



## MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

**Meeting:** Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**Present:** S Clark (Head Teacher), K Vallance (Chair/Secretary), A Blair (PTA Chair), L Donaldson (PTA Vice-Chair), Cllr Bamforth, S Hussain, S Sadiq, E Morrison, J Scott, J Wong, L Jones, J Thomson, C Adams, B Berlow-Jackson, N Siddiqui

**Apologies:** O Schechter, C Dodd

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

K Vallance welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed apologies had been received from O Schechter and C Dodd. K Vallance extended a welcome to the new attendees at the Parent Council meeting.

### 2. Minutes of Last Meeting (AGM 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021)

The minutes were accepted on the proposal of L Jones and seconded by J Wong.

### 3. Matters Arising

K Vallance noted that the majority of matters arising had been actioned by the time the minutes had been issued and accordingly post-meeting notes had been inserted in the minutes.

K Vallance highlighted that the NPFS web links had been issued via email after the AGM as intimated.

K Vallance confirmed that there were no further notable matters to update the Parent Council on arising from the PC Chairs meeting that took place on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

### 4. Head Teacher's Report

#### *Covid Update*

S Clark intimated that all pupils have returned in a positive manner and all protocols were being adhered to with only a handful of mandatory face masks requiring to be issued on any given day.

Having reviewed the extra-curricula programme some courses have been re-introduced helping with the mental wellbeing agenda. S Clark noted that some curriculum evenings have been held on line with parents and that overall positive feedback had been forthcoming from the virtual parent evenings.

S Clark confirmed that self isolating pupils were able to access their work remotely via Google Classrooms and MS Teams with Mrs Fareed being the Covid Support Officer assisting the process.

E Morrison queried the current Covid absence rates to which S Clark confirmed that 5% of school roll was absent today (approximately 90 pupils were self isolating). He further noted that the schools role had now changed and that Test & Protect had taken over the contact tracing function going forward but there was no change to other protocols.

S Sadiq asked about teacher supervision during breaks and lunch. S Clark confirmed that the school had an extensive and detailed rota system for teacher supervision and the staggered break system was working well.

K Vallance queried whether the classroom protocols remained the same. S Clark confirmed that at present the open window and door protocols remained in place along with mandatory face mask wearing and distancing in circulation areas. S Clark highlighted that the return of indoor PE classes was a welcome addition to the curriculum.

#### *Pupil Equity Funding*

S Clark intimated that the advert for the Wellbeing Officer at the school had been published and that the wellbeing base within the school was finished and decorated. S Sadiq queried whether pupils would be invited by appointment, referred or just drop in. S Clark noted that it would be a mixture of all of these, treated as a universal resource and closely monitored with the pupil group providing key ideas and initiatives going forward.



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

##### *Pupil Leadership Team*

S Clark confirmed that the Head Boy and Girl were in the process of forming the School Council and wider pupil representation within the school.

##### *Staff Vacancies*

S Clark noted that all staff positions had been filled for the start of the academic year. Two maternity cover spaces had been filled and the staff entitlement level had been increased due to the increasing school roll. Two temporary posts were currently being advertised.

##### *SQA Exam Results*

S Clark provided a review of the SQA examination results for S4 to S6.

##### *National 5 Results*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Proportion of S4 presentations at N5</b>	87	89	90.5	91.3	92.1	89.5	92.3	<b>90.6</b>
<b>Proportion of S4 Pupils passing N5</b>	94	90	93.1	92.2	93.1	91.6	91.9	<b>93.3</b>
<b>5+ N5 Passes - %</b>	79.4	74.1	85.4	85.1	83.3	82.5	85.9	<b>83.2</b>
<b>8 N5 Level Passes - %</b>	60	53.7	57.1	58.8	58.8	51.6	56	<b>60</b>
<b>8 N5 A Passes - %</b>	26	18.8	23.3	16.2	23.5	21.2	25	<b>34.9</b>

S Clark highlighted the very impressive eight N5 "A" passes rising to almost 35% for the year and noted that those who embraced remote learning achieved the rewards.

##### *Highers and Advanced Highers*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Proportion of S5 presentations at Higher</b>	88	90	89	93.1	91.2	91.6	90.1	<b>91.8</b>
<b>Proportion of S5 Pupils passing Higher</b>	88	89	88	88.4	88.9	89.9	90.7	<b>86.4</b>
<b>3+ Higher Passes - %</b>	70.7	72.7	70.3	76.5	75.8	76.5	78.8	<b>76.3</b>
<b>5+ Higher Passes - %</b>	46.4	50.2	47.2	56.3	54.9	54.3	56.2	<b>56</b>
<b>5 Higher A Passes - %</b>	15	17.7	15.1	16.8	17.1	19.4	21.3	<b>33.6</b>

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>1+ Advanced Higher Pass - %</b>	41	44	38	41	43	44	47.1	<b>53.9</b>

S Clark noted a similar trend with the Higher results reflected in the 34% "A" pass rate for five highers. S Clark also pointed out that MCHS has the highest uptake rate of vocational subjects within East Renfrewshire Council enhancing the positive aspects of attainment measurement across both S5 and S6.



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

K Vallance congratulated the MCHS teachers and school management for a superb achievement under very difficult circumstances and of course the pupils group themselves for performing extremely well in the strained situation.

Turning to the current academic year, S Clark highlighted the positive step taken of confirming that formal exams will take place in 2022. He noted however that there are likely to be additional options available in the exam papers as a contingency measure given potential disruption to course teaching throughout the year. S Clark noted that the ACM format could be introduced at a late stage using all of the existing assessment protocols if the situation dictates.

For S4, there will be an assessment opportunity at or before the October break. This will not be used for overall grading but will assist with preparation for the prelims early in January 2022. For S5 and S6 there is a study skills programme to provide support for the upcoming exam diet, with the programme focussing on advanced highers for S6 pupils.

#### 5. MCHS Sports Facility

K Vallance intimated that the public consultation period for the sports facility (ref. 2021/0420/TP) had come to an end and was disappointed to report that the Community Council had effectively objected to the proposal with their lengthy submission to the planning case officer. A number of other objections had been submitted to the Council on a wide range of issues such as flooding risk, drainage, lighting levels, parking provision, changing facilities and road congestion. K Vallance thanked everyone who had taken the time to submit letters of support to the case officer.

Cllr Bamforth provided an overall update stating that a further ERC Roads report on the application was shortly due to be issued and that the perceived lighting issues had now been addressed. Cllr Bamforth advised that the application was likely to go before the planning committee on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and hoped it would be approved subject to conditions.

S Clark confirmed that the intake for S1 had increased this year to 260 and that the overall school roll was heading towards the 1,500 maximum due to the increased numbers from the Maidenhill housing development. B Berlow-Jackson noted that the planned further denominational school could impact on the MCHS roll given that St Ninians S1 intake was around 340. Cllr Bamforth noted that the timeframe for this school was as yet not confirmed but did acknowledge that there was a requirement based on some 2,500 placing requests per year; the majority of which coming from outside of the ERC boundary.

S Sadiq queried the anticipated timeframe for the new facility from planning approval. Cllr Bamforth intimated that it should be completed for August 2023 and noted that the capital funding of £1.72m was there for this purpose. S Sadiq wondered if the same funding would be given to the school if the planning application was refused.

*Post Meeting Note* – The submission from the Community Council was subsequently withdrawn. The MCHS Sports Facility was **approved** at the planning committee meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021. A link to the Report of Handling is included below for reference purposes. The only change to the proposed planning conditions was limiting the evening hours use from 8pm to 7pm (Condition 1).

[https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/6963/Planning-Applications-Committee-Item-03-29-September-2021/pdf/Planning\\_Applications\\_Committee\\_Item\\_03 - 29 September 2021.pdf?m=637679001120570000](https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/6963/Planning-Applications-Committee-Item-03-29-September-2021/pdf/Planning_Applications_Committee_Item_03 - 29 September 2021.pdf?m=637679001120570000)

A fantastic result and we will continue to review matters with ERC to ensure the build programme remains on track.

#### 6. Finance Report

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

Opening Balance	£1,142.21
(Expenditure in period)	(£1,125.00) – S1 French Dictionaries
Receipt in Period	£ 434.63 – Dress Down Day Receipts
Closing Balance	£ 451.84

L Jones intimated that the school had in fact purchased 260 dictionaries, 10 more than originally intended and proposed that a further payment of £40 was made to the school funds to cover this additional cost. The motion was seconded by K Vallance and ratified by all present.



## 6. Finance Report (Cont'd)

S Sadiq queried whether the bank account was operated online. L Jones confirmed it was not at present. K Vallance noted that the forms were being submitted to RBS to change the operating personnel to reflect the current officer bearers and also move the account online given that the current operating branch was located in Dingwall. S Sadiq noted that changing to the local Clydesdale Bank branch may be an option going forward. L Jones and K Vallance to review further.

## 7. Parent Teacher Association Report

L Donaldson once again confirmed that it was likely to be a difficult year again for the PTA and asked for anyone interested in being part of a small fundraising team to get in touch and for others to contact K Vallance or L Jones with any ideas for raising much needed funds over the year under the current restrictions.

## 8. Correspondence

K Vallance confirmed having issued the MCHS Sports Facility link on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (see section 5 above) and for disseminating the Children's Hearings Scotland Volunteer information issued by ERC.

The P7 Induction Meeting was held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021. K Vallance thanked S Clark for the opportunity to host the meeting and introduce the Parent Council to the incoming S1 parents and carers.

K Vallance noted that the PC Chairs meeting would be taking place on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 with a report on proceedings being made at the next Parent Council meeting. K Vallance also noted that the Equalities Forum was taking place on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 and would also report back on this at the next Parent Council Meeting.

K Vallance to disseminate the Connect Membership information to the office bearers for the academic year 2021-2022.

## 9. Any Other Business:

B Berlow-Jackson referred to concern regarding anti-Semitic graffiti, which was found in the school prior to the summer holidays, and he thanked S Clark and the school for their approach in addressing this.

L Jones expressed concern over the consistency of uniform policy, specifically skirt length for girls. S Clark noted that the policy was clear and had intimated this to parents and carers on four occasions already since the start of term. S Clark highlighted enforcement as a key aspect and confirmed that female members of staff would take the lead on interaction with girls. L Donaldson noted that the issue needs to be dealt with and rules applied immediately and consistently. S Clark will review matters further and report back at the next meeting on the progress made.

Cllr Bamforth noted that she had been contacted about skirt length with concerns having been raised about girls "safety" being used in skirt length guidance. Cllr Bamforth also noted that she was involved with a charity providing school uniforms and would provide details to S Clark to assist with clothing provision for anyone requiring assistance.

## 10. Date for Next Meetings

The next Parent Council meeting will take place on **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 7pm**. The link for the MS Teams meeting will be advised nearer the time.

Future meetings will take place at 7pm on the following Mondays:

13<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
21<sup>st</sup> February 2022  
25<sup>th</sup> April 2022  
13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (AGM)