

## **Minutes of Auchinleck Academy Parent Council Meeting - 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016**

**Present:** Elizabeth Rankine, Peter Gilchrist, Carol Leitch, Martin Goudie, Hilary Sharpe, Maureen Guthrie, Elaine Taylor, Alex Gregory, Robert Brown, Councillor Jim Roberts, Adele Young, Susan Robertson, Trudy Morrison.

### **1. Apologies:**

Judith Govans, Agnes Nicol, Chris Johnstone

### **2. Minutes of previous meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016 were approved by Robert Brown and seconded by Elaine Taylor.

### **3. Matters arising:**

No matters arising from the minutes.

### **4. Treasurer Update:**

Paperwork received from Fiona Howat and the amount confirmed in September is still the same. £134.06.

### **5. Chair Update:**

Inspectors are in the school. Martin has met with the lay member of the group and covered the type of parent council we are and what the relationships are like with the school. Topics discussed included the new school. Concerns raised around the level engagement by EAC post decision being poor in comparison to pre-decision which was good.

Martin told them we were happy and supportive of the new school. We were concerned that the impact on Auchinleck in the meantime regarding investment. The initial communication from EAC was along the lines of fait accompli.

Councillor Roberts stated this was not the case and drew everyone's attention to the recent meeting at Boswell Centre and what was made available for everyone to review. Councillor Roberts suggested that the Parent Council should be clear on what information they do want.

Martin summarised that we were supportive but would like to know what support there will be to Auchinleck over the immediate years. Also drew attention to the lack of engagement of the Primary Schools and that this is important as these will be the children who attend the new school. Clarified how we have suggested the local primaries need early access to the campus to ensure the transition is made easier.

**Councillor Roberts agreed that he would take forward the issue of communications with all the groups.** He raised that the parent council have mentioned the situation with the toilets and if there are problems you need to go through the property sector.

Peter confirmed the situation with the toilets and how the risk assessment was completed. Only 2 refurbished out of 8 which were highlighted. **Councillor Roberts will visit the school and go round the toilets with Peter to see the issue for himself.**

Robert raised the issue of water supply on the top floor of the School. Peter confirmed a pump was installed next to the Janitors office which has resolved the issue currently.

Councillor Roberts stated that one of the reasons he attended the meeting tonight was due to the Swimming Pool and the state of the facility. The plan is to drain the pool over Christmas and New Year and carry out repairs required.

Called a meeting with Facilities management, Janitors and asked “why is the facility like this?” The climatic control has not been working for some time. Raised that staff needed trained properly and alarm should be installed to alert when the facility is not working properly.

Adele raised the issue that P7 Primary School children have received a letter notifying them that they will attend Auchinleck Academy for 2 days in June and she does not feel this is enough. Peter confirmed this is a bus issue in respect of cost. Martin highlighted this was his concern about outlying schools.

Alex asked if feedback has been taken from the children how effective the 2 days are.

Peter confirmed that the feedback has been positive and acknowledged that this was reduced to 2 days from 3 days previously due to cost. He confirmed that staff from Auchinleck Academy do go out to the Primaries to engage with the pupils too.

Alex suggested that it should be an integral part of P7.

Trudy asked would it be possible to integrate the first years gradually when the new School opens. Peter said the timetable would be a challenge as the school will be 85% capacity but they could look at the possibility of a first year play area for example.

Martin raised that the children already at the new Campus through their Primary School would be familiar with it and this could be an advantage over Children who are not familiar with the building/campus. This could be made easier by the Schools being more involved with the Campus throughout Primary.

Councillor Roberts asked “How many people go into the Council Website?” Limited response.

He drew attention to the fact it is an award winning website and would encourage everyone to access it. Alex said she did not agree as she had accessed it specifically to review Knockroon Campus information and felt it was disappointing.

**Councillor Roberts said he would go to Alan Ward and Stephanie and ask them to produce a monthly newsletter for the Primary Schools and Secondary Schools to keep them informed on the progress.**

Martin confirmed that the Grange could not facilitate us visiting since March and we are still waiting to hear from their Parent Council. **Councillor Roberts said he felt it would be a good idea and he would try to facilitate this.**

Alex asked does anyone know how it has impacted attainment at The Grange.

Peter – No

Councillor Roberts stated that the learning environment needs to be right. Some of the results we are getting back are not reflecting the investment made. Not sure whether it is leadership or other issues. Inspection reports are now being taken in front of Governance and Scrutiny Committee to review. There is a plan to bring Head Teachers in front of the Committee to explain the reports.

Martin stated that this should happen if there were concerns without there needing to be an inspection. Councillor Roberts raised that in his opinion inspectors should just arrive unannounced and Martin agreed that it is an artificial situation currently.

Councillor Roberts clarified that the schools work on self-assessment and this is why the external audit is required. Martin confirmed that the language on the audits will be simplified to ensure it can be understood when routinely published. The parent council will see an early draft of the report before it is published.

Adele raised that she would not be blaming the Headmaster, she would blame the Scottish Government as Curriculum for Excellence should not have been put in when money was tight. Robert stated that he got a 5 page report for his son and it was gobbledegook. Peter confirmed this was CFE report.

Alex questioned how effective are the Inspection Reports?

Peter confirmed that yes absolutely it does lead to change, if there are areas of serious concern they will return to ensure action has been implemented. If mixed feedback the Local Authority would review to see if progress/support required. Peter confirmed it was him who made up the self-assessment toolkit in schools and how that it should be measured against the Inspection.

Martin confirmed that the Scottish Government have a big focus on attainment and achievement. External Audit come in to review progress. There is no cycle in Scotland or

timetable for return. They will review the stats and choose what schools to visit taking a relative sample across the Country. Inspection reports set recommendations not demands.

The other thing Martin found surprising was that they are only assessing 5 of the 15 Key Indicators over the week, therefore, it is not going to be a full assessment of the School.

Councillor Roberts stated that this was a fair point, however, he confirmed that if they came up with concerns they do have the authority to go further if required. They are more interested in STEM education subjects.

Peter confirmed that a third of parents were asked for feedback and only 26% of parents responded.

Martin raised that one of the things he discussed was the amount of engagement with all parents and the difficulty in getting people involved. The discussion came around to the point that the School should engage more, Martin disagreed with that point.

Peter confirmed that he sends regular letters, text, newspapers to engage with customers.

Councillor Roberts stated that he would need to leave the meeting at 8.00pm, any other issues. **Raised the issue that Visions are not speaking to the Council at the moment and this will need to be addressed to ensure the Children have access to the Swimming** when the new School opens as this was what was discussed at consultation and there is no way children would be bused to the current Pool.

Susan raised the fact that people filled in feedback forms at the meeting at Boswell and questioned has there been a summary issued. Councillor Roberts stated no. Martin encouraged that this is addressed through the Newsletter.

Councillor Roberts raised the change in boundaries for local councils and left the meeting.

Martin confirmed Draft report will be available by mid-November and comments to be sent straight back to Martin who will get clarity.

## **6. Head Teacher Updates:**

Second day of Inspection today and our SLT have worked hard on self-assessment. 4 QI's set by the inspection team and we can choose one. We feel the initial meeting has gone quite well.

They have been quite honest that their job is to raise the bar and ratings have been upgraded. Leadership, Teaching, Self-Evaluation, Health and Wellbeing are the 4 quality indicators.

Encouraged us to go onto the Education website to look at the detail of the Inspection.

Today they have been in classrooms, observing, speaking to children for feedback. One of the areas of focus is “do the children have a voice?” Tomorrow they will spend time with a second group of parents and local business partners to give opinion on how we move things forward.

They have picked up that the attendance in Mauchline and Ochiltree is good but Muirkirk and Drongan is not.

On Thursday they will attend the Assemblies and on Thursday afternoon they will give an assessment of progress.

The report issued should give parents a report which can be easily understood.

Martin raised that movement of staff is very transient and rapid.

Peter confirmed that he still has not appointed a permanent English Teacher and he is just not able to appoint. In his opinion this is a Government issue and plans have not been in place early enough to address the issue. There is also difficulty in resourcing Modern Language teachers. Peter has updated the Inspection team on the recruitment issues.

Discussion by the group around the challenges of the Education system and how this is failing some children. With reduction in class room assistants some children can slip below the radar. Alex raised that the people at the coal face understand the problems but no one listens. Falling standards in Literacy and Numeracy in education were also discussed.

Peter did acknowledge that some staff will get nervous around their future and will they find a role in the new School.

Robert raised should we write to Alan Ward our concerns around the ability to fill and maintain staffing resource during the next 3 years? **Concern around our ability to attract and retain staff. Does a risk register actually exist for the Knockroom project? This idea can be taken forward by looking for potential “location allowance” to attract talent. Engage with Universities to promote living in East Ayrshire and engage with the top students.** Peter confirmed only teachers in Auchinleck and Cumnock will be considered for Knockroon Campus.

Scottish Attainment Challenge – East Ayrshire Council has been acknowledged as having high levels of deprivation. It is likely that Auchinleck Academy will get some funding.

## **7. AOCB:**

Maureen raised issue regarding Ochiltree Bus and the Stagecoach bus not waiting for the mini bus to arrive. Peter stated this has been addressed through Mr Roberson and to raise if it happens again.

**Trudy discussed Show my Homework and not being advised it would be implemented. Now she loves the system but would like the teachers to update.... if submitted etc. Peter will raise this with Teachers.**

**Parents raised issues on Catrine and Mauchline buses. It was agreed that Peter will investigate this.**

Alex raised issues with Parent Pay and who is the trouble shooter for this. Peter confirmed it would be Martin Robertson who would administer this or Caroline.

**8. Date of Next Meeting:**

17<sup>th</sup> January 2017

**End of Meeting**