

James Gillespie's High School Council

School Council Meeting

Tuesday 3rd June 2008

Minutes of Meeting

Present:

Elizabeth Bomberg, Jo Boyce, James Carter, Brenda Ellis, Carol Farrell, John Forsyth, Nigel Goddard, Ann Henderson, Kate Katagiri, Mies Knottenbelt, Chris McKinnell, Councillor Marilyn McLaren, Alpana Mair, Graeme Newall, Sheena Purdom, Jane Sanders, Vivienne Swan, Alex Wallace

Apologies:

Mino Caenepeil, Penny Long, Carina Hibbert, Tom MacIntyre

1. Minutes of meeting, 6th May and actions arising

The minutes from 6th May, Treasurer's Report referred to income raised at events. A correction was noted to record that both amounts mentioned of £440 and £155 related to income raised at the Burns Night in January.

The minutes were approved with this amendment as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Headteacher's Report

Key highlights of the year were diverse and demonstrated achievements in arts, sports and cultural activities – including the Pushkin Literary Prize won for the first time by an S2 pupil, Tommy Pia. The school is maintaining its holistic approach to teaching and learning and continues to be considered by international visitors as demonstrating "good practice". This was highlighted also through the recent School Review which commented on school standards with 4 excellent and 2 very graded comments.

The School Improvement Plan focused on underachievement in the S3 cohort, home study and parental communication; eco and health issues. The plan for the next 3 years is likely to focus on the "curriculum for excellence", embedding of ICT within all learning and teaching, also developing the leadership capacity in the staff.

Reviewed also the management remits and have changed the responsibility for events and liaison with the School Council to Sally Westerman. It was also proposed that other staff will attend future Council meetings if required.

School aiming to reduce amount of paper distributed to pupils and in particular the annual mailing sent at the start of session; moving towards web based links. Alex would welcome help with the School Website to develop this as a key communication tool for parents and pupils.

Finally – school will be changing some regular calendar fixtures, moving the popular "Diversity" concert to June. This will be preceded by Africa Week and avoid clashes with SQA focus prior to exams in March.

3. Treasurer's Report

Tom MacIntyre presented a proposed budget for the Council which was approved by the meeting. It was noted that we can claim “clerk’s fees” on submission of a claim to the City Council. We will be making claims on this in the future. The statement submitted did not include the amount of £2,600 raised through the Events Group which has been allocated to support pupil activities. There have been 7 bids to date to the fund following the invite for applications to staff. It is intended to support additional resources and activities which are not already funded or provided for by the School.

It was agreed to add a fourth and additional signatory to the School Council Bank Account. A minute to make this change, adding in Carol Farrell is required by the bank and was agreed at the meeting.

4. Chair’s Report on school re-building

Present position is that there is only 20% of the funding required for the “Wave 3” re-building programme which also includes Boroughmuir and Portobello High Schools. Nigel attended a meeting of the Councillors’, proposing a motion to progress this and to do so as a group of schools to maintain a unified approach. It is important that parents’ maintain pressure at both local and national government levels to keep the case being heard for re-building. There is a feasibility study of the proposals and it is intended to make this accessible to all parents through the School Library. It was agreed that the Council would set up a forum on the website to gather views and to also ensure that feeder primary schools had an opportunity to feedback on the vision and plans for a new school.

5. AOB

James Carter discussed a proposed briefing note for new S1 parents and has started a list of main points. Alex Wallace reported on the plans for S1 parents with a meeting in September to focus on home support while providing a social opportunity and the intention to move the S1 Parents Evening to November to help highlight any concerns at an earlier point in the session.

John Forsyth discussed the policy document that is being drafted to outline contact arrangements for non-resident parents. This will be circulated once approved and it is the intention of parents/staff involved in the consultative process to meet with other neighbourhood schools to share good practice in this area.

6. Active Schools Presentation

The meeting welcomed Graeme Newall, PE Teacher and Active School’s Co-ordinator at JGHS for his presentation on sports, particularly the “out of school programme”, Active Schools. Full presentation available on Council website.

- Aims are to get pupils more active, offer sport for all and make it fun and enjoyable.
- 350 students are signed up as club members to benefit from wide range of activities.
- First annual sporting celebration took place last year – next date is 10th September 2008
- 31 clubs, 12 different activities, 9 teams in football, 5 dance clubs, 4 basketball teams!
- Opportunities also to represent the school at sporting events such as athletics
- Coaching opportunities for older pupils and refereeing qualifications
- Funding – £1000 from school/sports Scotland. Essential therefore to charge £35 fee. [Reduced fee rate is £20].
- Sponsorship – local support for team strips; also required for travel costs and coaches.

There was a discussion about the feasibility of more teams in popular sports, particularly in first year. Also the suggestion to raise awareness half way during the session to involve students who may have missed out on places at the start of an activity. The meeting finished with a thank you to Graeme for his presentation, also to staff for their contributions.