

James Gillespies High School School Council Meeting

Tuesday 4 September 2007, 7.30 pm

Minutes

Present:

Shona Bellward	Robert Inder	Simon Pia
Alan Blunt	Marilyn Jackson	Sheena Purdom
Bev Boon	Alison Johnstone	Izazur Rahman
Norman Brown	Kate Katagiri	Rob Roberts
Debbie Christie	Mies Knottenbelt	Jim Rodger
John Connelly	Karina Kodymowska	Mike Scott
Ian Farmer	May Livsey	Marion Smith
Carol Farrell	Tom Macintyre	Gill Steele
Nigel Goddard (Chair)	Marilyne Maclaren	Vivienne Swan
Kim Hamilton	Alpana Mair	James Taylor
Ann Henderson	Chris McKinnell	Alex Wallace (Headteach.)
Carina Hibberd	Derek Mills	Monica Wilkinson
Joanna Hinton	Susan Noble	
Sara Hood	Lucy Norris	

- Minutes from the Parent Forum meeting of 29th August 2007 were approved with following changes:
 - Some people were not listed as present as the registration list had not been completed by all. The following names were noted as to be added to the list:
 - Vivienne Swan
 - Derek Mills
 - Cecelia MacIntyre
 - Mike Scott
 - There had been a request for the weekday of the Council meetings to be varied to make it more accessible for some parents with daycare issues. This request was agreed to be discussed on the next Council meeting agenda.

[Action: Nigel]
 - There was confusion over who were to be the Council and Trust go-betweens.

Action: Nigel Goddard to sort this matter out.

[Action: Nigel]
- Chair apologised for the late arrival of the agenda and notice of the meeting due to the unusual circumstance (new Council formation). **Good practice in future** would be to try to send out the agenda along with a reminder of the meeting a week in advance. Additionally, to make meetings effective, it was proposed that any **reporting** would where possible **be done in writing**, circulated in advance, and tabled at the meeting, with clearly proposed action and discussion items, thereby striving to make good use of the short meeting times that everyone was able to be together. Also agreed that the Council would do the minuting of our meetings ourselves rather than spending scarce resources to do this. **Mies, Alpana and Karina** agreed to take this meeting's minutes.
- Head of School report (Alex Wallace):
Buildings works over the summer had been a great success with significant improvements on a whole list of things achieved, including major Health & Safety and security issues that had been identified in the survey.

Staffing: JGHS has gained three staff members, and now considerably strengthened capacity in language teaching. However, there are also three teachers going into maternity leave and one senior Management has gone off sick until he retires at Christmas, making the situation difficult.

School Improvements programme is documented and publicly available now and Mr Wallace briefly summarised the key areas of focus, inviting questions.

Q: *Is the school considering fast-tracking through the curriculum programme?*

The School has come to the conclusion after discussing this at length, that evidence of experience at other schools shows overwhelmingly that this practice has in many ways not been a success, and the school is therefore not considering introducing this at this stage.

Q: *CCTV has been introduced into the School grounds over the summer: are there any cameras inside the school buildings (concerns about BigBrother-style surveying)?*

No, the cameras cover entrances and playground areas. No cameras are installed inside.

4. Report from Treasurer (Nick Hughes): Current balance included money leftover from communications budget and funds collected by old PTA, coming to a total of about £4,000.-. **Treasurer** proposed to open one cheque-book bank account initially, with 5 signatories (2 required): Treasurer, Chair and Vice-Chair of Council, Communications person, head of events. Also proposed for a **co-treasurer to be elected** to assist with all the duties that were already identified, including preparation and sorting out accounts before and following events, managing floats during events; developing spending policies and procedures, and sorting out VAT-free buying and insurance for this Council. It was noted that SPTC offers insurance, but also that the City Council has insurance in place. Proposals for action were agreed for treasurer to proceed.

[Action: Nick]

Jim Rodger to assist as co-treasurer in the short term (till December AGM), and **Mies to help with development** of spending documentation.

[Action: Mies and Nick]

Trust funds already have pro formas and procedures that can be passed on for information

[Action Alex]

5. Report from working group on Buildings:

Richard Dietrich gave short account of the Building Campaign and its progress to date, emphasising that communication between parents, to exercise a strong united voice, had been and will be important in future (hence **importance of email-list and other forms of mobilisation**). He mentioned that the survey report that had been promised had still not been received (Richard agreed to follow this through, if necessary with formal Request for Information)

[Action Richard]

He also said that the City Council had not yet made decisions about the next steps as budgets have not been agreed on. It was agreed that it is important to **produce a vision/plans** for the kind of School/School building JGHS would want to develop into meantime, if anything, because when the time comes to formally apply for the money to come through for a building project, there needs to be an accurate picture of how

much money should be earmarked for the project. **Councillor MacLaren** endorsed both these points and promised to keep pressure on about the final decision. It was proposed to proceed with two groups: continued political campaigning (**Richard**) and a separate group (initiated by **Derek Mills**) to work on **setting up a working group** for discussion of a plan for the new project).

[Action Derek]

6. Report from group on Events: **Mies** summarised ambitious old PTA programme that has been successfully established over last three years including: programme of parents workshops; termly big social events (Christmas Fun, Ceilidh and Summer Event); and a large programme of supporting School events (e.g. tea/coffees at parents eves, bar at Sport celebrations, Diversity, etc. etc.). Appealing for helpers to come forward following **email to go out**.

[Action Mies/Carol Farrell]

7. Communications Group: meeting on September 13, contacts and notes handed out by Ann Henderson. Appeal from Mr Wallace that, while recognising the importance of the request to improve communications within the School and between the School and parents, it is also clear that the magnitude of the workload for staff involved is unmanageable already and that such requests have to be discussed within what can reasonably be expected. It was suggested that parents in S1 and S2 start a process of setting up parent groups which would provide an opportunity to share ideas and concerns and thereby alleviating some need to contact the school. Ken Spence and Sheena volunteered to be the reps for S2 and John MacIntyre and Carina for S1

[Action John, Carina, Ken, Sheena]

8. Date for Parent Forum AGM: Agreed that **Ann to investigate a date** in the last week of November, to take place in the Library.

[Action Ann]

Mies to work on suggestion to **combine this meeting with a talk** or other similar interesting activity.

[Action Mies]

9. Decided to abandon the original intention to discuss the list of issues and prioritise them for the next agenda. Instead decided that **Nigel** would **group the items raised into themes** for further discussion in the next meeting. Alex Wallace suggested that these areas are grouped into the same categories used in the School Development Plan where possible.

[Action Nigel]

Meeting ended at 9.00pm.

Date of the Next Meeting: 2 October at 7.30