

Oban High School Parent Council Meeting

15th May 2018

Conference Room, Oban High School

Minutes

Present: Kevin Champion, Alex Craik, David Duncan, Lucy Files, Iain Fulton, Cheryl Howe, Louise Lawson, Caroline MacArthur, Angus MacFadyen, David McLaughlin, Sam Martin, Caragh Scott, Suzanne Thomson, Maggie Thorpe, Federica Warnock.

1) **Apologies** received from Peter Bain, Francesca Bichard, Gail Brack, Terry Donovan, Lyndsay Elliot, Julie Fairbrass, Nan Johnstone, Mairi Malloy, Joan Reynolds, Michelle MacFadyen, Anuschka Miller, Elaine Robertson, Sally Weaser.

2) **Minutes of last meeting** on 29th January agreed as accurate.

3) **Matters arising**

Maggie Thorpe thanked Julie Fairbrass, the previous Chair, for her service. She also expressed the Parent Council's heartfelt gratitude to everyone who helped move the desks and chairs from the old school into the lorry heading for Somalia, with particular thanks to Terry Donovan who did a huge amount of work in researching and arranging the recycling of the old furniture.

All other matters arising to be covered on the agenda.

4) **Fundraising**

The Fundraising Subgroup has met twice since January, and is always looking for volunteers to join the group. Lucy updated the Council members about developments.

- 100 Club £10 joining fee per year, monthly draw from Sep-June inclusive, two prizes of £25 and £15 every month. This will hopefully provide steady revenue. It was suggested that a clan representative could pull the winning ticket at assembly, the prize to be collected at the office.
- Charities Day Saturday 2nd June. Volunteers needed to help run the stall, where we will launch the 100 Club, have a lucky dip for a tour of the new school with Mr Bain, and sell home baking which Mrs Mackinnon has agreed to make with her pupils.
- School Highland Games in August, we could attend and sell clan-coloured water bottles, wrist bands and flags, together with face-painting to fund-raise.
- Friends of Oban High School is an idea to garner support from and sell merchandise to former pupils.

5) **Raising Our Profile**

It was suggested by Maggie that we form a subgroup to work on ways to raise the profile of the Parent Council within the school and the Community, to improve understanding of what we do and encourage parents to join in future. She asked for ideas from the Council members and their contacts in the wider parent forum about how to raise awareness. Anyone with ideas please get in touch with Maggie.

It was suggested a few of us meet with the pupils in the new leadership teams for the junior and senior school towards the end of June so that ideas can be shared.

Parent Council members will attend the evening event during the three day induction of the new S1 pupils and their parents. Maggie will give a short presentation, a leaflet about the Parent Council will be handed out highlighting Easy Fundraising and the Weather Lottery, and we will help sell school ties.

The school has a shop which will be doing uniform exchange and it is hoped that PC members could man the shop for possibly a couple of hours a month and also sell OHS and Parent Council clan-coloured water bottles to fund-raise. This would also help raise the profile of the Council within the school.

6) **New School**

Everyone was very positive about the new school. Teachers commented on the flow of pupils being much better. Initial problems with temperature control had now been resolved. The official opening will take place in approximately one year once the whole site is finished.

Currently the pupils are unable to access WiFi within the school. A number of members expressed concern and voiced strong opinions on the importance of WiFi. Iain Fulton is going to ask for an update from the liaison officer, and if necessary thereafter the Parent Council will voice their support for WiFi being made available to pupils, as an integral part of providing a school fit for the future.

7) **Staffing**

Louise Lawson updated on the staffing situation. She paid tribute to the teachers who have been covering classes during a very difficult extended period, and the Chair expressed thanks on behalf of the parents. However, recently there has been a significant improvement in the situation, with a large number of high quality applicants for the vacant posts, and successful interviews taking place just before the Easter break. Currently the only posts that are vacant are Maths and Chemistry.

Louise Lawson commented on the consultation that has ended recently. Following this, it has been decided to alter the structure of the school day.

The courses that OHS offer have also been considered. Providing to the needs of the few has to be balanced with the needs of the many. The school is able to offer more vocational courses at National 4 and 5 level. There is a low uptake at Advanced Higher, with English, Maths, Art, History and Biology being offered currently. Pupils in 6th year have the option of studying online with YASS and this can offer a wider choice of courses to some students who are able to cope with this type of relatively independent study.

8) **School Improvement Plan**

Louise Lawson explained this has to be submitted by 15th June 2018.

Priorities are raising attainment, Poverty Equity Funding, and recommendations for Education Endowment Funding. Parents are encouraged to submit any issues they feel pertinent for consideration.

9) **Poverty Equity Funding**

Kevin Champion spoke about this Scottish Government initiative to close the gap, which gives £1200 per annum to OHS for each pupil who is in receipt of free school meals. Kevin highlighted the importance of parents continuing to apply for school meal provision once their child goes to the High School.

This year the money has been spent on various initiatives including a breakfast club, and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy sessions for children struggling with anxiety or poor mental health. Some of the interventions have a positive impact on pupils not specifically within the target group.

There is a requirement to evaluate and report on the interventions, and this is done by a variety of indicators such as attendance, attainment, rate of exclusion, participation and engagement in learning.

Mr Champion would appreciate some help and is asking that parents consider the following questions:

- Suggestions for specific interventions which teachers could use to help the young people who are triggering the poverty equity funding
- The views of parents on Guidance teachers doing more focused work with these pupils, perhaps with personal, confidential conversations and/or involving their family?

Mr Champion would be grateful for any responses by the end of June.

10) **Examination Results**

Alex Craik presented data from February's exam results comparing OHS to similar schools. This data helps the school to target improvements.

11) **AOCB**

None.

12) **Date of the Next Meeting** August 2018, exact date to be confirmed.