



Hillhead Parent Council AGM

Date: Monday 14th September, 2015

Place: Hillhead Primary School

Attending Parent Council: Ruth Downes (Chairperson), Amalia Theodorakopoulos (Treasurer), Susie Haigh (Secretary), Astrid Azurdia, Colin Tsang, Rachel Lowther, Andrea Fisher, Amanda Buchanan, Anne Hanson, M.Mitchell, Emma Benzie

Attending Staff: Francis Donaghy (Head Teacher) Andrew Robson (Depute)

Apologies Parent Council: Fauzia Khan, Isolde Doig, Kiki Kobatake, Kate Smith, Julia Boswell, Senga Minto (child now left school), Claudine Corneloup (child now left school), Lisa Crampin, Sandra Huettenbuegel, Anke Hilt, Kirsty Matheson

Parent Forum: Approximately 10 – 15 parents

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Chairperson's report.
3. Treasurer's report
4. Appointment of Parent Council
5. Discussion of key plans/areas of focus for coming year
 - a. Media suite situation
 - b. Questionnaire feedback
 - c. Future events / socials
 - d. Fundraising ideas
 - e. Possible sub groups
 - f. Other

6. Head Teacher's report
7. Any other competent business
 - a. Road safety
 - b. Dates for 2015-16 Parent Council Meetings.

1. WELCOME

Chaired by Ruth Downes (RD) who welcomed attendees.

2. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ruth Downes presented the Annual Report. Available to read as separate document.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Amalia Theodorakopoulos (Treasurer) gave a brief explanation of the accounts and drew attention to the fact that the PC account is in credit and much of the money raised last year has yet to be spent. Grant applications for playground improvements were successful (£5000). This grant money needs to be spent before April 2016.

Spending decisions should be on the agenda at the first parent council meeting, and suggestions gathered from Francis Donaghy (FD) and pupil council.

4. APPOINTMENT OF PARENT COUNCIL

Ruth explained how the parent council works, that there are a maximum of 25 places and that those that are part of the parent council should commit to attending meetings where possible and contributing to discussions and activities throughout the year.

She pointed out that there are other ways to be involved for those not wanting to be part of the parent council, volunteering on an ad hoc basis, signing up to the gmail list or joining a sub-group of particular interest.

The following email nominations were noted: Fardos Mohsin and Keith Thompson

Those present were invited to write their names down on a list if they were interested in joining. In total 26 names were put forward, 14 from the existing parent council and 12 new names. A number of existing members had indicated that should there be more than 25 nominations, they would be happy to stand down to allow new parents a chance to join. Lisa Crampin agreed to stand down, and bring the number to 25.

The new 2015-16 Parent Council is listed below:

1. Ruth Downes
2. Julia Boswell
3. Colin Tsang
4. Astrid Azurdia
5. Andrea Fisher
6. Sandra Huettenbuegel
7. Emma Benzie
8. Kirsty Mathieson
9. Amanda Buchanan
10. M. Mitchell
11. Kiki Kob
12. Susie Haigh
13. Anne Hanson
14. Gillian Anderson
15. Fionnuala Featherstone
16. Naoimh Fleming
17. Emma Grehan
18. Zoe Higgins
19. Ana Langer
20. Simona Manca
21. Athole McLauchlan
22. Fardos Mohsin

- 23. Katie Nicoll
- 24. Fiona Stuart
- 25. Keith Thomson

A Parent Council meeting will be arranged shortly to elect office bearers.

5. DISCUSSION OF KEY PLANS /FOCUS FOR COMING YEAR

a. Media Suite Update

Ruth Downes gave background for new parents on the Media Suite situation. Due to lack of classroom space, in 2014 the school had to use this room as a shared classroom. It was agreed as a one-year temporary measure while the consultation took place and the space issues were resolved. In 2015, despite the cap and catchment changes the school continues to have a high roll and still suffers from lack of adequate space.

Once the final roll was apparent the school made the decision to allocate the space accordingly – retain one classroom as a GP room (as per last year), allocate the new room being built over the summer as a second GP room, continue to use the former media suite / library room as a shared classroom.

The PC received a number of emails over the summer from parents expressing concern about the continued use of the media suite as a classroom. Prior to the AGM the PC canvassed feedback from parents on their mailing list on this issue and received a handful of responses ranging from concerned to positive.

Francis Donaghy (FD) was invited to provide more information to parents on the reasons for allocating the rooms in this way.

FD made the following points:

- The lack of sufficient classroom space was far from ideal but that decisions had to be made about how to manage the space the school had effectively.
- The alternative option of composite classes was rejected on the basis that it would cause a disruption to 8 classes, and would be difficult to sustain.
- The main advantage of the current allocation is that it creates two separate GP rooms allowing all the children in the school 2 hours a week in a GP room. Allowing every class a separate classroom would reduce this across the board to 1 hour a week in a GP room.
- The teachers using the media suite work well together and felt positive about teaching in a shared space, lessons had been learnt from last year and the plan was to make as much use as possible of the outdoor classroom and team teaching.
- If the cap remains in place next year, the school will regain another room, meaning that the media suite can revert to GP usage.
- The questionnaire feedback from children in the media suite last year was positive. 70% rated the experience as 'good' and 13% as 'not good'.
- FD assured parents they would continue to monitor the situation and would be happy to ask the children currently sharing the room to fill in a questionnaire for feedback.

Wide ranging discussion followed.

- Some parents present felt very strongly that the media suite should not be used as a shared classroom and that it would be better to allocate an individual room for each class.
- Anecdotal evidence was reported from parents and children who were in the media suite last year that it was hot, unpleasant, noisy, hard to concentrate and their work suffered as a result.
(FD commented air conditioning has been looked at and improved and teachers were hoping to coordinate teaching to manage noise more

effectively. Also pointed out that the results of the survey completed by the children in the suite last year showed the majority of children rated their experience as satisfactory or positive – 70% rated ‘good’ and 13% ‘not good’)

- Concerns about the fire safety of the room were discussed. Parents stressed need to assess safe exit routes given amount of furniture in the room. *(FD confirmed fire regulations for the room were being followed.)*
- What about the minority of children who were having a negative experience in the room? Was it fair that they should suffer? Strong feelings expressed that a few were suffering for the sake of the wider school population.
- Point made that continuing to use the media suite as a classroom is risky as it ‘normalises’ it and allows GCC to consider as a long-term teaching space.
- Suggestion was made that the school rotate different classes through the media suite, so each class only has to be in there for a half-term. Others felt this would be disruptive and create unacceptable challenges for children and staff.
(FD noted that only classes with less than 30 children can share this room, which leaves limited number able to go in, especially if do not include P1 classes. Felt it wasn’t safe to locate P1 children this close to the entrance / exit of building).
- Some parents felt very strongly in disagreement with the school’s decision to use the media suite as a shared classroom. Others supported the decision. Some felt it wasn’t ideal and supported further monitoring and feedback. Many expressed frustration with GCC for allowing the school to be in this situation and recognised that school was in a difficult situation in managing the space.
- Point made that although GCC’s cap was slowly returning space to the school it was not by any means an ideal solution as it had disenfranchised a large number of local families. Children have been prevented from attending their local school or the school they have an

historical relationship with through sibling placements. There is a social cost to the wider community.

Overall FD reassured parents that the media suite share would be monitored and the questionnaire would be provided to children to gather feedback.

RD confirmed that Parent Council will continue to monitor the situation and would welcome feedback from parents with children in P6 classes affected. Would also work with the school to provide support / funds where necessary to enhance learning experience for children sharing the media suite (eg providing a canopy for the outdoor area).

b. PC Questionnaire feedback

Ruth gave overview of results of questionnaire.

Social events receiving most support were International Night, Spring Fair and School Disco.

Fundraising - Idea of tea towels / cards with children's art work most popular. Areas of for PC to focus on that scored highly were Outdoor learning / playground improvement, after school clubs and transport / road safety.

c. – e. Future events / Socials / Fundraising ideas / Possible sub groups

General discussion on some of key areas PC could focus next year.

- Agreed traffic / safe routes to school ongoing concern. Noted Senga now left PC who was the parent who led this sub-group. Would be good for new parent council to nominate someone to take up this role.
- School meals continue to be an issue. Reports of small portions and running out of food of concern to parents. Would be good to form a sub-group to liaise with Cordia and possibly other schools through the Glasgow Parent Councils Forum to discuss ways of improving.

- Easyfundraising has been set up –a PC coordinator needed to monitor and advertise this scheme more widely to parents.
- Autism support Group – Fionnuala has agreed to join the parent council and act as PC link. Fionnuala outlined work she is doing with Andrew Robson on raising awareness. Particular emphasis currently on the Scottish Government legislation on the attainment gap and pushing for inclusion of social communication disorders as important factor in attainment gap. Also work within school to continue to offer support, advice and raise awareness amongst parents and children.
- Possibility of a social action / charity sub-group following on success of food bank campaigns and recent refugee collection.

7. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

FD recognised work and involvement of the parent council and particularly Ruth during the consultation process and aftermath. Applauded Ruth's integrity and hard work during a difficult and stressful process.

Welcomed appointment of Andrew Robson into permanent role as depute.

Scottish Government legislation on bridging the attainment gap is important and will be presenting major issues and challenges for teachers over the coming months.

The playground improvements that took place over the summer have been welcomed by all and made a big difference, allowing areas of the playground to be used more effectively. Chance that school could build further on some of this by opening out more areas, for example by terracing the steep slope that runs up the back of the site.

Thanks offered to all those who volunteer their time to be on the parent council – both to those standing down and to those continuing. Welcome to the new parents joining the parent council and look forward to working with the new chair over the coming months.

8. AOB

Dates will be agreed for the parent council meetings for the rest of the year at the first meeting, which should take place in October.

RD offered thanks to everyone for attending.