

James Gillespie's High School Council

Minutes of Meeting

22nd November 2011

1 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Sheena Purdom (co-Chair), Audry Gilmour (co-Chair) Jack Simpson (Acting Head Teacher), Hazel Gough (Treasurer), Penny Long (Secretary), Sally Westerman, Carina Hibberd, Tom Macintyre, Cathy McCulloch, David Wigglesworth, Anne Steele, James Carter, Alison McLeod, Lucy Norris, Alison Wallace, Sabine Fasje, Jo Clayton, Neils Hermannsson, Vivienne Swan, Fiona Henderson, Sally Westerman (teacher), John Swinburne (teacher)

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM AGM (26 October 2011)

The accounts have been verified and signed off.

3 REPORTS AND UPDATES FROM SCHOOL COUNCIL

Sheena Purdom and Audrey Gilmour reported on the meetings they had attended recently:

Alternative Business Model Meeting (ABM)

The meeting was organised by Billy MacIntyre, Head of Resources Children and Families and discussed Edinburgh City Council's plans for their share of savings totalling £97 million. The Council is considering an Integrated Facilities Management model, which will outsource services, including cleaning and maintenance in every Edinburgh facility. The Council are holding a meeting on 22nd December when they will compare the business case for restructuring (24% cuts) vs outsourcing. No decision has been made yet. Core school hours will be unaffected, but there will be cuts to janitorial support and middle management.

Parental Involvement Meeting – the meeting was part of an ongoing process by Edinburgh Council to increase parental involvement. Gillian Tee presented and there were workshops for the parents attending, though with the main focus on primary education.

CCWP – Consultative Committee with Parents – the alternative business model was discussed - the Council assured participants that there is no link between needing to make savings and the tram project! It was confirmed that there will be new IT services at all schools. Breakout groups discussed how to save money but no new ideas were forthcoming. Concerns were raised about the management restructuring and timelines. Jack Simpson will share the outcomes with the Principal Head Teachers on Friday 25 November. The Council has made an assurance that there will be more time available for administration. They want the changes in place by the end of January.

New Build – Audrey Gilmour provided an update she had received from Janice Croll about the new building. The planning application has been submitted and there have been no negative comments from the statutory reviewers. No comments from other parties (eg neighbours) have been listed. The application for the temporary units on site has also been submitted and the location of some subjects has been agreed: Science at Darroch, and CDT and Home Economics at JGHS. The pupils have been working with Space Strategy to help design the layout of the central area. There is no confirmed date for the decant, and a decision will not be made until a Hub co is appointed. It is therefore looking less likely that the decant will be brought forward to next summer, although some work is likely to start then. The official date for the decant is still Christmas 2012.

Events – Jo Clayton reported on a successful wine tasting. Almost £600 pounds were taken in tickets and the raffle, but costs still have to be deducted.

The Christmas Concert is approaching and the Events group will provide refreshments.

4. Staff Perspective by John Swinburne

JS presented on behalf of the teaching staff planning to take industrial action on 30 November. He circulated a letter from the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) giving the teacher's perspective. This said that teachers were to:

- Pay 50% more in pensions contributions
- Work until the age of 68
- Have the value of pensions reduced by 40%

JS said that teachers did not want to take action and that the last time they did this was in 1989, but they are prepared to go ahead with the action. The Hutton Report rejected the idea that public service pensions are gold plated. There is real anger among staff at the proposed changes as this follows earlier reforms to pensions. Although the Government has moved a little recently, teachers want a more positive attitude towards negotiation. The action is also for social justice.

There was a lot of discussion following the presentation. Comments/ questions are listed below with responses in italics:

- The EIS statement is misleading – with private pensions being wound up the current level of provision in the public sector is not sustainable.
- What does the 40% reduction refer to? Is this because the scheme is to change to a career average, rather than final salary? This would mainly affect those who are promoted at the end of their careers - a revalued career average will benefit the lower paid – *Confirmed the*

plan is to change to career average, but this is not viewed as a benefit by research depts. in the unions.

- In general the population is living longer (with the exception of some deprived areas) so this is an inevitable change.
- Will the action on 30th November be the first of many? – *negotiations are continuing. The SSTA is also in favour of action.*
- What does the 50% increase in contributions mean as a proportion of salary? – *contributions are to increase from 6.4% to 9.6%, with the highest earners paying 12%.*
- Pension benefits accrued to date will be unaffected.
- This should not be a private/ public sector argument.
- The financial burdens should be shared, but where sections of society are profiting questions about ideals should be raised.

5 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

School Activities: The S1 Fancy dress was well supported by S1 and S6. The S1 Parent Consultations were also well supported with 84% attendance.

The Edinburgh City Council Fanfare Concert will include city wide ensembles, including pupils from JGHS who were so successful at the Mod.

Two S6 students flew to Stornaway to take part in the Gaelic debating competition and reached the semi-finals. These will be held at the Scottish Storytelling centre in the Royal Mile.

S3 pupils won the Scottish Book Trust writing award; S3s also participated in the Business Challenge and won the trophy with £75,000 in virtual earnings.

Staffing: Two permanent depute Head posts - one at JGHS and one at Royal High - have been advertised to all existing deputies in the city.

Industrial Action: A letter will be sent to all parents about the proposed strike on 30 November. If it goes ahead as expected, the school will be closed. This will not affect the Prelims, which start on 1st December.

Diamond Jubilee – Edinburgh City Council have decided to keep the holidays for Victoria Day and In-service day as planned. There will be an additional holiday for the Diamond Jubilee on 5th June 2012.

6 Any Other Business

Alex Wallace has extended an invitation to anyone interested in the South Africa Development Project to join him at an open house to discuss the project. 10 former pupils and 2 parents are visiting Durban in February.

Sheena Purdom said this would be Jack Simpson's last meeting as acting Head Teacher and thanked him on behalf of all present for keeping things afloat since the summer.