

Hillhead Parent Council AGM Monday 9th Sept 2013

Agenda:

- Welcome
- Chairperson's report
- Treasurer's report and appointment of a person to review annual accounts
- Appointment of new Parent Council (PC) members
- Discussion of sub-group possibilities and issues relating to functioning of PC
- Approval of draft constitution
- Discussion of key plans/areas of focus for coming year
- Head Teacher report on development priorities and cooperation with PC
- AOB

Welcome

Chaired by Ruth Downes (RD) who welcomed attendees and explained that a fledgling Parent Council had begun learning last year. The aim this year is to build upon this, establishing a much clearer structure with defined roles and responsibilities. Ruth attended a number of training events last year which clarified

- Everyone with a child at the school is automatically a member of the Parent Forum
- The Parent Council is a representative body of the Parent Forum made up of elected or nominated members.
- The majority of members of the PC and specifically the chair of the PC must have a child in the school.
- The Head Teacher has a right and a duty to attend PC meetings.

This meeting will establish a new PC within these guidelines.

Chairs report

RD reported on the achievements of the previous year. These included the International social, campaigning for playground improvements, Fairtrade Fayre, uniform improvements, the Gibson St Gala and a variety of volunteer roles assisting the school plays and trips.

Treasurers report

Amalia gave a brief explanation of the accounts and drew attention to the need for more fundraising activities. She also highlighted the acquisition of outdoor equipment for the school through the grant the PC received for the Gibson St Gala.

Michel Nowak was nominated to review the annual accounts for the coming year.

Appointment of new Parent Council

RD began the discussion with her ideas gleaned from the previous year's successes and difficulties. The recognised difficulty is having a PC which is as inclusive as possible, identifiable to the general parent community whilst remaining functional.

Last year parent reps provided a reliable group to progress events and issues. It was felt that in order to service a school of this size, moving forward, the PC needs a clearly defined core group who will represent the parent forum, with members ideally across all year groups. They will be supported by adjoining subgroups who will focus on a particular issue or event,

and report to the PC. The PC makes decisions and votes where appropriate. RD has worked on a PC constitution. This includes quorum numbers of 3-25 members.

Discussion followed with a focus on improving inclusivity of the PC. There was valuable input from parents with a variety of different nationalities and backgrounds. An almost corporate structure, with individual class reps meeting regularly with class parents and teacher and feeding into a pyramid like structure was mooted. The Head Teacher, Francis Donaghy (FD), felt that in Hillhead much of this should come through direct communication with the school.

There were also concerns raised that the PC is still a fledgling group and that we need to work to ensure we do not raise expectations and not deliver, better to grow gradually from a strong base

The general consensus achieved was that three levels of parent commitment were possible.

- Full PC membership with a commitment (where possible) to attend meetings and get involved in activities throughout the year.
- Commitment to support or volunteer on a more ad hoc or one off basis in an area of particular interest to the parent
- Providing email address in order to be kept up to date with developments.

The existing office bearers were willing to continue in their roles and as there were no objections the following were nominated and agreed

Chair: Ruth Downes

Secretary: Julia Boswell

Treasurer: Amelia Theodorakopoulos

A further 18 PC members were nominated and details will be sent to the Parent Forum and photos and details posted on the school website.

Parent Council meetings will be held approximately once a term, with subgroups potentially meeting more regularly. Information on PC activities will also be provided regularly, maintaining the current successful practice of using coloured paper.

Important note - Parent council meetings are open to all members of the Parent Forum

Discussion of sub-group possibilities and issues relating to the functioning of the PC

It was widely acknowledged that a major part of the PC work moving forward will be further improving communication with the Parent Forum, with consistency and availability being the aim. The Parent Council email address (hillheadprimaryparentcouncil@gmail.com) is an excellent way to communication and already includes over 180 email. This address will be put out at every opportunity in an attempt to increase the list. Susie Haigh has put an **Communication Box** in the office where parents can also contact the PC with queries or agenda item suggestions.

The use of a Parent Council Facebook page was discussed. Concerns from parents and the Head Teacher were acknowledged, though others felt that the medium could be used

positively and instantly to celebrate the school and the PC's successes. RD will be meeting with MM and will discuss potential difficulties and how to avoid them.

RD and FD were both keen to make it clear that the current arrangements for communication, through the childrens' school bags and the school website, would continue and that any new initiatives were an attempt to widen and open new avenues of communication.

The PC will endeavour to communicate with the wider parent community on any issue or event being considered. It was suggested that PC members could wear badges in the playground to help identify, demystify, and encourage input from others.

The date of all full PC meetings will be circulated in advance and agenda items welcomed from parents. The PC will need to establish how to prioritise agenda items and clarify which channel parents should use in raising different issues. Being clearer about what the PC does, and perhaps developing a mission statement of some kind, was discussed. FD emphasised that he has an open door policy for parents and their concerns and the option of a regular surgery/question time with FD/AD and a PC member was raised.

Discussion of key plans/areas of focus for the coming year.

There was little time to discuss what the PC would attempt to achieve this year and this will be the focus on discussion at the first full PC meeting.

In order to try and be as representative as possible when the PC start to look at activities, it was decided to send out a questionnaire as soon as possible to parents to inform the work of the PC. We will be asking for ideas, issues to tackle, how parents feel they can support the PC and the school, what people are interested in assisting with, as well as basic contact information. The poll will then inform our actions moving forward.

Kate Smith agreed to investigate potential fundraising sources including school pupil designed Christmas cards.

Head Teacher report on development priorities and cooperation with the PC

FD reported on the school's development priorities. Staff feel that after the positive inspection results they are now in a place to explore and develop the partnership with the PC, with fundraising, social events and recognising diversity being the main aims. Two important areas where the school would like to work with parents include:

- Developing the playground, particularly the forest area. Clearance of the area has begun but the school will need a variety of support to achieve its vision. There will be a need for volunteers, including those with technical skills, experience in grant applications and fundraising.
- The school also wish to capitalise on the wealth of creative talent present within the parent body. Ideas include after school programmes and creating an artist or musician in residence.

General volunteers are always required to help increase the opportunities for the children, for example by accompanying them to the football pitch at lunchtime.

AOB

Uniform update

Susie Haigh confirmed that, although Cotton Roots had improved the polo shirts following feedback, some old stock has been delivered to parents. Border Embroideries has confirmed that if any of the recognised issues arise from this stock, parents will receive an exchange.

The secondhand stall was a big success, so with stock remaining the intention is to make it a more regular event. The possibility of a bigger sale, including other items was suggested as a fundraiser.

Otago St Entrance

The road safety situation is once again becoming very serious with parents double parking, idling, and reversing. This is dangerous for the children and inconsiderate for the local residents. School has taken it up with the H&S officer with Glasgow City council. FD has also spoken to Land Services wardens. School has written to individuals in the past and given names to police but to no avail. A concerted initiative by the parent council may help.

The Hillhead Primary Parent Council constitution states that at least 15 people make up the quorum at an AGM and this was easily met.

Thanks was given to all who attended. A meeting will be arranged for the newly appointed Parent Council shortly.