

St. Joseph's Primary School Parent Council



St Ninian's High School



Parent Council Minutes – 27.9.16.

Attendees:

Parents: Brian Kelly (Chair) , Joanne Bastable (Secretary), Martin Morris, Maureen Wright, Trish Gordon, Carlos Varon-Lopez, Katrina Adams, Laura Torrance, Mary Theresa Sweeney, Christopher McGowan, Andrew Mackie, Stephen Nugent (Vice Chair), J.McLaughlin, I. Anderson

St Joseph's School Representatives: Carlyn Hill, K.Wynne, J.Lavery, F.Quinn, F. Cuning.

Church Representative: John Hutcheson.

Apologies : Sam MacConnell, Caroline Gray.

- Previous minutes reviewed and accepted.

Consultation

Brian began by outlining the documents currently available in relation to the ERC consultation regarding admissions to St. Ninian's, St. Joseph's, OLM and St. Cadoc's Primary schools. The Chairs of these groups met with Dorothy Graham as a preliminary meeting. Main concerns were the increment in numbers in OLM in 2016. ERC later outlined the reasons why the numbers had increased. The numbers in the other primary schools have also steadily increased. Further meetings were also held with Mairi Shaw, Mark Ratter and Fiona Morrison where the issues were outlined. St. Ninian's is currently operating at capacity and will be unable to maintain a significant increase in pupils. ERC invited opinions from the Chairs of the schools and this resulted in the consultation document. The Council were reluctant to consider additional capacity at St. Ninian's. Also discounted the possibility of building a new Catholic high school as they do not believe the numbers merit this. The Council believes that the proposal is the only option. ERC is protecting the rights of pupils currently already at school. There will therefore be a need for temporary accommodation at St. Ninian's when the current children reach high school. The issue is therefore around managing demand. ERC has not been in a position to predict the surge in demand for places partly because of the fact that many parents have opted into the Catholic Sector who previously might have opted for the non denominational sector. However, it is significant that many parents who have been unsuccessful in achieving a place at St. Ninian's have subsequently been very happy with the provision in the other high schools in ERC. Pupils being redirected to St. Luke's has also been dismissed as an option for managing demand. ERC therefore believe that a change in admissions policy is the only option within the legal framework. The other Chairs from the schools offered an immediate endorsement of the proposal but Brian felt he would rather wait until this meeting to formulate our response as a PC. The need for parents to respond individually was also stressed. St. Angela's PC is objecting to the proposal - as are several other groups. Not a democratic process according to ERC but it is vitally important that parents voice their opinions.

Miss Hill commented that the Church has made its views known and she agrees with the stance. St. Joseph's is approaching capacity and when a school is at capacity, Catholic children should have priority.

The need for compelling communication to encourage parents to respond was discussed. Primaries 4 -7 in St.Joseph's are submitting responses.

Brian reminded us that the 1918 Education Act allows for exactly this course of action.

Miss Hill pointed out that despite the fact that certain groups will undoubtedly feel negatively about this option, the fact is that numbers need to be addressed. Miss Hill also pointed out that a good Catholic school has an extra dimension that is unquantifiable. Equally important to remember that all other schools in ERC are of a very high quality. Concerns were raised that children might be Baptised for the wrong reasons, but this is unavoidable and indeed a matter for the Catholic Church to deal with. The possibility of a flyer to be distributed to parents was suggested. ERC did state publically that the successes of other schools in the area need to be highlighted.

It is not currently predicted that the Catholic population will ever be more than 10 streams - 300 pupils.

Brian is going to formulate a reply to the consultation.

Jacqueline and Katrina are going to produce a flyer for parents. Miss Hill thought it should also be handed out at St. Joseph's and St. Bridget's Churches. John offered to speak to Fr. Jim about this. The following people offered to co-ordinate handing out the leaflets: Vigil - Andrew, 10am - Mary Theresa, 12pm - John, 6pm - Maureen. St. Bridget's - Trish. Jacqueline agreed to liaise with St. Joseph's primary about printing and distributing the leaflets.

Head Teacher's Report.

- Still concerned about noise in the Base. Might need further clarification for working capacity in the Base. Looks as if the GP room might need to become a classroom despite the fact it is not a good classroom. Other option is to look at altering the layout of the Base - moving sinks might make more room available. Miss Hill is concerned that the school is approaching the situation where there will be no extra space. We need to continue to agitate to improve the situation in the Base.
- Toilets have been repaired.
- Plan to revisit the estate issues after the consultation.

Funding Group

- Trish reported that the Whitelees application has been provisionally submitted. Scottish Water are re evaluating the situation. Still hopeful about the outside classroom.

Mrs Thompson has been successful in securing funding for Food For Thought and the school hope to continue to develop closer links with parents and other agencies. There are currently many parents already providing support and time for the school and the pupils.

Proposed Fundraising

Mary Theresa is proposing a fund raising event - a dinner dance at the Busby Hotel. Hope to create a organising team of parents. If 100 parents come, there is the potential to raise £12 per person for school funds - which would raise £1200 in total. Suggested price for a ticket - £30 each. Think it might be most effective if linked to a particular project and ask local businesses to support it. Martin wondered if it would be worthwhile to also invite parents of former pupils.

Miss Hill reminded parents that the previous year had been very successful and highlighted the outstanding Transitions Review.

AOCB carried on to the next meeting. Meeting ended at 9pm.