

**James Gillespie's High School
Parent Council Meeting and AGM**

Tuesday 9th October 2018

Draft minutes

Present:

Donald Macdonald – DM (HT), Ian Porter – IP (DHT), Ailsa Macintosh – AM (Chair), Graeme Davis - GD (Communications), Julie-Ann Sime - JAS (Treasurer - from 21:00 only), Charles Warlow, Cath Downie, Alastair Philp, Ros Ingle, Luxshmi Soundranayagam, Maureen Cochrane, Pam Billina, Barbara Cochran, Ruth Tiplady, Karen Burke, Jose Lucio Munhoz, Lisa Sutherland, Theodora Lola-Luz, Almudena Garrido, Kingsley Nurafor, Penny Tarsia, Barbara Mole, Anna Christal – AC (Secretary)

Apologies:

Shelagh Shields - SS (Events), Fiona Denvir, Frank Carstairs, Amelia Beattie

1. Welcome, apologies and minutes of last meeting (11th Sept 2018)

AM welcomed everyone.

The minutes of the last meeting on 11th September 2018 were approved.

1.1 (5) Small sums meeting to allocate funding to requests

A meeting was held and a proposed funding allocation was drafted, subject to approval from Parent Council.

1.2 (5) DM to remind parents about EasyFundraising in his Friday newsletter.

Completed.

1.3 (7) Invitation to Frank Carstairs to discuss Office 365 and Sharepoint at a future meeting.

Completed and Frank Carstairs was scheduled to attend this meeting, however he has sent his apologies as he is unwell.

2. Frank Carstairs (Digital Learning update)

Postponed to next meeting.

3. Chair's Report (Ailsa Macintosh)

See document uploaded on the JGHS Parent Council website at:

<http://jghscouncil.btck.co.uk/Minutesandfiles>

In addition, AM reported on the papers presented at the Education, Children and Families Committee Meeting at the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) today.

In particular AM noted that these papers presented under 7.4 Lifelong Learning Plan a well-made case to support the role of music in schools including a top-line coalition commitment to "improve and protect access to music". AM contrasted this stance with predictions in the press that the Council is, once again, going to propose big cuts to the music service.

AM noted that the CEC Budget consultation is open online until 7th December 2018. It is in a different format this year with a focus on setting high level priorities. AM encouraged parents to engage with this consultation and said that she will respond on behalf of the JGHS Parent Council after the next South East Locality Meeting when there will hopefully be more information about possible music tuition funding cuts.

The link to the CEC Budget consultation for 2019-2023 is:

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/bi/change/>

AM also highlighted item 7.6 which includes a Strategic Report on Gaelic Medium Education (GME) which offers an overview of GME from age 0-18 and sets out some possible options including new site options and a proposed five-year timeline outlining the stages required for a move towards a standalone GME secondary in August 2024. This timeline includes the proposal for temporary classrooms at JGHS in August 2019 and the possibility of using Darroch as a short-medium term solution until 2024. It was noted that this report did not give the option of new permanent accommodation being built at JGHS as has previously been

discussed. This report has involved significant engagement with GME parents, but CEC is not yet at the stage to discuss with JGHS parents.

A parent asked DM if there were any further updates. DM confirmed that from August 2019 temporary accommodation will be required on site. DM is hoping to hear more information in the next 2-3 weeks.

A parent noted that a report on rising rolls is planned for the December meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee. Several parents expressed concern about timescales and lack of long-term planning. It was noted that issues with rising rolls have been raised in JGHS feeder primary schools continually over the last 10 years. Several parents who have been involved in campaigning about rising rolls in JGHS feeder primary schools stressed the importance of constant questioning, lobbying and pressure on CEC representatives from parents.

Action: AM to email local council representatives, the local MSP and Crawford McGhie to question whether the option for new permanent accommodation at JGHS is still a possibility following the GME review and to ask about timescales for decision making.

A parent suggested asking Southside Community Council and the Southside Association for support on the issue of rising roles.

Action: Theodora Lola-Luz to ask Southside Community Council and the Southside Association for support on the issue of rising roles.

Finally AM highlighted that the JGHS Parent Council were supporting feeder primary school parent councils following the CEC Janitorial Review with negative effects on lets and meetings outwith school hours.

DM reported that the CEC Janitorial Review had had minimal effects at JGHS and the school has retained the same core janitorial team.

4. Treasurer's Report (Julie-Ann Sime)

See documents uploaded on the JGHS Parent Council website at: <http://jghscouncil.btck.co.uk/Minutesandfiles>

The Parent Council approved the small sums funding for 2018.

5. Election of Parent Council Committee and Office Bearers

Nominations were requested.

- Ailsa Macintosh was proposed and re-elected as Chair.
- Graeme Davis was proposed and re-elected as Communications Rep.
- Julie-Ann Sime was proposed and re-elected as Treasurer.
- Anna Christal was proposed and re-elected as Secretary.
- Shelagh Shields will continue to organise refreshments at school events.
- Karen Burke, Charles Warlow, Ros Ingle and Cath Downie also agreed to continue as general members of the Parent Council Committee.
- Following the meeting, Cynthia Berry also agreed to continue as a general member of the Parent Council Committee.

It was noted that Julie Ann will be retiring from the role of Treasurer next year and the JGHS Parent Council would appreciate notice from anyone who might be interested in taking on this role, with the possibility of shadowing the Treasurer's role this year.

It is hoped that Fiona Denvir will take on the role of coordinating fund-raising.

6. Fundraising/events update

AM noted that volunteers are need to help organise and run fundraising and/or social events.

Ros Ingle noted that more volunteers would also be useful to help run the refreshment stalls at Parent Evenings and school events.

Action: Please email jghscouncilcomms@gmail.com if interested in helping with fund-raising and/or refreshment stalls.

Fundraising options for the Christmas Concert were discussed. Previously the Parent Council have organised a raffle or asked for donations. Last year the JGHS Parent Council linked with the JGHS Trust to allow Gift Aid to be collected on donations. There was concern that there were too many groups fund-raising at the Christmas Concert

last year. It was suggested that it might be better to coordinate effort and split proceeds between the different groups.

Action: DM to co-ordinate with pupils to have fewer fundraising appeals at the Christmas Concert.

The idea of a Christmas Appeal for funding by the JGHS Parent Council was suggested.

A parent suggested that donations to the JGHS Parent Council could be requested through ParentPay.

Action: DM and Parent Council to investigate the use of ParentPay for donations to the JGHS Parent Council.

Action: DM to check whether gift aid can be claimed on donations through ParentPay.

Another parent suggested using a site such as JustGiving for fund-raising.

It was noted that Gift Aid cannot be collected on funds collected from a raffle.

It was also suggested that a donation could be added to Christmas Concert tickets. This would need to be organised through the Usher Hall Box Office.

Action: GD to discuss possibility of raising funds through donations added to tickets with Manager of the Usher Hall.

Action: GD to email JGHS Parent Council mailing list to ask for volunteers to help organise Christmas fund-raising.

From discussion it was also clear that there was some confusion about the use of money raised by the South African project. DM confirmed that the money goes to the link schools in South Africa and helps to fund the visit of South African pupils and staff to JGHS. It does not support JGHS pupils on the South Africa trip.

7. Communications update (Graeme Davis)

GD noted that he would like to update JGHS Parent Council website, but would appreciate help. It is hoped that a small group can produce an

updated version on Wordpress and bring proposals to a future PC meeting. Wordpress. GD envisaged that this would involve a couple of meetings after half term.

Action: Please email jghscouncilcomms@gmail.com if interested in helping to update the JGHS Parent Council website.

GD noted that banners will be updated and produced for Christmas Concert.

Action: GD to produce JGHS Parent Council banners

GD noted that JGHS Parent Council emails are now sent using MailChimp. It would be useful to get parents to re-register for JGHS Parent Council emails through MailChimp.

Action: GD to liaise with school to send request for re-registration through the school mailing list or weekly newsletter.

Social media has been discussed previously, but there was a further debate and discussion about the benefits of using social media, especially in relation to fund-raising and events.

GD noted that he is happy to coordinate discussion, but needs other people to lead.

DM noted that there are no whole school Twitter or Facebook accounts. Facebook has been used for communications about the South Africa trip and Twitter is used by some sports groups within the school. The school website is currently the main source of information.

Several parents noted that there are programmes that can upload the same content on several social media channels simultaneously, e.g. tout suite. This would allow parents to access information in the method they find most convenient and information would then reach more parents.

8. Head teacher's report (Donald Macdonald)

DM thanked AM and the current JGHS Parent Council for their valuable contributions in supporting the school 2017-18.

DM reported that the new S1 have settled in well.

The school are working on developing a new website, with plans to go live mid-November. DM noted that developments are constrained by staffing and time available.

In response to previous questions about sharing teaching and learning resources with parents, there is currently no solution to replace Edmodo. Materials are being shared with pupils through Office 365.

In response to questions, DM reported that GLOW is generally not much used in Edinburgh schools.

In relation to discussions about attainment the meetings between JGHS senior management and all faculties are ongoing. DM highlighted that there have been significant improvements in Maths attainment over the last three years, with results at JGHS in SQA examinations outperforming the comparator school in the Insight Benchmarking Tool for first time.

DM noted that Tania Peters has been appointed as a Pupil Support Leader to replace Bob Shankland, following his promotion to DHT.

Action: IP to share information on pupil support leaders to make points of contact for parents clearer.

A new Curriculum Leader for Performing Arts will be appointed tomorrow to replace Deirdre O'Brien, following her promotion to DHT.

DM noted that the school have been unsuccessful in appointing a new Business Education teacher. The school are prioritising support in Business Education for senior pupils in examination classes. A further advert is being progressed.

There are additional appointments required in clerical and classroom support.

DM noted that there will be work taking place in the school over the October break in the 'Sphere' and 'Cube'. There has already been work completed to make these areas into teaching spaces. There is now additional work to enhance these areas for pupils.

DM outlined work to revisit the school's vision and values, as identified six years ago.

These values, which demonstrate what is important to the school, are:

- Respect
- Equality
- Inclusion
- Honesty
- High expectations/aspirations

These values were discussed with staff in May 2018 and will be discussed with representatives of the Pupil Voice tomorrow. DM would also like to get parental feedback.

DM explained that these values are used at assemblies and in restorative conversations with pupils.

Action: DM to send out Survey Monkey for parents in November with option for writing additional suggestions.

DM informed parents of a change in CEC policy for consent regarding pupil images. In the new policy, parental consent is required for images of S1 pupils, but S2-S6 pupils can give their own consent. The school has a general policy that no pupil names are associated with images on the school website. Pupils will be supported through assemblies to understand issue of consent. DM welcomed parental feedback on this policy.

9. AOCB

DM noted that the pilot will soon start to allow S4-S6 pupils to access school WiFi through their own devices. School WiFi is filtered and CGI monitoring systems will be in place.

A parent asked how the success and impact of the pilot would be monitored? DM noted that the school would self-evaluate the project.

Action: DM to seek guidance from CEC about what would constitute success in this pilot project to allow pupil access to school WiFi.

10. Date of next PC meeting – Tuesday 27th November 2018