



**MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL  
MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING**

**Meeting:** Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020

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**Present:** S Clark (Head Teacher), K Vallance (Chair/Secretary), L Donaldson (PTA Vice-Chair), Cllr Bamforth, S Hussain, S Sadiq, E Morrison, J Scott, J Wong, L Jones, L Fraser, C Adams, D Hawezy  
Pupil Leadership Team - K Little, F Hyde, A Finlay, R Bruce

**Apologies:** A Blair (PTA Chair), J Murphy

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### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

K Vallance welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed apologies had been received from J Murphy and A Blair. K Vallance extended a welcome to the new attendees at the Parent Council meeting.

### **2. Minutes of Last Meeting (26<sup>th</sup> October 2020)**

K Vallance apologised for incorrectly referring to “Morgan Stanley” in section 8 of the minutes when it should have been “JP Morgan”. Otherwise the minutes were accepted on the proposal of L Jones and seconded by J Scott.

### **3. Matters Arising**

*MCHS Sports Facility* –Cllr Bamforth confirmed that the allotted funds remained within the ERC Capital Plan for future education facility works.

*November Careers Evening* – Refer to section 4 for a feedback summary on the DYW week.

*ICT Funding* – K Vallance confirmed that £2,520 had been transferred from the Parent Council to the school for the purchase of 9 Chromebooks as part of the classroom in a box initiative following an entirely positive response received from the previous meeting attendees.

*JP Morgan IT Programme* – Discussions taking place between Laura McCaffrey and JPM in an effort to include MCHS in the programme.

### **4. Head Teacher’s Report**

S Clark introduced to the meeting school pupils forming the Pupil Leadership Team (PLT) namely Ryan Bruce, Ailsa Finlay, Katie Little and Fraser Hyde to provide an update to the Parent Council on many aspects of the school from the pupil’s perspective.

#### *Covid-19 Update*

S Clark noted that as tier 4 restrictions were now in place, PE would take place outdoors and those pupils who were shielding had been advised not to attend school. All extra curricula school activities had now been paused until the end of the year. S Clark reaffirmed that there continued to be high confidence around the many procedures that were in place with only 12 previous cases identified and no current self-isolations required. As a result staff confidence was considerably higher under the tier 4 restrictions. Having reviewed remote learning it was clear that at least half of the week of work was required for each subject and it was crucial that all classes have consistent access to teaching and study material. Contingency planning was still progressing to enhance new learning and tailoring to suit a whole school policy.

#### *Exams and Mocks/Prelims*

S Clark highlighted the importance of utilising the proposed mock exams for assessment evidence given the cancellation of the National 5 exams in 2021. S Clark noted that a further exam diet may happen around Easter subject to further restrictions. *Post meeting note – Higher and Advance Higher exams for 2021 are now cancelled therefore contingency planning by the school will be enacted for these exams as well. Mock/Prelim exams for these subjects that were due to take place in January are under review and subject to further restrictions.*



#### 4. Head Teacher's Report (Cont'd)

##### *Developing Young Workforce (DYW)*

S Clark confirmed that feedback from the virtual DYW week had intimated that it had been very successful and that the quality of information submitted was very high.

##### *Virtual Parent Evenings*

S Clark intimated that at the recent S1 Virtual Parent Evening 60% of teachers took part with more than 80% of parents joining the various teacher meetings. S Clark noted that MCHS is the first school in East Renfrewshire to take part and, with the positive responses received, will be rolling out to S3 with more dates under discussion.

##### *School Communications*

S Clark confirmed that there would be a change to the school Twitter profile, tailoring feeds to follow depending on interests. Instagram and Facebook accounts would be halted. Monthly highlights will be posted. Feedback from the Parent Council would be welcomed.

J Wong queried the consistency between class tests and subjects, particularly if they had not been taken at the same time. The potential for information transfer disadvantaging some pupils was high. S Clark noted that the final assessments and mock exams would be undertaken under exam conditions therefore this issue should not be prevalent.

S Clark noted that a list would be published for assessments that will be taken into account. Teacher awareness will be raised and a high level of vigilance required. S Clark noted that it was up to each school to implement policy and SQA guidance but conceded it was a complex situation.

##### *Pupil Leadership Team*

###### Fraser Hyde – Covid Strategies

F Hyde noted the many positive protocols and strategies that had been put in place from mask wearing, one way systems, staggered lunchtimes, environmentally friendly wipes and online resources for pupils who were self isolating. Pupil feedback was positive although there were obviously restrictive issues with the more practical subjects and limited hand sanitiser stations throughout the school. L Donaldson highlighted that after 3 uses of sanitiser, hands should then be washed. S Clark noted the challenge faced for washing facilities but work was underway to add more sanitiser and washing stations.

###### Ryan Bruce – ERC Schools Meeting

R Bruce highlighted a number of key protocols across the region. With different school protocols in place, a video was produced by upper school pupils to summarise a consistent approach to the current situation. The appointment of a designated mental health teacher was a key success as well as the online teaching and quick uptake with access to devices rolled out by ERC to all by June. It meant that nobody was left behind. Views had been sought on the new Eastwood Leisure Centre in terms of location, facilities, gym provision, fitness instruction and engagement. For supportive studies the largest uptake had been from S6 pupils across all subjects – initially due to Covid but extended to all for catch up learning.

###### Katie Little – Mental Wellbeing

K Little discussed the increased promotion of mental wellbeing within the school. An example was the ability to proceed with Charities Week albeit in a very different format. It provided pupils with some much needed light relief and a sense of normality in these times. New procedures allowed the format to change into some very positive outcomes. £7,000 was raised for charity: A fabulous result under the circumstances. The entire meeting thanked school management for enabling the Charities Week to take place.

###### Ailsa Finlay – Upcoming Events

A Finlay noted the upcoming Christmas lunch for S6 to be held week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Food donation week would also continue this year culminating in a pre-Christmas dress down “Christmas Jumper” day on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The Christmas Fayre stalls would also be open again on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 for pupils and staff alike. S Sadiq asked if pictures of the food donations could be ‘tweeted’. S Clark to arrange.

K Vallance thanked all four representatives of the PLT and commended them on their presentation skills and informative contributions to the meeting.



## 5. Finance Report

L Jones outlined the current financial position of the Parent Council bank account as follows:

Opening Balance	£3,662.21
Expenditure in Period	£2,520.00 ( <i>Transfer for Chromebooks – see section 3</i> )
Closing Balance	£1,142.21

## 6. Parent Teacher Association Report

L Donaldson highlighted that times were not easy for the PTA given the various restrictions that were in place but it was very much appreciated that S Clark had agreed to a further two 'exceptional' dress down days in the academic year. The first is intended to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, the other prior to the summer holidays. S Sadiq queried whether a sponsor could be brought in for one of the dress down days. L Donaldson and S Clark to review further.

## 7. Correspondence

K Vallance noted that at the recent Parent Council chairs meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 concerns had been raised over congested timetables due to possible clashes with SQA exam subjects. PC Chairs were asked to bring this to the attention of each Council and request feedback. S Clark was not aware of any issues but would review.

K Vallance mentioned the Saturday Schools Programme noting that funding had been secured for extra curricula activities however delivery had been disrupted by the tier 4 restrictions. Specific funding details are as per the attached link as provided by Cllr Bamforth.

[https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/3495/Education-Committee-Item-04-01-October-2020/pdf/Education\\_Committee\\_Item\\_04\\_-\\_01\\_October\\_2020.pdf?m=637363908341570000](https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/3495/Education-Committee-Item-04-01-October-2020/pdf/Education_Committee_Item_04_-_01_October_2020.pdf?m=637363908341570000)

K Vallance highlighted the work by the Healthier Minds Team noting that support teams were in place working towards an infrastructure for self and/or parental referral as part of the Health & Wellbeing Agenda with the formation of peer support networks and screening hubs. S Clark confirmed that Miss Cartledge was leading Healthier Minds for MCHS and that it was a long-term project for the region. S Clark noted that the lack of assembly was a challenge for information dissemination but other outlets were being used.

## 8. Any Other Business:

No further business was discussed.

## 9. Date for Next Meetings

The next Parent Council meeting will take place on **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 at 7pm**. The link for the MS Teams meeting will be advised nearer the time.

Further meetings for the academic year are as follows:

8<sup>th</sup> March 2021

24<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (AGM)