

**James Gillespie's High School**

**Parent Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**Draft minutes**

**Present:**

Donald Macdonald – DM (HT), Ailsa Macintosh – AM (Chair),  
Ian Porter – IP (DHT), Ruth Cox – RC (Curricular Leader for Performing  
Arts), Julie-Ann Sime - JAS (Treasurer), Charles Warlow,  
Cathie Sudlow, Shelagh Shields, Cath Downie, Claire Marshall,  
Fiona Denvir, Ros Ingle, Sarah Scott, Ruth Tiplady, Lisa Sutherland,  
Luxshmi Soundranayagam, Melanie Main, Gail Edwards,  
Anna Christal – AC (Secretary)

**Apologies:**

Graeme Davis - GD (Communications), Cynthia Berry, Karen Burke

**1. Welcome, apologies and minutes of last meeting (19<sup>th</sup> March 2019)**

AM welcomed everyone.

The minutes of the meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 were approved.

The minutes of the last meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were approved.

**1.1 (1.2) Raising funds through donations added to tickets for Christmas Concert.**

Ongoing.

**1.2 (1.3) Production of JGHS Parent Council banners**

Ongoing.

**1.3 (5.1) AM to share contact details with Gail Edwards and offer support for survey of parents.**

Completed. Survey will be circulated to parents this week.

#### **1.4 (5.2). DM to send information to feeder primaries about wine-tasting social event**

Completed.

#### **1.5 (7) DM to send out results from School Values Survey.**

To be sent out on 29 May 2019.

#### **1.8 (8) Volunteer to take over Communications role on the JGHS Parent Council**

Ongoing.

### **2. Department update – Ruth Cox, Curricular Leader for Performing Arts**

RC started in post January 2019. RC gave a presentation to parents, PDF copy of which is inserted as an object at the end of these minutes.

A parent asked about extra-curricular opportunities for pupils who are not following curriculum in performing arts. RC replied that Departments are looking at communication with parents and are keen to encourage all pupils to get involved. RC also noted that Music Department are looking at no cost in school based certification as an alternative to external exams for pupils at lower grades studying with music instructors. RC also noted that SQA units are still offered, including Higher Performance Units.

RC said that Music Department is completing an inventory of instruments and the Department will support pupils where possible with loan of instruments.

A parent asked if there is a contingency plan if funded City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) music tuition is discontinued, as has happened in other council areas. RC noted that funding will continue to be available for pupils on SQA courses. There may also be possibility of using some equity funding. DM noted importance of Parent Council involvement in previous campaign against cuts music tuition.

JAS noted that Parent Council have previously funded the purchase of instruments and music activities through Small Sums Fund.

### **3. Chair update (Ailsa Macintosh)**

AM publicised the next Engage Career event on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at the Braid Hills Hotel. More information is available on JGHS Parent Council website.

AM noted that the James Gillespie's Primary School Bike Bus is also open to secondary pupils. Again information is available on the Parent Council website.

AM also noted that the issue of pupil access to school WiFi was raised again at the most recent South East Locality Meeting and at the Consultative Committee with Parents. It was also discussed at the CEC Education, Children and Families Committee meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May during discussions on Digital Strategy. Alex Ramage (the parent representative on the Education, Children and Families Committee and Chair of Liberton High School Parent Council) is also on a Council working group and keen to promote pupil access to WiFi.

### **4. Fundraising and Events (Fiona Denvir/Ailsa Macintosh)**

#### **4.1 Wine-tasting social event on Fri 26<sup>th</sup> April – update**

The wine tasting social event was a sell-out. AM formally thanked Cynthia Berry for organising such a successful event as well as Fiona Denvir and all the parent volunteers involved. She also thanked Lisa Shearer and the pupils who provided the music. Formal thanks was also noted to Andrew Lundy at Vino Wines together with Barney's Beer; Scotmid Co-operative on Marchmont Road, the Greengrocer at 18 Argyle Place; Sainsbury's Local on Marchmont Road, Aldi at Cameron Toll, Victor Hugo Deli on Melville Terrace and Barnomadics. Thanks was also extend to all attending and supporting this event. £287 was raised.

It was noted that the success of this event was probably helped by sharing the date early and generating lots of publicity through the school newsletter, Parent Council email lists and to feeder primaries.

## 4.2 Future fundraising/social events

Gail Edwards has organised a survey to identify possible future events. The survey will be shared in the school newsletter this week. The survey also includes ideas on timings and looks to engage parents in helping to run future events.

**Action: DM to endorse survey in his newsletter and forward link to feeder primary schools to share with prospective new S1 parents.**

**Action: AM to email invite to all parents through school to meeting of interested parties to discuss events following results from survey in early September. DM to forward to feeder primary schools.**

In discussion about events, it was noted that quiz nights to raise funds for the South Africa trip have been very successful. The possibility the individual year group events and cinema nights was discussed.

Several parents were keen to have an event for new S1 parents early in term. IP said he was happy to work with Parent Council to organise such an event. Lisa Sutherland volunteered to help.

**Action: AM to share Lisa Sutherland's email with Ian Porter.**

IP noted that P7 information evening on 17<sup>th</sup> June. Parent Council has previously attended to promote activities. Parent email contacts have also been collected to add to Parent Council Mailing list.

**Action: Cathie Sudlow volunteered to attend and represent Parent Council.**

**Action: Fiona Denvir to forward slips to IP to gather email addresses at event.**

It was noted that it would be useful to identify a date for the new S1 parents' event in September to share on 17<sup>th</sup> June.

Shelagh Shields also noted that more volunteers are needed to help with teas and coffees at events. Please email:

[ighscouncilcommms@gmail.com](mailto:ighscouncilcommms@gmail.com) if interested.

It was noted that parents are keen to encourage school staff to join events.

## **5. JGHS Trust update (Fiona Denvir/Ailsa Macintosh)**

AM noted that the JGHS Trust are still looking for a new volunteer parent trustee. Councillor Alison Dickie has also joined the Trust as a trustee. The Chair's annual report was recently distributed.

AM has met with JGHS Trust Chair Ann Henderson to share information.

Melanie Main noted that the JGHS Trust is inviting S6 parents to an event at City Chambers after the S6 Leaver's event.

It was noted that provision of an S6 common room has been discussed by the Trust, but concern about space available. DM noted that this is unlikely to be revisited before 2021 when Darroch is available. A parent noted that St Oswald's Church Hall (alongside Bruntsfield Primary School) has been discussed as option for Boroughmuir High School.

**Action: Lisa Sutherland to share contact details with AM**

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

JAS noted that Parent Council account currently stands at £4786.94. This included a £50 donation from Ian Murray MP for completing a Populus survey.

The Parent Council approved Small Sums Funding for £4500 this year.

**Action: JAS to send out call to school staff for Small Sums Funding in June.**

Funding will be allocated in September 2019.

**Action: DM to issue reminder about EasyFundRaising in school newsletter before the end of term.**

**Action: JAS to email DM for update on ParentPay funds collected on behalf of the Parent Council.**

## **7. Head teacher's report incl. WiFi and rising rolls and exam leave (Donald Macdonald)**

In reference to WiFi, DM thanked Charles Warlow and Graham Davis for their continuing support. The current pilot scheme will now continue until

the end of June 2020. Information about access to school WiFi will be shared with new S4-S6 at assemblies.

It was noted that the school would like to assess the impact of the pilot scheme with data gathering completed by February 2020 to allow presentation of results in April 2020. A parent suggested contact with Edinburgh University. JAS may also be able to suggest as Masters project through her work.

**Action: DM to ask for contacts and leads in newsletter.**

DM noted that current experience has shown that tablets or laptops more useful than phones for many tasks. Some class sets of laptops and tablets are available for classes to borrow.

DM noted that the school is nearly fully staffed, with 5 additional appointments required.

DM has had contact with external agencies that are advising about changes in patterns of drug use in young people. DM is keen to update materials used in class and share information with parents and pupils. It was noted that parents are keen to receive updated information.

A parent shared concern about the length and provision of study support during exam leave. DM noted that S4-S6 pupils are on study leave from mid-January to early February for Prelims and from end of April to start of June for the SQA exams. Staff are available during timetabled lessons for consultation during these periods of exam leave and many pupils come in during this time. A parent commented that other schools have a more formal structure with revision classes and immersion classes in the days before exams and some pupils would benefit from this more structured revision programme. A parent also noted that only a limited range of subjects were on offer for study periods over the Easter holidays. DM noted that staff volunteer to run classes over Easter and whilst payment is available, this is not a contracted responsibility.

**Action: DM to discuss with Heads of Department**

A parent asked about published league tables and was reassured that school positions depend on the statistics included and often do not take

account of A level presentations and higher uptake of Advanced Highers compared to additional Highers in S6.

It was noted that the percentage of school leavers moving onto positive destinations from JGHS has increased from 93% 4 years ago, to 97% in 2017-18.

## **8. AOCB**

A parent asked about garden maintenance and the increasing number of weeds in the school grounds.

**Action: DM to investigate weed control in maintenance contract.**

## **9. Date of next PC meeting – Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

PDF of Ruth Cox's presentation – click to open

