

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

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**Draft minutes**

**Present:**

Donald Macdonald – DM (HT), Ian Porter – IP (DHT), Frank Carstairs (FC), Ailsa Macintosh – AM (Chair), Graeme Davis - GD (Communications), Julie-Ann Sime - JAS (Treasurer), Robbie McVeigh, Mari Primrose, Jason King, Tanya Potter, Shelagh Shields, Charles Warlow, Cath Downie, Alastair Philp, Ros Ingle, Pam Billina, Barbara Cochran, Ruth Tiplady, Karen Burke, Barbara Mole, Philippa Ward, Bruce Crawford, Anna Christal – AC (Secretary)

**Apologies:**

No apologies received.

**1. Welcome, apologies and minutes of last meeting (9<sup>th</sup> Oct 2018)**

AM welcomed everyone.

The minutes of the last meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018 were approved.

**1.1 (3) AM to email representatives about option for new permanent accommodation at JGHS**

Completed - see item 3

**1.2 (3) Request for support on issue of rising roles from Southside Community Council and the Southside Association.**

Ongoing.

**1.3 (6) Co-ordination with pupils to have fewer fundraising appeals at the Christmas Concert.**

Completed - see item 5

**1.4 (6) Use of ParentPay for donations to the JGHS Parent Council.**

Completed– see item 5

**1.5 (6) DM to check whether gift aid can be claimed on donations through ParentPay.**

Ongoing

**1.6 (6) Raising funds through donations added to tickets for Christmas Concert.**

Completed

**1.7 (6) Email request for volunteers to help organise Christmas fund-raising.**

Completed

**1.8 (7). Update to the JGHS Parent Council website.**

Ongoing

**1.9 (7) Production of JGHS Parent Council banners**

Ongoing

**1.10 (7) Re-registration for JGHS Parent Council Mailing List.**

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. Ongoing.

**1.11 (8) Information shared on pupil support leaders to make points of contact for parents clearer.**

Completed

**1.12 (8) Issuing of school questionnaire for parental feedback about JGHS vision and values**

Ongoing

**1.13 (9) Success criteria for pilot project to allow pupil access to school WiFi.**

See item 7. Ongoing.

## **2. Frank Carstairs (Digital Learning update)**

Frank Carstairs has the role of upskilling staff and students in the use of Office 365. He is also tasked with transferring materials from the school network to the school SharePoint site which allows student access to resources through Office 365. He is also working with the IT technician to update and develop the school website.

FC recognised that in terms of parental access to learning materials, Office 365 is not a complete solution to replace Edmodo. However for students the use of Office 365 allows similar access.

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) provides Office 365 for all students. All students have email addresses provided in Office 365. Office 365 is accessible through multiple devices and as well as providing familiar programmes such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Email, FC highlighted the following programmes that enable sharing of materials

- OneDrive is the student's personal online storage space. Use of One Drive replaces the need for USB sticks and also allows sharing of materials with other students or teachers. FC highlighted that this is proving useful in sharing personal statements for UCAS applications with students he is mentoring.
- OneNote is a digital notebook, that can be used to organise class materials with content accessible outside school. Some teachers have set up class notebooks to enable collaboration. On the class notebook each pupil has a personal workspace which only the pupil and teacher can access. Students can choose what to share on this class notebook.
- Teams can also be used to create a class and teacher can then assign tasks or assignments.
- SharePoint is accessible to all staff and students and can be used to share files. Data from local network is being uploaded. Content is again accessible outside school.

FC showed a screen shot of the school Office 365 home page. He highlighted the faculties tab with homework, past papers and other support materials.

Currently staff training is being prioritised with student training to follow early next year with information shared through assemblies and tutorials to allow pupils to use materials. Junior school students have used Office 365 through Computing in S1 and S2, but more work is needed to support students in the senior school.

FC noted that Office 365 does have a facility for parent/guardian links, but this is not enabled by CEC.

Parents noted that it would be useful to know if staff are using Office 365 so that they could encourage young people to show them materials.

A parent asked about plans for consistency of approach and adoption. FC reported that not all teachers are using NoteBooks and it was recognised that teachers will have different approaches. However FC highlighted various mechanisms for sharing good practice including an upcoming twilight programme of CPD, learning lunches, CAT sessions and Inservice sessions.

The need to keep materials on SharePoint updated, remove outdated materials was highlighted.

A parent asked about use of Office 365 for homework. FC noted that homework can be uploaded onto OneDrive and then shared with teacher through either the pupil personal OneNote page or by email.

FC noted that pupils are generally being encouraged to use email more.

A parent asked about continuity of Office 365 access at end of S6? It would be useful to know the timescale for leavers accounts being removed. It was recognised that pupils leaving JGHS will need to copy materials to keep them.

**Action: DM to follow up**

FC reported that development of the new school website is in the design phase. The aim is to streamline content and simplify the website. The plan is that all course materials will be on SharePoint.

A parent noted that in comparison with previous years, the school online diary is missing events such as parents' nights. Access to important dates on the school calendar is useful for parents. FC noted that the

school were looking to identify the best calendar to link with the new website.

**Action: School to add key dates to school calendar.**

### **3. Chair update incl. SEL/budget update (Ailsa Macintosh)**

The most recent South East Locality (SEL) meeting was held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Susan Gibb from SQA gave a presentation with information about qualifications and materials available on the SQA website. She also offered to present at Parents' Evenings, Parent Council meetings. SQA website and information.

From the SEL meeting, AM noted that CEC are looking for parental involvement with Edinburgh Learns. These are strategy groups covering Learning & Teaching, Quality Improvement, Equity, Health & Wellbeing, Parental Engagement and Digital Learning and Leadership. Charles Warlow has agreed to attend the Parental Engagement group. For each group there are four meetings per year, but parents are not expected to attend them all, it is possible to just go to one meeting. The next two meetings of the Parental Engagement Strategy Group meeting are 16/01/2019 and 15/05/2019 @ 10-12 noon @ Waverly Court and Maria is happy for more parents to attend.

**Action: Contact AM through [jghscouncilcomms@gmail.com](mailto:jghscouncilcomms@gmail.com) to express interest in attending any of these groups.**

Regarding the forthcoming Council budget, an extraordinary meeting of the CEC Education, Children and Families Committee is planned for 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018. AM is planning to attend. The CEC budget consultation closes on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018. CEC have issued lots of encouragement to engage, but AM reported that details of specific budget proposals are limited in this consultation.

**Action: AM to respond on behalf of JGHS Parent Council that the budget consultation does not contain enough detail to act as proper consultation on proposals**

AM reported that currently there are no formal proposals to cut music tuition.

Additional matters discussed at the SEL meeting included:

- WiFi. Edinburgh City's Parent Representative expressed disappointment that (at 8 November) the pilot project had not started. It was noted that Balerno High School are also keen in setting up pupil access to WiFi.
- Primary school lets
- Timing of Prelims
- Rising rolls.

AM reported feedback from Crawford McGhie (Acting Head of Operational Support at City of Edinburgh Council) in response to email sent after last meeting to look at investing in new permanent buildings at JGHS to address the issue of rising rolls. Feedback was that current focus is on providing temporary accommodation in August 2019 and that there is currently no appetite for building at JGHS as it was likely to be difficult and costly. CEC are investigating the option of upgrading Darroch to provide a dedicated location for a focused improvement of GME provision and at the same time the facilities will be able to be deployed flexibly in the future. There will be a full update at the CEC Education, Children and Families Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Papers for this meeting are publicly available from 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

#### **4. JGHS Trust update (Robbie McVeigh)**

Robbie is parent trustee on the JGHS Trust, alongside Fiona Denvir. Donald MacDonald and Ian Porter are also trustees. Robbie noted that in this role of trustees, they bring their experience as JGHS parents but are not representing the JGHS Parent Council. A trustee is a separate role with statutory obligations to the JGHS Trust.

Robbie reported that he is keen to get feedback on his role from JGHS Parents. It was suggested that the parent trustees share attending JGHS PC meetings and report to the Trust on issues of interest to parents, and vice versa, and that the parent trustees help facilitate communications and closer working relationships between the two bodies.

The JGHS Trust AGM is scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018. This meeting will be focussed on formalising the structure of the Trust, following an

increase in funds available. This Trust plans to spend this legacy over the next three years, but spending has been limited to date.

Robbie noted that aims of Trust and JGHS Parent Council are different. The JGHS Trust website (<http://www.jamesgillespiestrust.com/>) details the mission statement for the JGHS Trust “to promote the welfare of James Gillespie's High School and to establish mutually beneficial relationships between the school, its alumni and its community.”

In terms of funding, the focus of the Trust is on equity and equality. There may also be some differences in opinion regarding projects to fund.

As examples, Robbie noted that the Trust recently supported the S1 trip, ensuring that all S1 pupils could attend. They have also supported two places for South African students visiting JGHS. Some pupils have applied for support to the JGHS Trust. To date, there have not been many applications from staff for funding.

IP noted that there is a need to raise the profile of funding available through the Trust. The Pupil Voice are scheduled to attend the next Trust Meeting.

A parent asked if it would be better to invest this legacy and produce a steady income to fund equity projects in future? However it was felt that investing in the current financial market would result in only limited returns.

A parent suggested that funding for an S6 common room would be beneficial.

A parent asked about the JGHS Trust role in developing the alumni community, with the possibility of generating further legacies, regular donations, organising reunions and developing the wider JGHS Community. DM is keen to develop a database for alumni and acknowledged that this would benefit from funding for administrator to set up a database.

A number of parents noted the need for greater coordination of funding efforts between the JGHS Parent Council and the JGHS Trust.

A parent noted that Sciennes PS Trust and Parent Council have a single school wish list, with funding coordinated between the two bodies.

To develop relationships between the JGHS Trust and JGHS Parent Council, Robbie suggested respective Chairs are invited to a future meeting of each group. AM agreed to invite new Chair of JGHS Trust to a JGHS Parent Council meeting next year. AM also indicated that she would be happy to attend a future meeting of the JGHS Trust.

**Action: AM to invite new Chair of JGHS Trust to JGHS Parent Council meeting. RMcV to liaise with the JGHS Trust to invite AM to a future Trust meeting.**

## **5. Fundraising and Events inc. Christmas/Festive Fundraising (Ailsa Macintosh/Graeme Davis)**

DM noted that Parent Pay request for JGHS Parent Council donations added in October had raised ~ £1200 so far, without any publicity.

GD noted that the £2 contribution on tickets sold through the Usher Hall Box office had generated ~£160 so far. Early ticket sales were missed, so this is likely to only raise limited funds.

AM noted that there has been discussion about organising a raffle for the Christmas Concert, but it was agreed that, if a volunteer could be found, the raffle should be held at the April social event (Fri 26<sup>th</sup> April). It was agreed that the focus at the Christmas Concert should be on pupil fund-raising efforts.

It was suggested that the JGHS Parent Council could instead focus on promoting a festive fund-raising effort through ParentPay.

It was noted that giving through ParentPay is efficient and easy, but we need to determine if Gift Aid can be claimed on donations collected in this way (see Action 1.6). It was noted that an alternative could be to set up a charitable web page to allow donations through the Trust?

A parent suggested that the JGHS Trust could have a book stall at the Christmas Concert. It was also suggested that leaflets about ParentPay could also be provided at the Christmas Concert.



**Action: JGHS Parent Council to organise festive digital fund-raising campaign.**

AM noted that the JGHS Parent Council Wine-tasting social event will be held on Friday 26 April 2018. Sponsorship is already in place from Sainsburys, Vino. Coop and Aldi. The plan is to invite staff and parents, including P7 parents from JGHS cluster primary school. There are plans to include a BBQ at this event. There was debate about whether the event should be free of charge or ticketed and whether those attending should pay for specific items. It was also suggested that this event include a raffle.

## **6. Finance update (Julie-Ann Sime)**

JAS reported that the JGHS Parent Council currently have a balance of £1929. JAS noted that £264 had recently been raised through easy fundraising.

**Action: DM promote JGHS Parent Council easy fundraising page ([www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/JGHSparentcouncil](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/JGHSparentcouncil)) through weekly newsletter.**

## **7. Head teacher's report inc. WiFi (Donald Macdonald)**

DM reported that pupil access to school WiFi pilot started last week. Prior to starting the pilot, school staff contacted all looked after pupils and pupils on free school meals to check that that they had a suitable WiFi enabled device. Pilot started initially with 20 pupils from S5. These pupils had many different devices and all successfully accessed the school WiFi.

Assemblies are being held this week and all S4-6 are being issued with a contract. On return, they will be able to access WiFi. School web filtering is in place which means that pupils will not be able to access Instagram, WhatsApp. Expectations to not download apps or videos have been shared as well as importance of collective responsibility to ensure sensible use.

Success criteria have been identified which includes the impact of pupil use of WiFi on other users. No issues so far.

The aim is for pilot to run till February break, then continue thereafter.

DM reported that there are currently 258 pupils registered for S1 in August 2019 and the school is planning to timetable for 260. The school is tracking applications through Seemis. For 2021, the current projection is for 280 in S1. For August 2019, the school are planning additional temporary accommodation of 6 classroom spaces in the back car park. Planning preparation will be required.

DM reported that the CEC plan is to develop a stand-alone Gaelic high school for 2024.

DM noted that the school is currently fully staffed and that the school is advertising now for jobs that will be vacated by retirement and for rising rolls at the end of the summer term.

In response to a parent question, DM noted that Prelim dates were finalised today and will be issued shortly. Prelims will start in the second week of term in January 2019.

## **8. AOCB**

A parent noted that they had heard complaints that many of the toilet doors do not lock. DM was aware of the issue and there were some difficulties in procurement for repairs.

Another parent noted that there was often no soap in dispensers in the pupil toilets.

**Action: School to arrange for more efficient repair scheduling.**

## **9. Date of next PC meeting – Tuesday 22nd January 2019**