

## **Blairgowrie High School Parent Council (PC)**

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 17 September 2013**

**Present:** Barrie Rutherford, Bev Leslie, Carolyn Watson, Carol Jewell, Eleanor Rutherford, Wendy Sinclair, Lesley Waugh, Judith Pearson, David Grant, Fara Adams, Alisa Smith, Jose Rodriguez, Councillor Bob Ellis,

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Councillor Alan Grant, Councillor Liz Grant, Councillor Caroline Shiers,

#### **Item 1: Office Bearers Reports**

Barrie Rutherford Chairperson Parent Council

BR indicated that he would be talking about what the Parent Council had been involved in the previous year in terms of academic issues and also fund raising activities. Before starting he outlined the basic aims of the Parent Council for anybody not familiar with its role

Improving the learning experience of pupils by working with senior staff to identify and discuss key educational challenges facing the school, pupils and parents

To represent the views of parents to the Head Teacher and the Management Team and senior members of staff

To assist in the provision of educational equipment and projects not normally provided by Perth and Kinross Council. The Parent Council therefore has a very important role to play as a fundraiser.

The Parent Council has had 6 meetings throughout the year with the Head Teacher and senior staff. Local Councillors, Bob Ellis and Caroline Shiers have been attending the meetings on a regular basis. The Parent

Council does not discuss issues relating to individual pupils but only matters that affect the entire student body.

On the academic front some of the issues discussed were as follows

- Staffing Matters – there is always a number of staff changes and absences. This can have a profound impact on educational standards as the recruitment of replacement or temporary staff is not straight forward.
- School Inspection - this is still an ongoing process which will no doubt be the focus of attention for next year's meetings. The school has reflected on the HMI's findings and has responded by developing a plan of action which sets out various changes in approach to our children's education. The Parent Council did have a number of concerns with the Inspection Report and these were expressed in writing to the Inspector last May. Among the issues raised was the language used in the report. Although aimed at parents it was riddled with educational jargon making it difficult to understand for the lay person. The report also made a number of assertions. The evidence on which these assertions were made was very flimsy. A meeting was requested with the inspector in order to air these concerns. This has not occurred although a meeting has occurred with one of the inspection team who has promised to pass these concerns on.
- Curriculum for Excellence – this new educational approach has now reached the implementation stage. New examination systems, course choice options, changes to teaching methods and initiatives such as wider achievement has been the subject of discussion. It is likely that these matters will feature and indeed dominate the agendas for next year's meeting
- Gordon Miller's Resignation - the resignation of Gordon Miller is due to take effect from next month. He worked hard with energy and enthusiasm with the Parent Council for nine years. In this time he listened to our concerns and kept us fully informed about issues affecting the school. We are most grateful for the work he did for the Parent Council during his period as Head Teacher and we wish him well for the future.

- Extra Curricular Activities – it is worth noting that there is a wide range of activities taking place which complement and enhance the academic stuff. The Parent Council were pleased to support many of these activities throughout the year.

BR then turned to Fundraising. In recent years the school have asked the Parent Council for help to fund educational projects and equipment not funded by Perth and Kinross Council. A Fund raising committee has been established and this meets separately from the Parent Council. If any parent wants to help out solely on the fund raising side you would be most welcome at these meetings.

BR mentioned two fundraising activities. Firstly the sponsored bungee jump. Patrick Egan one of the Maths teachers did a bungee jump at Killiecrankie to raise funds. Secondly the Rafting fund raiser. Although this has been postponed due to the dry weather and the low water levels this event will go ahead. As the weather will be getting colder wet suits will be supplied. It is hoped that this event sponsored by Naelimits will prove to be successful so much so that it becomes an annual event.

BR intimated that the Parent Council acts as a focus group which expresses the views of parents to teachers. Due to the very limited resources available the Parent Council is only in a position to take a random sample of parental views. It is hoped that this is representative of the population. However if any parent feels that their views are not being taken on board they are welcome to come along to any of the scheduled Parent Council meetings. BR indicated that schedule of the dates, times and venues of these meetings could be obtained from the school website. BR reminded parents that they can serve on the committee if they so wish and asked that if anybody was interested they put their name and contact details on the sheets which are also on display.

BR thanked all parents, staff and councillors who have contributed to the work of the Parent Council over the past year.

Carolyn Watson and Judith Pearson Joint Treasurers

CW and JP intimated that a full copy of the Parent Council accounts was available at the table at the back of the room. These accounts had been audited by an independent examiner in accordance with the Charities & Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Account (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). Income was derived from a Perth and Kinross Council grant of £826, donations and gift aid of £1109, grants of £1000 and fundraising activities resulting in £1916. Receipts for the year were £4851. Expenditure for the year was £120 for the cost of fundraising and £2290 in the form of donation to various school departments. Payments for the year therefore totalled £2940. This resulted in a surplus of funds for the current year of £1911.

The Joint Treasurers then asked two members of the Parent Council to propose and second the Annual Accounts

Proposer	Eleanor Rutherford
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Seconder	Wendy Sinclair
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## **Item 2: Report by Interim Head Teacher**

Bev Leslie (Interim Head Teacher) stated that Blairgowrie High School continued to be a school of ambition. The school's goals had not altered and the aim was still to provide an environment whereby the highest levels of progression could be achieved educationally, personally and socially. The Curriculum for Excellence underlines the above.

BV intimated that the role of the Parent Council is crucial to the success of the school as the Parent Council assumes the role of critical friend acting as a sounding board and bringing a different perspective to various issues.

This year had been particularly difficult due to the inspection report. However in response to this a lot of positive work was being undertaken. There was a support meeting from HMI last week which focussed on the curriculum. A three year view of improvement actions was being undertaken.

One of the challenges is to ensure more parental involvement in different capacities. Opportunities must be made available for staff and parents to work together. It will also be necessary to be more creative. There is a big push nationally to access as many achievement opportunities as possible including increasing awareness and employability opportunities. There also needs to be a greater awareness of the curriculum for excellence.

BV reported that the school had successfully improved the SQA results. Record levels of attainment had been achieved this year.

It was observed that there seemed to be a wealth of information available to teachers on educational matters but precious few available to parents. It was extremely difficult for parents to access materials. Also it was noted that local contexts are not covered. BV stated that this was a national problem but information was beginning to be developed for example the senior phase benchmarking tool. The Learning and Teaching Scotland website has some useful information.

### **Item 3: Any Other Business**

ER stated that the school production of a Mid Summer's Night Dream could benefit from parental help. ER to investigate further.

### **Item 4: Dates for Future Parent Council Meetings**

5 November 2013

10 December 2013

28 January 2014

4 March 2014

29 April 2014

3 June 2014

The meeting then concluded.

