

LINLITHGOW ACADEMY

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on 27th Feb 2014

Present:

David MacKenzie (Rector and advisor to PC), David Devine (Chairperson) Elspeth Brown, Lindsay Guthrie, Kate Signorini, Elaine Stewart, Kathryn Morrison, Mark Fulton, Douglas Gray, Helen Boxall, Douglas Taylor, Jennifer MacDonald (Parent Members) Rhona White -(Teacher), Daniel Devine, Neil Anderson(Pupils), Susan Robertson (Clerk).

1. WELCOME

David Devine as Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. PRESENTATION OF RECRUITMENT PROCESS -ELAINE COOK and LIZ WELLS

Elaine Cook (Head of Services) and Liz Wells (Education Officer) explained in detail the format and proposed selection process which will begin in March to select a new Head teacher to replace David MacKenzie. The vacancy is due to be advertised on 19/3, closing on 6/4. A new process is being proposed that will involve Parents, Pupils and Teachers being engaged at the Long Leat interview stage – the PC felt this was an excellent idea in principle, however questions around logistics remain to be answered by WLC. The Long Leat interview day will be held in mid / late April and the Short Leat Final interviews mid / late May. Elaine also stated that another Parents only meeting of the PC would be required in Mid April, she was actioned with providing an indication of the required date.

David Devine challenged why the role was not being advertised prior to this time as David MacKenzie had intimated his intention to leave last August and formalised this in writing in very early January. Elaine was unable to provide a satisfactory response at all to this question. Elaine did state that the recruitment process could not start until she had met with the PC. From a PC perspective this is not standard policy or process and at no time were we made aware of this point – for clarity no contact re this requirement was ever made with the LA PC or David Devine directly.

Elaine Cook was asked what ‘Plan B’ would be if the first round of recruitment was unsuccessful, as was the case on the last occasion. In this situation an Interim Head Teacher would need to be appointed – the PC raised their concerns that owing to the delay in commencing the recruitment process until 19/3 this was a very real possibility and an avoidable situation which could have been managed better by the Education Department. The delay in the recruitment process also presents a risk and potential lost opportunity for an orderly handover of knowledge from David to his successor prior to his departure in June. This risk applies even if a candidate is appointed in the initial recruitment campaign owing to standard notice periods for senior staff in most organisations.

Recruitment training has already been undertaken by several Parent Council Members.

3 APOLOGIES

Tony Boyle, Stuart Borrowman, Jim Dixon, Alex Davidson and Mhairi Sheail

4 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING.

All actions have been completed as follows:

Minutes amended where required

David has made further enquiries about Youth awards and has been in contact with Nan Matthews, awaiting feedback.

LAA hamper not many staff contributed in response to David's e-mail.

David had passed on how positive feedback was from Parent Council Questionnaires'.

Daniel Devine and David MacKenzie have met and discussed updating the school website.

National Forum Newsletter was sent electronically to all members.

5. RECTOR'S REPORT

See attachment

David also reported that the Inspection carried out in school this week had been a very positive exercise. The findings have to be quality assured and then report will be published about 21st April. Parents will then receive a letter explaining the key findings of the inspection.

6. TEACHER'S UPDATE

No report available.

7. PUPIL COUNCIL REPORT

Jennifer Chumley's position as staff link teacher has been filled by Liam McLaughlin from Business Management..

Big Quiz was run by Pupil Council for the first time this year. A very successful event and money raised will go towards the Catering System.

Rights Respecting Schools – The school charter is almost complete and will be distributed shortly. A Pupil Council Member will attend each right respecting schools meeting.

Feedback Sheets - All classrooms now display suggestion sheets, lists of names of Pupil Council Members and council members plan to visit registration classes and assemblies.

Autism Resource - Visits to this will continue.

No Smoking Day – On 12th March there will be information and demonstrations available for pupils at lunchtime.

Referendum Debate – Two pupils had been due to attend an event about the referendum, but WLC changed their plans and no school pupils attended.

Referendum in School – Two pupils will be speaking to David MacKenzie about the guidelines for discussion in school.

Primary Visits – Pupil Council members will be visiting P7's in March.

A vacancy for S1 pupil council member has been filled by Liam McDonald.

8. LAA UPDATE

Update from last meeting held on 13th Feb was as follows:
Wine tasting had gone very well

£280 raised from the Christmas concert

Bingo evening to be held on 30th April, donations will be needed, will try and get this in next school newsletter

Plans for a pamper night later in the year.

Committee members have increased, balance in the Bank at the moment is £1460 and Centenary Club holds £1339.

9. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

HMI Inspection already covered in Rector's report.

Two members of the Parent Council had been involved in the Parents group selected to meet with the inspectors. This was an interesting experience but one thing which had become very clear was that there is serious lack of understanding by parents of the Curriculum of Excellence and the new exam system. There is confusion over levels, language being used and no consistency throughout the departments.

Information already given to parents not is clear enough.

Parent Council discussed the possibility of producing a "simple guide" for parents explaining in easy language what CfE is all about.

Lindsay Guthrie and Douglas Gray volunteered to co-ordinate this and will check this out with David MacKenzie

ACTION LINDSAY GUTHRIE and DOUGLAS GRAY.

There was a discussion about the impact on class time of pupils choosing 6 subjects instead of 5 and the possibility of pupils having 1 less teaching period per subject. This will be raised by the Parent Council with David MacKenzie.

ACTION KATE SIGNORINI.

School website still needs to be updated in a more structured way and the school bag section needs to be used consistently by the school so that parents are more aware of what is happening.

Sub Committee Reports – Elspeth has had to stand down from the Communications Group. It was agreed to be a good idea to review and revise the working groups and identify the priorities for the Parent Council to focus on. This will be discussed after the results from HMI inspection are published.

It was agreed that a visible presence at Parent's Nights by Parent Council is a really good idea.

Teacher role in Parent Council - This item will be carried forward for discussion at a later date.

AOB

During a meeting with HMI inspectors it was mentioned that there is a school improvement plan. A member of the Parent Council would like to know where to locate this and how much access parents have to this information. This will be put on the agenda for discussion at next meeting.

Parent Council would like an update on the agreed school approach to the referendum. Lindsay has not had an answer to her letter. Lindsay will ask for an update.

ACTION LINDSAY GUTHRIE.

A parents only meeting will be arranged for Council members to discuss the forthcoming recruitment of new Head teacher. All parent council members have been asked to think of suitable questions which could possibly be used for interview purposes and to e-mail suggestions to David Devine.

ACTION ALL

Parent council website has been tidied up by David Devine however additional input required in respect of workgroups progress.

David MacKenzie had left the meeting early so we were unable to get an update on the subjects of Gender Attainment and AAL. David Devine will raise this with Rector post meeting.

ACTION DAVID DEVINE

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 28th April 2014