

## Dingwall Academy Parent Council

### Minute of Meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017

#### Present

Helen Cameron	Samantha Blyth	Angela MacLean	Emma Whitham
Eileen Bice	Laura Ross	Stephen MacKenzie	
Alister MacKinnon	Karen Cormack	Graham Mackenzie	
Lindsay Ramsay	Alan Stewart	Margaret Paterson	

#### Apologies

No apologies received

#### **1. Approval of Minutes of meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

The minutes were proposed by Laura Ross and seconded by Stephen Mackenzie.

#### **2. School Building**

The facilities company visited the school in December and should receive a report of findings imminently. Karen Cormack will provide update at next meeting.

#### **3. School Report Working Group**

Helen Cameron and Emma Whitham have attended Report Working Group meetings and the Parent Council have been asked to carry out a short survey to find out what parents think about the current reporting system in order to feedback to staff and ultimately improve communications between school and parents. Emma presented a draft questionnaire; minor amendments were made, and then endorsed by Parent Council. It was agreed it should be created in Google Form then emailed out to every parent. Stephen Mackenzie offered to help Emma analyse responses if needed.

Lindsay Ramsay shared her experience of communications with teachers and thought there was room for improvement with the language teachers used when communicating with parents. Karen Cormack commented that it had been highlighted that teachers never received any training for parents' nights and this was something teachers would benefit from. Alan Stewart suggested that a start might be providing a session for probationers on how to talk to parents. Suggestions were noted by Karen Cormack.

**Action 1** – Emma Whitham to create Google Form questionnaire then arrange to be emailed out to all parents.

**Action 2** – Emma Whitham (with the help of Stephen Mackenzie) to analyse questionnaire responses and feedback to Parent Council at next meeting

#### **4. Dinner Hall Capacity**

Helen Cameron brought up the issue of capacity of the dinner hall, especially for those with a packed lunch. Karen Cormack advised the capacity is 400 and there is no scope for this to change.

#### **5. Lepra**

Concerns have been raised about the volume of fundraising and the pressure this puts on parents. It was suggested the school have a fundraising calendar so parents know what to expect and to help avoid too many asks close together.

**Action 3** – Karen Cormack to arrange fundraising calendar to be drawn up.

## **6. Treasurers Report**

The Christmas Fair was a huge success and the Parent Council profit was £1740.25. There is now £2866.61 in current account and £78.36 in savings account.

## **7. Christmas Fair**

The Christmas Fair was a tremendous success. Everyone shared the view that it was a fabulous team effort and special appreciation was given to Sam Blyth who put in massive effort to make the whole event happen. Sam Blyth has received over 150 messages from stall holders praising the quality of the event and the behavior of pupils. Angela Maclean also commented on positive feedback she had received about the brilliant behavior of the pupils.

Both Sam Blyth and Lorna Ross shared their appreciation of the office staff, who provided endless support on the week leading up to the fair and with helping add up all the cash afterwards.

The HFT team was also recognized as making a significant contribution with serving hot drinks and biscuits to the stall holders throughout the evening.

The only negative comment received was about the heating, stall holders found the school far too hot. Sam Blyth suggested we advise stall holders to bring a fan next year.

There is much support to make the Christmas Fair an annual event and Sam Blyth has already received 160 requests for stall bookings. It was decided to keep the maximum to 120 as everyone felt the school was at capacity. Sam will start to take bookings in June and it was agreed that priority will be given to those who had a stall at 2016 event.

The school also had a successful evening and between the various groups within the school raised nearly £1000.

Helen Cameron shared that Parent Council reps along with the HFT team used up the leftover rolls and bacon from the Christmas Fair on the last day of term to sell bacon rolls at break time – this raised £115 for the Parent Council funds.

**Action 4** – Karen Cormack to check a thank you was sent for Caledonian Sleeper tickets.

**Action 5** – Laura Ross to buy and give gift to school office staff as a thank you for their help

## **8. Race Night**

The race night has been postponed until June 9<sup>th</sup> as there hasn't been enough time to make all the arrangements. This event will be discussed in more detail after the Spring Fair but in the meantime Stephen Mackenzie is going to get local businesses on board to sponsor each of the races.

**Action 6** – Stephen Mackenzie to arrange race sponsorship

## **9. Spring Fair**

The date for the Spring Fair is Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March. It was agreed the Parent Council will arrange a bottle stall, raffle, BBQ and inflatables passes at the front door. Stephen Mackenzie advised the Loopallu team have already donated 2 tickets for festival; this will be the top raffle prize.

Further details will be discussed at next meeting, although the following tasks have already been assigned;

**Action 7** – Sam Blyth to buy new bands for inflatable pass

**Action 8** - Emma Whitham to arrange parent helper rota

**Action 9** – Sam Blyth to contact student council to get their view/feedback on inflatables

#### **10. Waste – Litter**

Karen Cormack advised that she has arranged for Duncan Falconer from the Highland Council Waste Management team to run a Zero Waste campaign at the school in February.

#### **11. Strathpuffer**

Karen Cormack shared the success of the Dingwall Academy Mountain Bike team at the Strathpuffer on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January - the team came second out of the school event. Drew Graham's commitment was commended.

#### **12. Staffing**

Karen Cormack advised that Mrs Rachel Merrel was on long-term leave due to family illness.

#### **13. Right of Way**

Graham Mackenzie advised that Mr Fred Lees has again brought up the issue of the Right of Way he thinks runs through the school grounds. All members of the Parent Council were firm they have no interest in revisiting this issue and Graham Mackenzie agreed to feedback this to the Community Council.

**Action 10** – Cllr Graham Mackenzie to feedback to Community Council Parent Council position on Right of Way issue.

#### **16. Common Timetabling**

Sam Blyth asked Karen Cormack if there was any indication that Dingwall Academy would be going to common timetabling and Karen advised that there is no plan for Dingwall Academy to move to this timetable and it is envisaged that the only reason the school would have to adopt it would be to accommodate the Virtual School timetable and this could be achieved fairly quickly as Dingwall Academy already operated on a 4.5 day week.

#### **17. ICT**

Sam Byth sought reassurance that the rollout of Chromebooks was still on target and achievable for August 2017. Both Karen Cormack and Alister MacKinnon advised that Wipro are confident all will be in place and there hasn't been any suggestion this will be delayed. Karen Cormack did point out that this still had not been trialed in a school as big as Dingwall and that there was a Head Teachers meeting next month to discuss the rollout.

#### **18. Management of Schools Review**

Karen Cormack advised she is now chair of the Highland Secondary Headteachers' Association and in that role has been invited to sit on the Management of Schools group. This group is looking at promoted post structures in all schools.

Members of the Parent Council raised concerns about the potential for management structures to be changed without consultation and were keen that we were proactive and made it clear to Bill Alexander, Head of Care and Learning, that we wanted parent views to be considered during any review.

**Action 11** – Helen Cameron to write to Bill Alexander on behalf of Parent Council to request full consultation when Dingwall Academy becomes part of the review.

#### **19. Education, Children and Adult Services**

Sam Blyth has accepted a new role as Education, Children and Adult Services Representative (ECAS Rep). It is an advisory role on behalf of the Highland Parent Council Partnership Forum (HPCP).

Sam Blyth has advised that the committee meets 4 times a year for a full day to vote on key issues impacting on ECAS in the Highlands. So far the HPCP rep role is advisory only. However, HPCP has a mandate from the HPCP conference to pursue having up to two reps with voting rights (as many other Council regions do). HPCP will time its future meeting to be before ECAS meeting so that Parent Councils can be alerted to upcoming issues and also keep Councillors informed of parental views and feedback.

**The date of next meeting is February 27<sup>th</sup> 2017 at 7pm**

### Tasks Requiring Action

<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Who</b>
<b>1</b>	Google Form Questionnaire for School Report Working group	Emma Whitham
<b>2</b>	Analyse questionnaire responses	Emma Whitham
<b>3</b>	Fundraising calendar	Karen Cormack
<b>4</b>	Check thank you card sent to Caledonian Sleeper tickets donator	Karen Cormack
<b>5</b>	Thank you gift to office staff	Laura Ross
<b>6</b>	Race Sponsorship for Race Night	Stephen Mackenzie
<b>7</b>	Buy Bands for Spring Fair Inflatable passes	Sam Blyth
<b>8</b>	Spring Fair parent helper rota	Emma Whitham
<b>9</b>	Contact pupil council their feedback on inflatables	Sam Blyth
<b>10</b>	Right of Way feedback to Community Council	Cllr Graham Mackenzie
<b>11</b>	Write to Bill Alexander regarding parent involvement in any review of school management structure.	Helen Cameron