Angus Music Forum 15thFebruary 2012 and 4th June 2012

Attending:

Maxine Cottiss –Quality Improvement Officer (Expressive Arts)

Jerry Randalls - Music Support Officer

Parents

General

* JR shared some of the key findings of recent research undertaken by the music department. These included:

General:

* + The scores reflected a polarised view with scores 1 ’totally disagree’ and 10 ’totally agree’ consistently being the two highest scores.
  + There was a reasonable response rate.

Pros:

* + Overall, standards of teaching and performing were judged high
  + The range of instruments offered was good
  + Music tuition was highly valued – self-discipline, inspiration to others, increasing musical appreciation and self- esteem were given as positives
  + Several parents were willing to pay more in recognition of the service offered

Cons:

* + Some teachers has been on long-term sick leaving children without teachers
  + Communication overall was a challenge – this covered both teacher arrangements for those currently in lessons and also about what was available to those new to the service.
  + Difficulties obtaining transport for more rurally based children to attend groups
  + Many parents are already struggling to find money to cover the music tuition so were unable to pay more despite recognising that an excellent service is offered
* JR updated the group that there would be changes to orchestra practice times due to budget restraints and examinations throughout Angus so that terms with orchestra rehearsals dates would be more limited than in the past running September to November.
* Additionally, it was reported that a substantial amount of the music budget is spend on providing transport throughout the region in order to facilitate attendance at these rehearsals.
* JR also commented that Band Camps were also under review. This was partially a recognition that it is difficult to find staff willing and able to give up weekends. Partly also a recognition that due to necessary budget restraints, parents would have to contribute more towards the cost of the weekends at a time when many families are under financial pressure. This is particularly relevant where families have more than one child attending such camps.
* It was suggested that this kind of experience could be obtained by a Friday night rehearsal, followed by a full Saturday rehearsal ,with no residential aspect.
* The music department is currently well stocked with instruments purchased in recent years
* The music department was looking at offering alternative groups for young people to play with rather than the full orchestra which can be problematic and only include orchestral instruments as well as logistical problems (see above). This includes groups such as the Celtic Music Club, YMI.
* It was agreed that a parents forum would be set up along the lines of a parent council. A working title of Angus Parents’ Music Forum was suggested. The aims of this group would be:
  + To work with Angus Council Music/Expressive Arts to inform, feedback and suggest ways forward from a parental perspective
  + To help communicate the work of the music services and the benefits of learning a musical instrument
  + To fundraise to assist in facilitating the aims of the Music services of offering a wide choice to as many pupils as possible.
* Parents to be recruited:
  + Letters sent out to those receiving music tuition via their music teachers
  + Via parent councils (JS to draft a letter to Parent Council Chairs)
  + Via GLOW website
  + Through schools to all pupils?
  + Setting up of a dedicated website?
* Next meeting to be held after the summer holidays tbc.