

Dingwall Academy Parent Council 17th March 2014

1 Apologies – Cllr Graham Mackenzie; Carol Seaton; Dawn Morgan; Linda Watson; Alison MacLeod

2. Present – Helen Cameron, Karen Cormack, Cllr Angela MacLean, Stephen Mackenzie, Nigel Greenwood, Lindsay Ramsay, Anita Munro, Samantha Blyth, Alan Radin, Sandra Rea, Laura Ross.

3. Minutes of 20th January 2014 - approved by Lara Ross. Seconded by Nigel Greenwood

4. Matters arising

1. Skills Force funding has received support, and will be going ahead.
2. Rock Challenge team came 3rd with their performance at Eden Court, and a decision will need to be made as to whether the emphasis should be on continuing to allow the pupils to organise and deliver the performance themselves, or to take in more outside help to ‘professionalise’ the performance. KC

5. Resignation of Heather Thornton from Parent council

Heather has intimated that she wishes to step down from the Parent Council, due to other commitments. She was thanked for her valuable contribution over the last several years, as both a member and as chair. A card will be sent by Helen on behalf of the Parent Council, thanking her. HC

6. Appointment of New Depute Rector.

The new Depute Rector has been appointed, after interviews were recently held. Wendy Harrison, currently PT English at Alness Academy has been appointed, and she has already started attending meetings within the school. Her formal appointment starts after Easter Break, and the Parent Council welcome her and look forward to working with her.

7. Staffing – and supply cover..

The additional financial cuts, along with the renewed pressures of the Curriculum for Excellence, are leaving a hole in staffing cover within the school. In particular, this occurs when there are practical examinations going on, where the teacher/pupil ratios are low to facilitate assessments (in particular music, languages and Home economics/CDT). In practical terms, this means that there are occasions where there are insufficient teacher numbers to cover normal classes. The usual way to deal with this is to take some classes, and combine them in a large social area to work as study groups. This means that it has to be a member of the SMT who leads these study groups – not an ideal situation as the pupils are not necessarily studying their timetabled courses, and the SMT are not being used in their role of school management

As CfE continues to be implemented, we may see more need for this, although there is a possibility that there may be less internal verification work undertaken to counter it.

Karen Cormack to provide statistics on impact this term.

KC

Helen Cameron to write to Jim Stevens asking him for his views and what is being done to provide solutions across all schools.

HC

8. Funding support for ipads.

Karen reported that she has meetings coming up about the use of external devices, and that there may be scope to use other tablet computers rather than ipads. Defer further discussion until next meeting.

KC

9. Fujitsu

There being no update available on the tendering process, this item to be carried forward to the next meeting.

Cllr Angela MacLean to ask cllr Alasdair Mackinnon to provide details on the length of the tendering process, and to question what contractual controls will be in place to ensure that the fujitsu situation does not appear in the new contract when it is awarded.

Cllr AMacL

10. SEEMis

The new management software system is due to be installed and migration of records due to be completed to allow use at the start of the 2014/15 academic year. There will be some cascade training down to all staff over the following weeks.

The school will build their own monitoring and tracking system, as the SEEMis system seems to lack what is required. Karen will keep the Parent council informed.

KC

11. Sub Groups

1. Partnering Evening 24th April. The partnering evening on 24th April is an opportunity for local business to find out what is involved in working with the school to provide support, training and mentoring. The majority of the invites are to businesses which we hope will join with the school to continue to roll out these benefits to pupils. It would be helpful if all Parent Council members could attend, and a request for the SMT to attend was also made.

KC/HC.

2. Mini bus drivers. We now have several names of volunteer drivers, whom it is hoped will sit the Highland council Test. We will contact Cllr Mackinnon to seek out funding for the training/tests.

SM

11. Craig Road closure

The latest news is that TEC services have made no decision yet on whether they are going to apply for a closure. Until such time as an application is made, or substantive movement to this is undertaken, then we have no further input

12. AOCB

1. Canteen usage. Concern was raised about the lack of seating in the canteen area for those eating packed lunches. The problem seems to be that the canteen staff are unhappy about having to clear up the mess made by those eating packed lunches. Karen is aware, and is looking at ways to address the problem. KC
2. Congratulation to DA Drama Society in their success at the recent One Act plays event in Eden Court.
3. A request to ask Hugh Fraser (ECS Director) to the next Parent Council meeting, to answer questions on the school roll and reserved placements, on the staffing issues at point 7 above, and in general about the effects of the forthcoming re-organisation of Highland council Services. A copy also to be sent to Steve Barron, the Council chief executive. HC
4. Financial. There are no substantive changes to the baning accounts, and balances are £1419 in current account, and a further £1177 in the deposit account.

13. DONM.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 28th April, 7pm in the School.