

## KING'S PARK SECONDARY SCHOOL

### PARENT COUNCIL

#### MINUTES OF MEETING: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2011

#### PRESENT:

Simon Bates  
Marjorie Sinclair  
Angela Martin  
Lynn Samson  
Irene Yuile  
Margaret Barr  
Louise Kinloch  
Margaret Logan  
Anne Burke  
Zoe Kean  
Colin Towler  
Euan McIntyre (School Captain)  
June Wells (Clerk)

#### APOLOGIES:

Seonaid Macrae  
Brodie McGregor  
Greg Kousourou

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Brodie MacGregor, Greg Kousourou and Seonaid Macrae. Simon welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

#### 3. MATTERS ARISING

**School Grounds:** Greg and Zoe had been not yet met with Mr Lonie as he had been off ill. They will report back any progress at next meeting.

**Simshill and Old Cathcart Community Council Minutes:** The following was reported in the minutes:

*The problem of litter throughout the area – particularly at Croftfoot shops and roads leading to KP Secondary. Cllr. Docherty will speak to Mrs. M. Barr, Head Teacher AND also arrange for Community Litter Wardens to be called out again during the lunch period.*

Simon Bates noted that there had been complaints about pupils dropping litter. Margaret Barr agreed that this was a real concern, and the school continued to work hard to persuade pupils of the benefits of looking after their environment, and showing respect for local residents. She had contacted Land and Environmental Services, and had secured agreement that the streets between the school and the shops would have a special clean. However, this might not happen for another week, and already local residents had reported that street cleaning or litter-bin-emptying had been severely disrupted since the start of the bad weather. She had also secured agreement that litter wardens would give the area some extra attention beginning next week, and she had contacted the Community Police (no reply yet). She was now writing to the local councillors to let them know about the agreements made by the Council, with the hope that they would provide support. Lynn Samson also offered to write to local councillors to express concern about the lack of street cleaning and litter-bin-emptying, which made things even more difficult. Margaret thanked Lynn for offering to write the letter.

*An update is awaited on the proposed demolition of the janitor's houses at King's Park Secondary. Margaret Barr has no information on this at present.*

*King's Park Secondary School's popular Christmas Concert had to be cancelled due to weather conditions.*

**Consultation on School Handbooks:** An email had been received from Kathryn Farrow with details of a website available. Margaret has forwarded this website address to the Parent Council. June will forward on to Parent Council members again.

#### 4. SCHOOL REPORT

I Yuile/A Burke/Euan McIntyre/M Logan/M Barr reported:

- Pupils experiences/achievements:
  - The 'Rutherglen Reformer' had featured an article about Glen Melville and Eilidh Shearer, who had won the West of Scotland heat of the 'Talk Your Way to Brussels' speaking competition, held by the Scottish European Educational Trust, sponsored by IBM. The final of the competition will be held in Brussels in February.
  - Phase 2 of the Sensory Garden project (the rose garden) had begun. Biology pupils, working with the community organisation Friends of King's Park, continued to develop the sensory garden in the local park.
  - Friends of King's Park had also held a Santa's Grotto for local children. Thanks to the senior pupils who had helped to look after the children while they waited for Santa.
  - A group of pupils had entered the Determined to Make Movies competition – a historical movie set in Holmwood House, with costumes from Pollok House.
  - I Yuile would shortly collate the school's entry to the annual Enterprise and Employability Awards.
  - The S3 Skills for Work Hospitality pupils had recently held an Afternoon Tea, which was superb, and a 3-course Christmas lunch, which was restaurant-standard. They had also hosted a regular morning cafe which was very popular. A Burke outlined the background to the course, which is now in its second year, in partnership with Langside College. The course gave pupils great opportunities for achievement. However, recent news from Langside had been that there would be a 10% in the school/college partnership funding, and it was not clear which courses would be affected.
  - Euan McIntyre updated the group on preparations for the Leavers' Ceremony, clothes recycling, and the Charities group's preparations for Red Nose Day.
  - Former pupil Stefanie Szula featured in The Guardian TV magazine, because of her role in the latest Peter Mullan film 'Neds'.
  - The school website gives information about several pupil achievements, for example:
    - Daniel But designed the Christmas Card used by Glasgow Credit Union, while on work experience there
    - Liana Bates has been selected to play viola in the orchestra of the Scottish Youth Opera
    - Holly O'Brien had returned from the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, after a wonderful experience. Holly had given a presentation to S5 pupils, and several had applied for this year's Space School.
  - Several King's Park pupils had performed at the Glasgow Schools' Christmas Concert in the City Halls, providing most enjoyable entertainment.
- Thank you to the Fundraising Group and all the pupils who helped with bag-packing at Asda on two days in December – including Christmas Eve! They had raised the fantastic sum of £1,825. Feedback from shoppers had been excellent.
- Thank you to everyone for their patience when so many events had to be cancelled because of the snow. Fashion with Compassion, Christmas Concert, S1 Parents' Evening, Swimming Gala, Christmas Ceilidhs, several trips, Prefects' visit to the Panto. Dates of these events had been rescheduled. Thank you to Zoe Kean for organising the Prefects' visit to the Panto, which had been greatly enjoyed.
- I Yuile reported that her fixed-term post as Employability Officer would come to an end on 31 March. Because of the severe budget cuts, Glasgow would reduce the number of posts to 13, and the remit would be solely secondary schools, linked to improving the number of positive leaver destinations. There was huge disappointment that such a valuable role (covering enterprise and employability throughout the whole learning community) would be lost.
- M Logan reported that the prelims had gone very well.
- Following the Senior Council's discussions about having a recognised supplier for school uniform, M Logan had contacted Marks and Spencer, who were keen to enter discussions with the school. She asked if any parents would be willing to join a group of people who would meet representatives from Marks and Spencer. Thank you to Marjorie Sinclair and Louise Kinloch who volunteered.

#### 5. HOMEWORK/STUDY TIMETABLES

Angela Martin expressed concern about what she saw as a lack of homework being sent home and had had discussion with other parents on the subject. Parents felt a bit in the dark about what was expected of children – how much homework to be done, when it should be done, do they have homework? Margaret Barr asked that

parents contact her directly if they had such concerns. Parents should be encouraged to contact school on any concerns they may have. Discussion ensued. There was concern however with Pastoral Care being the first line of contact. Parents were often unable to talk directly to the teacher in question re a specific problem. It is Glasgow District Council School policy that contact with teachers is made by prior appointment. Discussion followed about how the school could become more accessible to all parents no matter the concern. Primary school teachers are much more accessible and easier to contact, but unfortunately this is not the case with secondary school teachers. Louise also said there were times she would have liked to thank a specific teacher for help she had received but was unsure how to do this. Margaret Barr stated that this could be done through Pastoral Care.

There was discussion on possible exam timetables and how the school and parents could work together to help pupils study. During the closure due to snow, teachers had been asked to let pupils know via the website what work they should be doing. There was, however, the constant struggle with pupils and the importance of homework. Margaret Logan reported that non-completion of homework was a big problem and that a demerit system had been put in place. These demerits are fed back to parents in the hope that the problem can be resolved. In Personal and Social Education, pupils are given lessons on study skills, and preparing study timetables, but for some pupils this was not working.

It was agreed that all relevant information could be found on the school website, however many parents do not access this information. Margaret Barr felt that a more personal approach was needed but unsure how to do this. Much discussion followed. It was suggested that a copy of a study timetable could be put in the Induction Pack given out in 1<sup>st</sup> Year. Perhaps a simple breakdown such as "French: Learn ten words a night" etc. There could also be guidance on how to encourage children to study. Parents could be given helpful hints as to the best environment for positive studying. Anne Burke suggested that on specific nights, ie 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Parents Night, parents could receive handouts with key facts and study tips on how to plan for future tests for individual subjects. Each department could prepare their own handout. The handouts could also include relevant website and also a link to the school website. Zoe suggested that these handouts would be very helpful on Parents Night. There would be ample time to read the handouts whilst waiting for appointments. This would also allow parents the opportunity to ask teachers directly re information in the handouts.

There was an issue with getting parents to come along to school events and take an active part in their child's education. Most parents will come when it is about their own child but fewer parents come along to talks and information nights. There was uncertainty about how to approach this problem and much discussion followed. "How to Help Your Child" events have been included in the Course Planning Evenings, for the parents of S2 and S4/5, but it was agreed that a standalone event would be helpful. Margaret Barr would organise such an event in March. Information could also be pulled from the website and a booklet made up for 1<sup>st</sup> Years, perhaps including handouts from each individual department. The parents of S4/5/6 pupils already received a handbook at the beginning of the year, with SQA deadlines, and information about open doors supported study. However, a specific handbook for parents could also be provided, possibly circulated at the beginning of the academic year. This could include exam timetables and studying guidelines with the emphasis being on parents to ensure their children study. Before prelims start an exam timetable could also be put on the website and texts sent to parents of all Senior pupils informing them of this. Margaret Barr stated that an actual exam timetable was given out prior to the exams starting and this could be found on the website. It was also felt that if the Parent Council could hand out this handbook at specific events it could make the school and the Parent Council appear more approachable to unsure parents.

## **6. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Colin Towler spoke to his report. There is a current balance of £42.65 in the bank but a cheque for £600 from the Council was due soon. Margaret Barr will check when this is actually due. Colin will check when this amount was paid in last year.

He reported on a couple of cheques issued but never cashed: one for £20.48 for AGM refreshments and one for £132 for the school prize-giving refreshments. Anne Burke said that the cheque for £20.48 had been for her. She had initially misplaced it then found it. She had destroyed it as she had had it for so long. She told Colin that he could erase that entry from the accounts. The uncashed cheque for £132 had been given to Seonaid. As she was not present at the meeting Colin will follow this up with her. Margaret Logan said she would get a cheque to Colin for the Pantomime and apologised for the delay in doing so. The 6<sup>th</sup> Year Leaving Do had cost £50. Colin reported that there will be approximately £450 once all monies have been received. Euan requested a sum of £340 for this year as he had been looking into printed/photo mugs for this year. Margaret Barr would give him an application form for the Fundraising Group. He was also advised that the mugs could probably be bought more cheaply.

## **7. CORRESPONDENCE**

**Glasgow Parent Council Forum AGM Minutes:** The Parent Council had already received these. Simon felt it was important that we were represented on this Forum. Zoe agreed to attend. The venue has still to be confirmed and Simon will forward details when he receives them.

**Maureen McKenna Letter:** A letter was received from Maureen McKenna re school closures due to snow. Simon read out a passage from the letter:

*One of the parents who wrote to me during the adverse weather had lived in Canada where parents and friends regularly cleared school playgrounds to enable increased access for children and their families. As this adverse weather looks like becoming a regular occurrence, I would welcome the views of Parent Councils as to whether this should be something that should be considered.*

Discussion followed about the feasibility of this. Margaret Barr reported that Land Engineering was responsible for clearing snow and ice from pathways and school grounds, and from one building to the next. She had had to complain as this was not getting done, but was unsure if this was because Land Engineering could not get to the school because of the snow. There was concern about health and safety issues. If parents carry out snow clearing and become injured, who is liable? There was uncertainty over the legal aspects of this.

There was further discussion about the information aspect of the school closures. It was felt this issue was more of improved communications than clearing school grounds. Education websites had crashed due to the volume of hits, leaving parents in the dark as to whether schools were open or closed. The BBC website appeared to be the most reliable. Margaret Barr reported that during the closures the school website was updated daily and text messages were sent to all parents.

Simon will respond to Maureen's letter and report back to the Parent Council.

## 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**Future Fundraising Activities:** There was no big event planned in the near future. The question was raised about whether lighting had been hired or bought in December. If not, would it then be possible to purchase the rest of the PE lockers, and has this been agreed at an earlier meeting? It was agreed that June would check previous minutes and include in these minutes.

*From the Minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> October 2010: It was therefore agreed to get half the lockers immediately at a cost of around £1,228. Once the cost of the lighting had been agreed the decision on whether to get the rest of the lockers would be made. Jane will chase.*

Louise requested that sub groups prepare a short note to feedback to future meetings. Simon seconded this. June will contact sub groups and ask them to send note to her and she will circulate with future minutes.

Euan was requested to fill out Fundraising Form for Leaver's Do donation. Margaret Barr will provide this. The form will then have to come back to Parent Council for approval.

**Playground:** Colin suggested that he could provide old whisky barrels for planting purpose for the school grounds. Simon will follow this up.

**Janitor's House:** Colin offered to look into this and find out what is happening. As this property had been neglected over many years the cost of refurbishment would be enormous. The best outcome would be for the Council to demolish it but this would need to be kept on the Council agenda. This was agreed. Louise will email Colin with contact at Council.

## 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at 7 pm.