

St Joseph's Academy Parent Council
Minutes of Meeting 29th November 2021

Attendance

Parents	
Gavin Duffy (Chair)	
Julie Batchelor	
Dawn Bias (Church Rep)	Apology
Deborah Boyd	Apology
Jim Campbell	
Pamela Chigbo	Apology
Mairi Gribben	Apology
Shirley Harkness	Apology
Amanda Busam Kennedy	
Jackie Livingstone	
Catriona McCrindle	Apology
Paul McLaughlin	Apology
Kate McLean	Apology
Anne Queen	
Marion Smith	
Douglas Thomson	Apology
Grace Walker	
Staff	
Joseph Kane (HT)	
Est Ayrshire Councillors	
Fiona Campbell	Apology
Maureen McKay	Apology

Meeting conducted via Zoom call, as a result there will be limitations to the detail of what can be discussed.

Opening Prayer

Gavin Duffy opened the meeting by welcoming everyone on the call and leading the opening prayer.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Passed as accurate.

Matters Arising (from Parent Forum Meeting)

Julie Batchelor proposed that PC members write a short piece on the benefits of being a member of the Parent Council. **Action: ALL**

Head Teacher Report

Mr Kane presented the [School Report](#), highlighting:

COVID-19

- Staff absence (Covid-19 plus other seasonal absences) highest since beginning of pandemic
- Hoping not having to resort to contingency plans.

SQA

- SQA upheld professional judgement of teaching staff relating to appeal results, so no results were changed.
- Prelim calendar issued to pupils & parents

Reporting

- Online parents' nights will be scheduled in January / February 2022

Willowbank Consultation

GD advised that, via email (dated 29/10/21), Linda McAuley Griffiths had advised that:

- The consultation around Willowbank was complete
- Willowbank School has a apposition to get through academic year 22/23 but that there will be evident capacity issues after that point
- It is highly likely that EAC will return to the St Joseph's development as part of an "interim" solution
- EAC will require at all future stages to have due corporate governance in respect of next steps which will be in our taking an additional paper to cabinet to approve a more sustainable direction of travel, whilst likely utilising the plans in hand to cover the build time necessary from 23/24 onwards.

LMG's email is included as an appendix to these minutes for completeness.

There was some discussion around the probity of this approach from EAC, and some concern that the "interim" solution would in the longer term become permanent, potentially avoiding the scrutiny that Education Scotland and the related mandatory consultation process would bring to any "permanent" solution proposed.

Treasurer's Report

Handover in progress and account signatories to be updated as GW, ABK & JK **Action: GW**

Account Balance = £1395.30

Fundraising: There was a discussion around the importance of fundraising to the provision of additional funds for the school, GW proposed the following ideas:

- On-line shopping widget
- Non uniform day
- On-line raffle
- Treasure hunt

A fuller discussion on fundraising will be scheduled for January's PC Meeting, including the provision of 'poverty proofing' events,

Correspondence

No correspondence received.

AOB

Closing Prayer

GD led the closing prayer.

Dates of Meetings:

- 31st January 2022
- 14th March 2022
- 9th May 2022
- 20th June 2022

Appendix 1 – Email from Head of Education (Linda McAuley Griffiths) to Parent Council Chairs (29/10/21)

CLASSIFICATION: OFFICIAL

Good afternoon Jane and Gavin,

I hope that this finds you and your families well. You will know that I advised last week that I would provide you both with an update on the consultation and hope that the undernoted will serve as such.

I have communicated the undernoted to both of your Head Teachers today, in advance of writing to you and have also advised Education Scotland of the undernoted today.

In regards to summarising past events, as you already know, due to increasing numbers of children and young people with additional support needs, a solution was sought to reduce the pressure on our specialist provision and a transformational review commenced in 2019.

Due to unprecedented increases in numbers of children and young people, particularly within Willowbank School, a timely, viable and sustainable solution was needed to reduce the pressure on the physical space.

At the time, the school estate plans did not offer a timely solution and due to the close proximity of St Joseph's Academy to Willowbank School, a potential viable and timely option was identified that could be utilised to resolve capacity pressures. The one element that became quickly under scrutiny was sustainability of this option and questions were raised as to whether or not this would resolve the capacity pressures in the long-term. The local authority made a commitment that once the engagement with all stakeholders concluded, a fair and transparent report would be presented to Cabinet and final recommendations would reflect the absolute needs of the children and young people in both schools.

At present and in framing our proposed future actions, we are also aware of a potentially significant tranche of new house building in both the Kilmarnock and Stewarton areas that will also no doubt have significant impact on our number of young people with ASN, this information was not available to us at the start of the consultation in Jan 2020.

In addition, there has been ongoing concern about the "one option" approach and this was also emphasised in my discussion with Education Scotland, and indeed also evident from Public Consultation.

Through further engagement with all stakeholders and the timing of COVID-19 resulting in subsequent delays, it has brought the local authority to a position where it no longer makes sense to pursue this as a sustainable option but to continue to scope specialist provision on a wider scale and include the Willowbank/St Joseph's consultation and data within the school estate management programme and broaden out the options.

The data gathered from the consultation will absolutely not be lost and will play an important part in the future direction of this scoping and allow us to work closely together and find timely, viable and sustainable solutions in the short, mid and long-term.

I would wish to emphasise at this early stage, that it is highly likely that we will absolutely return to the St Joseph's development as part of an "interim" solution as we begin to make plans for further ASN estate, and during any building that facilitates the sustainable solution to Willowbank. Tracy has already intimated that Willowbank has a position to get through academic year 22/23 but there will be evident capacity issues after this date, and this interim solution will be needed after this time.

Clearly, this will mark an end to the consultation as it currently stands and we will require at all future stages to have due corporate governance in respect of next steps which will be in our taking an additional paper to cabinet to approve a more sustainable direction of travel, whilst likely utilising the plans in hand to cover the build time necessary from 23/24 onwards.

I will clearly keep you both availed and indeed involved in said developments.

I absolutely trust that this news will be welcomed by both of you and your respective parent councils and we will likely meet to discuss further in the near future.

Kindest regards,

Linda

Linda McAulay-Griffiths
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