Angus Parents Music Forum

The first meeting was held on 8th November at Angus House,Orchardbank Business Park, Forfar

Present: Jane Stork (Acting Chair), Ian Kinnear, Julie-Anne Kinnear, Gillian Bartle, Janet Crozier.

Apologies: Heather Crabb*,* Anita Lee

1. **Attendance/Communication**

It was agreed that numbers were too limited to make election of officers meaningful. It was also agreed that the low numbers was probably because of limited communication of the meeting. It was agreed that the next meeting – planned for 7th February 2013 should be much more widely advertised:

* On the Glow parents’ blog
* In a letter to go out shortly to parent council chairs
* To the parents of all children currently in music tuition via a letter, written from the acting chair, to be delivered directly by music tutors to those children
* By flyers to be printed out by the music dept., supplied by the group and handed out (and announced) at the forthcoming concerts on 27th/28th November. Gillian and Julie-Anne both volunteered to help hand out the sheets on these occasions.

Jane, as acting chair agreed to draft a letter for these purposes which will be circulated to the group for comments.

1. **Remit of the Group**

Whilst the group was small, it was agreed that this forum should be run for and by parents only and that members of staff of Angus Ed dept attend on the invitation of the group as and when necessary

1. **Aims of the Group**

The aims of the group where felt to be broadly as stated in the original letter announcing this meeting:

* To share, inform and discuss information on music tuition in Angus
* To offer parental input into Angus music policy
* To help disseminate information to other parents including those not currently using the services or those new to the service
* To fundraise, enabling more ambitious projects to go ahead

with the addition of:

* To create a positive, aspirational and open forum for parents interested in music tuition

1. **Band camps and Rehearsals**

Following the events of October 2011 band camp and the logistical and financial difficulties of running these camps, what is the future of these? What are the alternatives? The group requires further information and this aspect will be followed up at the next meeting. Several parents expressed concern that the significant reduction in rehearsals for concerts; both the loss of the residential courses and less evening rehearsals, was increasing pressure on teachers and pupils to reach the same standard as in former years. Whilst parents strongly desired that standards should be aspirational, perhaps acknowledgment that less time was available would not be a bad thing so that music making could remain fun, above all else.

1. **Music Tuition**

Is there any possibility of families with more than one child in the system to get a sibling discount? Also, could parents supplying and maintaining personal instruments for their child/ren obtain a discount since the fees stipulate a sum for rental and maintenance of departmental instruments?

1. **Curriculum For Excellence**

Parents noted that with choices now being made in S3 for S4 rather than S2 for S3 & 4, parents of children taking music to the new National 5 or 4 would be paying for an extra year’s tuition. Is there any acknowledgement of this? Does this mean that there is more money in the system and it’s just going to get swallowed up in the overall education budget? The group would like more information on this.

Equally there was a concern that pupils who are now only taking 6 exams at national 5 were less likely to take music as one option. Whilst is was acknowledged that pupils may return to do a National 5 in music in senior years, parents will have to fund lessons until age 16 whereas the child would have been free of charge at standard level, age 14. Does the department have any information on the number of pupils planning to take music in S4 compared with previous years? When this information is available could it shared please? There is a concern that music examination levels will fall in the next couple of years.

1. **Individual high school experiences**

Does the Education Department have specific guidelines as to the music provision that must be supplied by each high school or is it down to each school to make its own arrangements? There was some concern about the lack of equal opportunities throughout Angus depending on local teachers’ commitment/availability/skills. How can we assure that each child gets a fair opportunity to make the most of Angus Music provision?(eg., using a neighbouring school facility where appropriate, etc)?

1. **Date of Next Meeting**

**7th February 2013**