



Minutes of meeting of St Ninian's High School Parent Council held on Thursday 9 December 2021

In Attendance:

Parent Members: M McKenzie (Chair), J McLachlan (Vice Chair-JMc), K Adams, B Kelly (BK), J McLaughlin (JMCL), J Mackie (JM), S Reid (SR), J Stewart, A Wilmott (AW) and D Wilson (DW)

School Staff: J Docherty (Head Teacher), T Creighton, J Cummins and C McRea

Elected representative: Cllr Colm Merrick

Apologies: U Chimezie, T Gordon, K Kelly, S MacConnell, F McFarlane, G McLaughlin (Church representative), J Miller, M Paglocca, L Sutherland and C Wallis

1 Welcome and Prayer

Michael welcomed everyone to the meeting and led an opening prayer.

Michael advised that an additional item with regard to a proposed Health and Wellbeing Census would be taken after the update on the Diocesan Parent Forum meeting.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 November 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 November 2021 were moved by JMc and seconded by DW and approved.

3 Matters Arising – none

4 Eastwood Park Development update

It was noted that the planning application for a new leisure centre, theatre and various additional facilities at Eastwood Park was currently scheduled to be considered by East Renfrewshire Council's planning applications committee on 19 January 2022.

It was anticipated that this would not be subject to any hearings procedure and instead would be a report by the Head of Planning for due consideration by the Committee. As a public meeting, there would be the opportunity to attend (whether in person or online) as an observer.

The agenda and associated papers for the meeting would require to be issued at least 3 clear days in advance of the meeting therefore the report should be available no later than 14 January 2022.

There was some discussion about any further representations or views as well as any specific comments with regard to the planning report when it becomes available. It was accepted that a focus for the parent council and indeed the school would be on both the safe and efficient management of the construction process as well as the benefits to be accrued by the school through the proposed new leisure and arts centre.

The Chair also advised that he had initial communication with M Ratter, Director of Education at ERC, with regard to him attending a future meeting to provide an update on the Eastwood Park Masterplan. This was likely to be either the May or June meeting of the Parent Council.

Outcomes:

- the anticipated timescale for consideration of the planning application was noted with further updates to be provided as information became available and to future meetings; and
- further communication with M Ratter on his attendance at a future meeting with specific regard to the Eastwood Park Masterplan;

5 Diocesan Parent Forum

Michael advised that he and Stuart Reid had attended the parent forum meeting on 16 November 2021 and advised that there was a particular focus about a return to Mass. There were to be 2 meetings of the Forum each year and SR had agreed to represent the Parent Council at those meetings.

Outcome: SR to represent the parent council at Forum meetings and report back as appropriate.

6 Health and Wellbeing Census

The Chair made reference to a proposed new Health and Wellbeing Census developed by the Scottish Government to be used on annual basis to track the health and wellbeing of children and young people. It is designed to include all Primary 5 to Secondary 6 aged pupils. The intention was that the Census would be issued through individual local authorities. The Chair expressed his view that he believed that the concerns some members had would be better submitted individually given the nature and content of the proposed Census. He felt that it would be difficult to reach an agreed position upon which a submission could be made.

The Chair made reference to a recent email received from the Scottish Catholic Education Services (SCES) which raised concerns with particular aspects of the Census, namely, sex related questions.

Mr Docherty advised that the Census had not at this stage been received at the school and was subject to consideration by East Renfrewshire Council. He raised concerns with regard to the Census, in particular, highlighting a distinct lack of parental engagement and involvement; serious issues about the purpose and content of particular aspects of the Census and how he considered those aspects to be contradictory to the teaching of Catholic Education.

Mr Creighton advised that he had recently attended an initial meeting with the Council and issues raised included aspects of the Census content, parental consent, opt out options and

confidentiality. He further advised that information was due to be sent to parents with children in denominational schools. Mr Docherty cautioned about this 'separation' of children and parents in denominational schools.

Cllr Merrick further informed the meeting that there were a number of options with regard to the Census and that Council officials were planning meetings with both Head Teachers and Parent Councils prior to any implementation by the Council.

Parent members raised various points about the Census and considerable discussion took place.

While there was some recognition of the potential benefits of gathering general information with regard to the health and wellbeing of pupils it was considered that this Census tried to cover too many issues and was poorly developed. There was general consensus on concerns about confidentiality, data protection, parental consent, purpose and the sexual related questions. Questions were also raised about the material benefit of the information that would be gathered.

Several parent members expressed serious objections to the Census and how it could ever be acceptable in terms of Catholic Education teaching and the principle of parents being the First Educators. Several members felt it was imperative that the parent council took a strong stand against the Census and that we would be failing in our responsibilities if we did not oppose it being issued to pupils.

Points were raised with regard to the role of the parent council in the context of representing the overall views of the parent body/forum.

Reference was made to a letter drafted by SR and very recently circulated via the WhatsApp page. The intention was to submit the letter to East Renfrewshire Council (ERC). Some members indicated that they would not support the letter in its current form; some members indicated they would support the letter as drafted and other members wanted time to review and consider its contents.

All present agreed, however, that representation should be made to ERC seeking a response on how they intended to deal with this matter and whether and how they intend to issue. Parent members also recognised the need to raise awareness across the school parent group.

Outcomes:

- Chair to draft a letter to ERC raising the significant concerns expressed at the meeting using elements of the letter from SCES and the draft letter by SR;
- That letter to seek contact and communication from ERC with regard to how they intend to deal with the Census
- Request M Ratter's attendance at the next or specific meeting of the parent council

7 Head Teacher's Report

Mr Docherty provided a detailed update on various matters across the school with a particular focus on:

- Faith including Advent
- Learning and Teaching including use of S6 tutors/mentors, attainment support teams, in-school tuition and support, online careers evenings, UCAS references, pupil reports and parent evenings and outcomes from CIU peer review for Expressive Arts and Maths
- Wider Achievement recognition via Twitter and the monthly newsletter

- ERC budget consultation process due to end on 12 December 2021
- Latest Scottish Government (SG) guidance with respect to Covid including contract tracing and self-isolation and potential contingency planning arrangements pending any further SG announcements and updates from SQA
- Potential future developments with regard to re-establishing the faith based parents group and Friends of St Ninian's Group

8 Retiral of Mr Docherty

The Chair led a vote of thanks and tribute to Mr Docherty on his pending retiral as Head Teacher after 17 years in that role.

The Chair indicated that, through Mr Docherty's leadership, excellence had become the norm at St Ninian's High School and the hugely positive ethos in the school was in no small way down to Mr Docherty. He, on behalf of the parent council and wider parent group, presented Mr Docherty with a few gifts and mementoes to mark his huge contribution to the school, pupils and wider community.

Other parent members expressed their thanks and gratitude for the hugely positive impact Mr Docherty had shown throughout his career and time at St Ninian's. All present wished him all the very best for the future.

Mr Docherty responded in kind recognising the team effort required from staff, parents and primarily the students and young people at St Ninian's. He said it had been a pleasure and privilege to hold the position. He wished each and every staff member, parent, carer and pupil the very best for the future.

9 AOCB – None

10 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 13 January 2022 at 7p.m.