

# Minutes of Hillhead Parent Council Meeting, March 18 2024

## Item 1 - Welcome / all

**Martina** – welcome everyone, and especially to our new member Vinishree (Vini).

## Item 2- Minutes and actions from last meeting

The minutes were proposed by Ali and seconded by Sandra.

## Update on parent council work

- Fundraising update - minibus handover

**Ali** – at the handover we had a good crowd of some of the senior pupils, who I think are the school events committee. We got lots of nice photos, and they'd made some posters thanking the PC and Itison, and Jack was having some fun sounding the horn from the key. Ollie Norman said a few words, and it was a very positive day. We now have a relationship with Itison, and Ollie Norman's kids were at Hillhead Primary, and Lisa's child is at the high school. This is a relationship we can perhaps build on and pass on to future parent councils.

**Karen McAlaney** – it was a terrific day. The minibus looks fantastic.

- Skypark – Caledonian Gladiators shoot-out

**Sandra** – the kids had lots of fun, shooting the hoops, and were very excited about the pizza and to meet the Gladiators.

**Jack Richardson** – they're another great connection for us to have: Skypark and the Gladiators. It was a good day out. They've started another fundraiser to get money for new basketball strips – and a bit of money has already come in from the tenants at Skypark. There was a donation box, and some donations made via the GoFundMe page. The QR code still said minibus on it, but we can assume that any money that's come in after Wednesday is for the basketball fund.

**Ali** – the minibus link has ended.

**Martina** – a new link has been sent round.

**Sandra** – there is a link that's working, and we can send that round again. And there are some good photos on Twitter.

**Martina** – there are numerous tenants at Skypark, so they might be up for further partnerships.

We have three new parent council members, and we could perhaps all meet up soon to have a chat about things.

**Vinishree** – hello everybody ... our initial meeting with other parent council members generated a lot of good ideas

**Martina** – we're very lucky that Vini, Yolanda and Raeda can translate materials into languages we haven't been able to previously, for example.

New members were also thinking about how we can support mental health. One of the things that has come up is positive role models for young men. There is a charity working in Glasgow that we can maybe invite into the school to tie in with what the school is doing already. There's some great work trying to counteract toxic masculinity. And it's also really positive to have young male teachers being good role models.

**Bernie** – There are many people associated with our school who have done very well, for example the person who made the donation of £2,000 to the minibus appeal. Some of these former pupils might be willing to come back and maybe we can look at the idea of the MTA having a guest speaker on a monthly basis, talking about how they've made their way up the ladder. And we don't want to forget the girls, they're just as important in all of this.

**Sandra** – I think it's a very good idea to start the conversation.

#### **Ideas for what further fundraising could support / the financial situation**

**Martina** – If any people attending this meeting have any ideas for fundraising they could please let us know.

**Karen McAlaney** – the area in front of the school, where the bee hotel is. That would be an area we could use for sustainability. We'll have to look at trips moving forward and how we will fund these.

**Bernie** – I think we need to have fundraising as a permanent item on the agenda as a PC. We were talking about regular quiz and music nights, and I think we can build on the competences of the music department that might be revenue generating.

I think we should recognise that the silent auction shows there's a reservoir of people willing to support the school, and we should try to tap into that. So, perhaps two or three events per session that generated 5k would fulfil some of the school's objectives.

We'll need to begin this in autumn-winter of '24-25, given the exams in the summer term, and by which we might assist with trips involving the whole school, for example.

**Anna Dekar** – asked in the chat: Could you do any kids v teachers events? Quiz, sports etc? Kids love beating teachers. Entry fee per team maybe?

#### **Education funding cuts**

**Martina** – there are some questions that have come in, and there are concerns about what these cuts might mean. The council has had to make some very challenging decisions in light of the funding it receives from the Scottish Government and the Westminster government.

We've had quite a few replies from councillors and MSPs. The opposition parties are understandably in support of our objections and the current administration, while sympathetic, point out the challenges of working with the funding cuts.

A big concern is around the holiday food programme, which feeds children in the Easter and summer holidays, and the activity part of the programme is being cut.

**Karen McAlaney** (answering questions that have come in via the PC in advance of the meeting and asked by Martina):

**Q: It has been reported that Glasgow schools will lose 172 teachers this session and 450 over the next 3 years which is almost 10% of Glasgow teachers. Is this correct?**

Yes, that is correct.

**Q: What jobs are likely to be lost and what will be the impact?**

Our school will have a reduction in teaching staff for August. This will be factored into the new timetable and will likely mean we will need to streamline some classes in the senior phase and/or remove some options choices for S6. In terms of support staff, at present we don't have confirmation that Our Developing the Young Workforce co-ordinator (Sean) will be in post next session. The money for this post comes directly from the Scottish Government and has not yet been confirmed. Sean's job it is to co-ordinate work experience opportunities for pupils and also to support pupils into positive destinations after school. We no longer have an Attendance Officer (also known as the Home School Support Worker) as this post ended in June 2023. The work done by the Attendance Officer is now being carried out by the senior leadership team and Pastoral Care. The MCR Programme is due to come to an end which means we will no longer have an MCR Pathways co-ordinator (Eileen) or MCR Mentors. I cannot comment further on this at present.

**Q: Who will do the work of those leaving?**

All of these staff are part of our Pathways Team and support some of our most vulnerable pupils, including all care experienced pupils. As always, we will try to do our best to provide a high level of support to all pupils but we also need to be realistic about what the remaining staff can provide and be considerate of their workload and demands on their time. Teaching and support staff already work very hard and will not be able to cover all of this additional work.

**Q: Will there be other cuts to school budgets?**

This is not something I can answer at present.

**Q: Will there be cuts to supported study?**

I cannot answer this at present. This year's Easter Study Support will go ahead and will run for 8 days of the holiday. As always, I am very grateful to staff who give up their own time during the holiday to support pupils. Teachers have also been offering after school study support this term as well as all of the usual in class support to complete assignments and prepare for the final exam.

**Q: Is it true that there will also be cuts to leadership posts and also changes to the staffing formula for schools? What impact will this have on pupils?**

Again, this is not something I can comment on at present.

**Q: What is happening with the Advanced Higher Hub? What will the impact be on S6 pupils at Hillhead High?**

The Advanced Higher Hub at Caledonian University comes to an end this session. The Hub takes pupils from all over the city where capacity and/or timetable constraints meant an S6 pupil could not access their choice of AH in school. This has not involved many pupils from our school over the past few years as we have been able to offer a range of AH in our school but we have had a small group of pupils access it each year. Secondary school leaders across Glasgow are working on a plan to try to co-ordinate where there might be space for a pupil to attend another school. However due to the staffing cuts we may also have to scale back our own school offer for S6 next session.

**Q: How does the school spend the Pupil Equity Fund money? Will this be able to plug the gaps?**

There is specific guidance around how the Pupil Equity Fund can be spent in order to close the poverty related attainment gap – all of the priorities for spending the money have been linked into our school improvement plans over the past 6 years. The main priorities include:

- Staffing for the Pathways Team: Raising Attainment PTs, FARE Youth Worker, part-time Campus Police officer, MCR co-ordinator Acting Depute Head Teacher (PEF) who co-ordinates senior phase raising attainment initiatives including targeted support and also supported study sessions and Easter revision. N.B. Increased staffing costs and a reduction in overall staffing mean we no longer have Acting PTs of Raising Attainment as we had in the first 4 years of PEF. This work is now covered by the Acting DHT (PEF) Mr Richardson but this post will end in June 2025.
- Support for learning staffing: (70% of pupils have an additional support need, double the current national average of 35%) – additional PSAs, staffing to support nurture, literacy & numeracy.
- Wider achievement & leadership opportunities for pupils: fully funded Duke of Edinburgh Awards, resources for other wider achievement options, funding of curriculum trips & activities
- Cost of the school day initiatives
- Curriculum work

**Q: Teacher absence has meant that some pupils have not had a specialist teacher for periods of time this year. Will this get worse with the cuts?**

Every effort is made to get specialist cover when there is long term absence, however, this has not been possible in some subjects this session. I totally appreciate how unsatisfactory this can be for pupils and parents, while also recognising the additional burden of work this places on some departments in school and on individual staff. I cannot comment on how the staffing cuts will impact on this next session.

**Anna Dekar** – Pathways has been invaluable, is there any way for parents to appeal that?

**Martina** – we can have further discussion about what we want to do further in the light of these cuts and questions.

**Bernie** – I remember Mrs McAlaney presenting to us five years ago on the positive effects of PEF for attainment. Some schools received money to narrow the attainment gap and improving equity across the school profile. What wasn't clear five years ago was whether this money would be maintained.

**Karen McAlaney** – we get money from the Pupil Equity Fund to improve outcomes for children and young people by increasing attainment linked to the poverty-related attainment gap. This money will continue for the next two sessions.

**Ram** – mentors will stay put, but be coordinated centrally. There is a perception that Glasgow has too many teachers compared to other councils – but we can't compare our schools to those in other areas. I've gone back to reports from 2015, and they're saying the Glasgow budget is always under pressure. As we have an extremely high number of ASN (additional support needs) schools, 21, compared to most authorities, our numbers are inflated because of the 10-1 ratio in these schools. Teachers in mainstream Glasgow schools have the standard ratios and no spare teachers.

**Martina** – the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that Glasgow is in the top five for the whole of the UK in terms of poverty. Their report makes sobering reading in terms of poverty and its effects on Glasgow pupils. The reason Glasgow has more teachers relative to other council areas is because of its status regarding poverty. Link to report: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/uk-poverty-2024-the-essential-guide-to-understanding-poverty-in-the-uk>

**Martina** – we appreciate you answering those questions Karen, given your position as a member of Glasgow City Council staff.

**Vini** – I do a lot of climate change action with young people, mostly in Dundee, but if there's anything related to the environment about how I can use my skills to support the school.

**Martina** – maybe Sam, Vini and Sandra can have a chat about what can be done moving forward.

- Solar panels and wider environmental work

**Karen McAlaney** – I have been trying to speak to a link at headquarters to answer the questions on solar panels. It is complex though with a listed building and also the cost implications.

**Karen McAlaney** – I will make contact with headquarters again.

**Sandra** – I'll ask them again if there's a way of moving things forward. It would be beneficial for several reasons, not just environmental, for the school to have solar panels.

#### Finance update

**Ali** – the current balance is £882. We got three quarters of our Tesco grant, so I've contacted them to see what they need to pay the balance. I'm waiting to hear back. That should take us to just over £1,200, so we do have money there if things come up. We don't have any things we're committed to but we do need to pay for meeting rooms.

Re basketball strips etc, I've put the GoFundMe target as £1,000.

**Jack** – the more the better. A set of strips for 15 kids would cost £300-£800. £1,000 would be realistic. And the strips the girls have aren't the right cut.

**Jack** – any images on our Twitter are okay to use regarding permissions, so they can be used and shared for publicity.

**Martina** – as are the Gladiators pictures that are also on Twitter.

**Ali** – we also need to sort out signatories as Valentina and Jerome aren't in post any longer. I'll put out a message on WhatsApp.

#### Easter holidays, exams, and providing food for pupils

**Karen McAlaney** – pupils will be out on exam leave after Easter.

**Jack Richardson** – the Easter study support for S5 and S6 will be from Tuesday to Friday in week one, and from Monday to Thursday inclusive. There will be a two-hour session in the morning and a two-hour session in the afternoon.

I've also shared E-sgoil for support during working hours and in the evenings. It's an online free resource through Teams. It's fully interactive, so the pupils who do sign up – and we've got more than 100 signed up already – do seem to really enjoy it, as they can ask questions in the chat etc.

**Martina** – can we raise money to provide lunches?

**Karen McAlaney** – We used to provide snacks and pupils in all day can bring in a packed lunch but there will be no Fuel Zone lunches.

**Martina** – is there something we can do as a PC, either offering money or providing snacks?

**Ali** – we could put a small amount in, but I'm not sure how we'd organise it?

**Martina** – I think we can have a chat about this, and see what we can provide so we're not excluding people.

**Steven Neil** – S5 and S6 pupils are gearing up for exams, and it's a pressurised time of the year for our young people, as well as the teachers giving all the support they can. Everyone's working hard so that every single pupil regardless of background or demographics achieves to the best of their ability. Texts will be going out on the morning of each day as usual, and there are SQA candidate cards and study packs being handed out to the pupils. We talk about deprivation, and lots of people use flash cards for their revision, so it's great that we can provide those materials because they make a huge difference to some of our learners. It's important we get the messaging correct so that every single pupil is in the best position to succeed.

We've also been meeting the invigilators, and are looking at having a team of 16 invigilators.

**Tom Carson** – the first exam is on April 22 and the last is on May 28, so if you've got a child in S5 or S6 our PE facilities are affected. As it's deadline time, if any parents have any queries they can contact Steven or Tom.

**Martina** – yes, and good luck to everyone.

#### Summer fayre

**Karen McAlaney** – The fayre will take place on Saturday June 1st June.

**Martina** – we can think about PC members staffing the stalls etc, but we'll chat about that later; for example the pre-used clothing stall.

### School vision update

**Steven Neil** – at the last PC, we talked about the process of developing the new school vision. We've moved things on after discussions with the outgoing S6; what they would like to see if they were going to send their relations here. The word 'thrive' kept coming up – personal growth and fulfilment. When we talk about resilience, wellbeing ... thriving means lower levels of stress and longer life spans. The vision is something we're aiming for that's focused and succinct, and ties in with our school values.

I've shared this with pupils and we're looking at three options for the vision part:

Thriving together

We all thrive together

We thrive together.

**Martina** – it's great that everyone's been so involved.

### Any other business

**Karen McAlaney** – thanks for everyone for coming tonight, and for being such a supportive parent council.

**Martina** – and yes, thanks to everyone from us too.

**The next meeting is Tuesday 21 May 2024 – in person in the Chinese Hub from 6.30 to 8pm**