

# Dunblane High School Parent Council



## Minutes for Meeting of the Parent Council

5<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Venue – McCarron Room

7.15 – 9pm

Attendees: Linsay Goodfellow (Chair), Heather Dougan (Secretary), Kathy McEwan (Treasurer), Chinny Iroegbu, Lynne Ross (Vice Chair), Sandy Fleming (Community Representative), Lorraine Thomson, Audrey Taylor, Liz Fraser, Kenny Forsyth, Margo Wilkinson (Depute Head), Frank Lennon (Head Teacher), Julia Nimmins, Mark Spencer Bowles, Charity McArdle

Apologies: Louise Scott

1. **Chair's Report** – The first meeting was postponed due to the early timing of the meeting and there being nothing particular to report at that early stage. An informal meeting of the Office Bearers was held in September.

2. Linsay spoke of setting up parent council email addresses to ensure personal and Parent Council business is clearly distinct. The matter had come to a head as a result of the recent exchanges from Mr Forsyth who emailed Linsay regarding becoming a PC member subsequent to the AGM. Linsay replied to his email and was then sent a further email containing 9 points. Mr Forsyth expressed his concern that he had missed his opportunity to be elected as a Parent Council member when he attended the AGM and stated that he felt that the election of Office Bearers/Parent Council members had been rushed and that he was now seeking to be co-opted. The Chair considered that this had not been the case and this view was supported by a number of those present at the AGM, but she reiterated that Mr Forsyth and all parents and guardians were warmly invited to the regular meetings. She was of the view that correct procedures needed to be followed for the election of members. The Vice Chair then clearly outlined the particular circumstances where co-option was appropriate. A full discussion of the matter followed after which Mr Forsyth left. Mrs Goodfellow stated she had been concerned to ensure this matter was dealt with fairly and properly and prior to tonight's meeting had sought advice and guidance from both Stirling Council and the SPTC and both bodies were of the view that procedures had been appropriately followed. All email correspondence had been printed and was available to view. Mr Lennon spoke of the purpose of the PC being to develop the common good of the school and advised that this is a well led Parent Council and a remarkably open one too. He said that every one of the DHPC meetings for the last 5 years had been open to any parent who wished to attend and many did. He pointed out that in his experience it was the norm that only the office bearers attended PC meetings. After Mr Forsyth left the McCarron Room the meeting continued, however a note of discomfort was made by two parent forum members, in the discussion that followed it transpired that Ms Nimmins was a P7 parent and as such was welcome as an observer but could not be recognised as being a member of the parent forum and therefore could not challenge proceedings. She was advised that she was

welcome to remain at the meeting as an observer, but chose to leave. Mr Lennon observed that this situation was not one he had ever come across before in nearly 20 years as a Head Teacher.

The Chair recognised the unsettling nature of the proceedings and it was suggested and agreed that a short break should be taken.

**Homework** – Charity McArdle spoke about putting in place a Homework Timetable for S1-S3, where teachers would set the homework as and when they wanted it in, involving different levels of homework. Mr Lennon spoke of how there are 11 subjects for each child in S1-S3 and homework is by its nature unpredictable. On the other hand if there was a worry about pupil performance and there was parental concern then it should be looked at. There was a discussion regarding about what amount of homework should be done and how difficult it is to ensure its completion especially if it is not accountable (e.g French vocab, verbs). Children are not tested on knowledge for the first 3 years and Mr Lennon feels that the teachers were best placed to assess and check on homework. If a teacher had a concern then a letter would go home to the parents. It was raised that the pupils feel that they don't have to worry about it and Charity feels that there needs to be a structure in place for everyone including those who do not have the support networks in place at home. Mr Lennon spoke about setting up a parent/teacher working group. Liz Fraser spoke about the primary schools giving course outlines to parents at beginning of each term and Mr Lennon will now put course outlines for each subject in S3 on the school website before the next PC meeting.

**2. Treasurer's Report** – Kathy spoke of how at the moment she is not officially Treasurer due to complicated nature of the bank paperwork for transferring over signatories. The balance at present is £396.76. SPTC membership is being paid by Stirling Council, Mrs Wilkinson will check with Jo Allan that payment has been made.

**3. Fundraising** - Lorraine spoke of how they were thinking about an S1 disco but decided against this. She wondered if there are school events that the Parent Council could link in with. It was suggested that the Pupil Council be asked about ideas for fundraising and what the money could be raised for. It was mentioned that there are different groups within the school who also fundraise and we don't wish to stand in their way.

**4. Head Teacher's Report** - Mr Lennon advised that the exam results were in the recent Newsletter. He also spoke of how the new maths teacher Laura Kennedy will be starting after the holidays and that the new 33 period week seems to be going well. In a recent fundraising event the Likkabula group raised over £1000 in one day.

**AOB** – Chiny mentioned her son was concerned that prelim results were not given until after Christmas – but there is no hard and fast rule with some teachers giving out the results before Christmas. Sandy spoke of how Newton and Dunblane are working on a travel plan i.e. how pupils travel to school, risks etc. Grants are more likely to be available if all the schools work together. Mr Lennon will forward the High School's travel plan to Sandy.

## **5. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting will be confirmed.