion it was noted that letters issued to primary school children did not make sufficiently clear when boys would be involved in either Rugby or Cross Country which caused confusion as parents did not know which kit to send.

Letters advertising pre-season rugby training were posted out and received by parents after the pre-season Monday session had taken place. This was not a good start for S1 parents who were new to The School, unfamiliar with these arrangements and who had expressed disappointment. CG acknowledged this error and passed Mr. Lang's apologies.

When asked if The School could provide lockers in the Sports' facilities to increase security for pupils' personal belongings, CG advised that combination lockers are available in corridor in Sports hall. It was noted these were at present in the hallways rather than within the changing rooms

CG advised that he was not aware of the rooms used for music lessons in basement of Forthingay Centre being either too hot or too cold. AM advised that in discussion with peripatetic music teachers she had been advised that they too were minded that it was not a wholly acceptable location for children to have lessons principally on account of the variations in temperature and the adverse effect this could precipitate in pupils. CG agreed to investigate this issue and thereafter respond more fully to The Committee.

4. Rectors Report

CG noted the recent tragic, sudden death of Alex. Pope, Head Girl from the class of 2015.

Her mother Jane Williamson is a piano teacher at The School and the thoughts of the whole Hutchesons' community remain with Alex.'s Family.

CG advised the committee of the arrival in The School of a number of new staff members as follows:- John McColgan who has taken the roles of Bursar and Secretary to The Board Catriona Donaldson, as the Bursar's P.A., Rachel Drake, Art Teacher at Beaton Road, Frances Glen, part-time Art Teacher at Kingarth Street, Kayleigh Logan in Catering, Adriana Luker as a Psychology Teacher Patricia McBride also in Catering and 'Liz. Stark as a Modern Foreign Languages Teacher at Kingarth Street; Peter Clowes, a Janitor, had now left the school and Kate Keter had handed in her notice as the school's Archivist. Ryan Smillie, another Janitor, has been offered a position in the Ministry of Defence Police and will be leaving the school shortly, Philip Tonner was appointed to an academic position at the University of Strathclyde, Eddie Bradie, a Chef, has moved to the Janitorial Team and The School is currently advertising for a new Chef. Sandra Leitch who ran the After school club is retiring and The School is currently advertising for this position.

Long standing awards marking 30 years' service had recently been presented to Kingarth Street staff Valerie Gough, Margaret Borland and Gillian Mackay

CG advised of The School's results from the 2017 diet of SQA examinations. He noted that the results last year were the best the school had ever achieved amongst its Fifth Year pupils but that this year, with 68% A at higher, this record had been matched. This he opined represented a superb commitment from both staff and pupils and noted that he was delighted with some of the additional results as, whilst these were not at A grade, they represented significant achievements for individual pupils.

Pre-School Provision

CG advised that Focus groups had been set up with P.1 & P.2 parents to discuss this facility due to open in August 2018. Provision will be restricted to term time five days a week .

Kingarth Street has been awarded Fair Achiever status from Fair Trade. This is the culmination of 4 years of hard work.

CG noted that a whole school photograph was taken and was a great success and an enjoyable experience for all involved. FM noted that this had been a triumph of logistics and organization and had run with military precision. CG drew the attention of The Committee to the photographs on The School website.

CG advised that during the summer holidays work had begun in respect of the Sports' Strategy and that the first tangible improvement was in the Multi Use Games Area which had been resurfaced and upgraded. For those unfamiliar with this term he advised that this space formerly accommodated two tennis courts in Boleyn Road.

In respect of the improved Sports' Hall he advised that the ground works survey was completed, that steel works would begin in January and that a major fundraising initiative would soon be launched with a sports' themed activity day for pupils and parents taking place in January 2018.

CG advised that The School Strategic Plan, a 10 year strategy, is ready to be launched. Information will be sent directly to all parents who have been asked to direct their comments to their respective year representatives' e-mail addresses listed on The Association page on The School website.

5. Primary Report

FM reported that the new P.1 pupils have settled in well. She further reported that 30 new intermediate entrants also started in other primary years.

Over the summer work has been undertaken on a new Science base within Kingarth Street. FM recorded her thanks to Mr Andy Smillie (janitor) for building units. There will be an official opening of the new facility on 2nd November by Professor Brian Williams. This teaching space can also be used for additional technology related activities.

FM hoped that the involvement of science teachers from Beaton Road would add to the developing emphasis on transition between primary and secondary

FM reported there had been significant investment in I.C.T. over the summer, with new PCs and smartboards in I.C.T. lab, music department and science lab. From P.3/4 upwards children will be using laptops. 90 new sets have been distributed throughout Primary school. All software has been updated and FM noted the significant contribution to this project from Jonathan Caddy.

FM advised that a Christmas Fayre will be held on 15th Dec with the children's work for sale and choir singing.

6. Governors' Remarks

There were no comments intimated to the meeting from The Governors

7. 1957 Group Report

KS noted that a Ladies Afternoon Tea was planned for 2nd December from 2-5pm Tickets were available at £25 per person and guests would be accommodated at tables of 10. There would be a range of boutique stalls for Christmas shopping.

KS noted that she was delighted with the interest generated and noted that four tables had already been sold.

8. Former Pupils' Club

BM advised he had nothing to report

[exeunt CG and FM]

9. KR Advised the Committee members of the need for timeous submission of applications by those intending to stand for the vacant positions on The Committee.

He confirmed that Ruth Walker, the new Chairman of The Board of Governors had kindly agreed to address the meeting on The School Strategy 2017-27 and hoped this would encourage a good attendance by parents.

He asked that Committee members attend early on the evening of the A.G.M. to assist with administration.

AOCB

There being no further points of business KR thanked those present and advised that the date of the next meeting would be **13th November 2017** when the chairmen of the sub-committees would be confirmed.