



Dingwall Academy Parent Council

Minute of the Meeting held 9th March 2015 at 7pm

Present

Samantha Blyth
Helen Cameron
Karen Cormack
Mike Evans

Alister Mackinnon
Lindsay Ramsay
Sandra Rea
Laura Ross

Apologies

Nigel Greenwood
Graham Mackenzie
Stephen Mackenzie
Angela Maclean
Linda Watson

Alison MacLeod
Anita Munro
Margaret Patterson
Alan Radin

Minutes of the previous Parent Council meeting held on 19th January 2015 were accepted.

Matters Arising

Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme – interested S3 pupils have now been enrolled.

A letter on budget cuts was sent out to parents on 15th February. Karen has received no response.

Parent volunteers to assist the PE Department in looking into how to encourage more girls to take part are still required and Lindsay Ramsay and Mike Evans are still prepared to be involved.

Minibus Training – Three Dingwall Academy parents have come forward. Sam has contacted Dingwall Primary to see if there are any parents willing to undergo training. There have been two volunteers. More volunteers are still required, however, as Highland Council need eight trainees to make the course viable. Alister is to contact Ben Wyvis Primary and St Clements School to see if more volunteers will come forward from there.

ICT

Wifi installation commenced last weekend and is to continue this weekend (14th/15th March). This is to allow internet access for Highland Council-bought portable

devices. There is to be a pilot scheme whereby hour-long guest access will be available in the Library. Tokens for this will be issued and this will be free of charge.

The school computers are to be refreshed and “reduced” by 40% before the summer holidays. New hardware will have all required software already installed. All staff computers and the computer suites should all be fit for purpose.

Partnership

Nigel Greenwood has visited the school a few times to talk about engineering.

A group of pupils have been helping to train Senior Citizens in using computers at Strathpeffer Community Centre every Friday afternoon, which has been of great benefit to the pupils concerned.

Educational Trusts

The Chair of Grantown Parent Council has been researching into whether schools can access money which has been left to schools by people in their wills. These funds are held by Highland Council. Sam is in touch with the Grantown Parent Council Chair about this.

Teacher Numbers

Headteachers have been told that Highland Council have to maintain the same level of teacher numbers across the whole authority which means that Dingwall Academy will still have to reduce its staff numbers by two over the coming year.

Alister is asking questions in Council about this.

Karen explained that, using the same formula that was used five years ago, she now will have seven fewer teachers than she did then.

Temperature of the School Building

In summer, the school is far too hot, especially the top two floors. Air conditioning was not installed when the school was being built, ostensibly for environmental reasons. Measures such as putting fans in some classrooms and installing a water cooler on each floor have been taken, but these are not adequate to combat the effects of the heat.

The situation has been monitored by the school over the past year, but feedback from parents is now needed to provide evidence as to whether there has been an impact on pupils’ health and learning. Helen is to devise a short questionnaire which will be sent out to parents via the school.

Treasurer’s Report

Savings Account: £78.34

Cheque Account: £242.49 once various cheques have been written to pay for Spring Fair expenses.

There is a question as to whether VAT will have to be paid on these expenses. VAT can normally be reclaimed on items ordered through the School Fund, unless the school is making a profit. Initially, Laura was concerned that, if VAT has to be paid, there will be insufficient funds in the cheque account to cover it, but there should be sufficient cash flow to avoid this.

Spring Fair (28th March 2015 11-3pm)

Karen and Sam reported on the plans for the Spring Fair.

Stalls and activities will include:

S2 stalls	Rowan
Rock Challenge	BBQ (Parent Council)
Africa 2015	DADS
Diggers	Snack stalls (Home Economics Dept)
Book stall (English Dept)	Art
Musical performances	Skateboard & BMX display & tuition
Laser Tag	Bouncy Castle

S1 pupils are going to read stories to pre-schoolers.

Sam has ordered and organised various outside activities such as the inflatables, laser tag and Skateboard group. She has also ordered wrist bands which can be purchased in advance by pupils at a cost of £10. If wearing a wristband, no further payment for activities will be required on the day. However, activities can also be paid for on a pay-as-you-go basis on the day itself. To break even, 250 wristbands will need to be sold. If all 500 bands are sold, Sam will order extra pieces of equipment to minimise queuing etc.

Lindsay has contacted the Police to see if they would be willing to come. They are keen as long as they have staff available to do it. She has been unable to get hold of the Fire Brigade.

Raffle - two books of raffle tickets are to go home to each family. Tickets cost £1 each or £5/book. Prizes include an i-pad, Belladrum tickets, Deas hamper, signed Scotland shirt, driving lessons, Ross County prize.

The Spring Fair is to be advertised on the school's new Facebook page. Parents are encouraged to "like" the page.

Parent helpers are still needed for the day itself and Sam is to advertise this on the School's Facebook page. It was suggested that a rota of helpers should be drawn up, in order to encourage helpers to commit to their slot.

Donations of books, teddy bears and nail varnish are requested.

Pupils have been involved in sourcing items and Munros Butchers have donated 300 sausages. Tesco is to be approached regarding the supply of bread rolls.

A.O.C.B

Dingwall Distributor Road - Helen enquired about the status of the plans for this. Alister confirmed that the road was not yet a part of the Council's capital spending programme. Helen is to write to Highland Council to enquire about the possible impact the road might have on pupil safety. Alister is to forward details to Helen.

Sam queried whether the gap between the S2 Parents' Evening and the deadline for returning the S2 Options form could be widened, in order to give more time for parents and pupils to discuss the options. This year the Parents' Evening was on Monday and the form had to be returned a few days later. It was suggested that a gap of two weeks would be better. Karen is to get feedback from the staff about this.

Alister commented that Head Boy, Euan Gill, and Head Girl, Sara di Carlo, were fantastic ambassadors for the school when they attended the recent Sir Hector Macdonald Memorial Service.

The date of the next meeting is Monday, 18th May 2015 at 7pm.