



Ross High School, Well Wynd, Tranent, East Lothian EH33 2EQ

**ROSS HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL
Meeting of Tuesday 27th February 2018**

Present: G Walshe (Chair), N Neighbour (Vice Chair), B Esamal, D Hill, R Averbuch, B Sanchez, J Robertson, D Middlemass, L Taylor

In Attendance: Ann Archer (Depute Head Teacher), M Donnelly (Principal Teacher), L Donohoe (Parent), Cllr J McMillan, V Brown (Clerk)

Apologies: P Reynolds, Cllr B Small, Cllr G Mackett, Cllr S Akhtar, Cllr C McGinn, Cllr F Dugdale, Cllr K McLeod, G Forsyth, A Muir, N McMillan, J Dall, M Macdonald, W Thornton

Minutes	Action
<p>1. Introductions and Apologies NN welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was Cllr JM first time at the Ross High School Parent Council meeting and he gave a brief introduction of himself and the work he does as a Councillor for the Haddington ward. GW welcomed him and thanked him for coming.</p> <p>2. Minutes of last Meeting and Matters Arising The initial draft plans for the extension to the school was presented at the last meeting. Everyone will be able to see them soon however they are still being tweaked with the architects coming in next week AA will speak to PR to see when it can be organised for the parent forum to come in and see the plans once finalised.</p> <p>Cllr JM said that Councillor Shamin Akhtar wants to pass on big thanks for the hard work that was done for the Consultation of the Education Bill – Empowering Schools. They were all really impressed with the replies received from Ross High School. GW said big thanks to NN who worked really hard on this and done most of the work.</p> <p>One amendment of the minutes, Empowering Schools instead of Governance Review, VB will change this.</p> <p>The Agenda template also needs updated, VB will email for a new one.</p> <p>Apologies as above.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 30th January 2018 were approved. Proposed by NN and Seconded by LT</p> <p>3. Head Teacher's Update AA gave an update of activity over the last month, with lots happening.</p> <p>The S6 London trip was a great success, the students were a credit to the school and PR sends his thanks to everyone that took part.</p> <p>The first newsletter from the Junior Team has just been produced. They are the pupil voice for the school and have a quality insurance team, which is regularly consulted. AA will circulate the newsletter, which is also available on social media.</p> <p>In sports, the indoor bowls team has done well.</p> <p>There is a new Deputy Head Teacher working in the Additional Support Needs (ASN) department who has set up a parents café which supports parental engagement which is working well. Parents can just drop in for a cup of tea or coffee.</p> <p>To recognise the students who achieve five or more merits a week, a text will go out to the parents to let them know.</p>	<p></p> <p>AA</p> <p>VB</p> <p>VB</p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>AA</p>

Happy Fest took place last week at Ross High, which included a mixture of singing and dancing and was well attended.

There has been a Primary School Conference where Ross High School was mentioned when speaking about Right Respecting School, being the first School in East Lothian with a Level 2 award, well done.

The East Lothian Market Place, which is linking in with businesses, has a road show on the 28th February in North Berwick.

The Geography Department had virtual reality sessions with a volcano, floods, sand and water that were really interesting.

Some students have had a meeting with Ministers in Edinburgh where they had an opportunity to interview MSP Iain Gray.

Fizz free has been a bit of a challenge however is working very well with most students' drinking water instead. AA said that the policy in school is that no fizzy drinks are allowed. If the students still really want it, they can just respectfully keep it in the bag during school hours. AA has seen a big difference in waste compared to last year and the pupils have noticed a change themselves in moodiness.

Well done to Jordan Smith who has been offered a place with a law firm in recognition of the Mock Court case. This is fantastic news, well done.

Staffing update has two new Teachers. A new post as a Principal Teacher and also a new Teacher in Biology. The candidates had a very high standard and much thanks to the Probationary Department at ELC for prepping the candidates for the interviews.

There are still no Home Economics (HE) Teachers and Cllr JM offered to speak to his contacts and might be able to support us in finding someone. AA said that working with Edinburgh College is going well at the moment, however not a long-term solution. GW said that HE is especially important with health and wellbeing. LD said that it might be more lucrative for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) to be flexible and choose to do HE even though it isn't their qualification? For example PE Teachers have been positive on taking on HE. Cllr JM has seen a cookery demonstration given by a very young top chef, which was very good. LD said that it is really sad if HE is not available because some pupils are not getting a cooked meal a day and would really benefit from learning how to cook. Cllr JM stressed that it is a great experience to be part of learning how to cook.

Cllr JM

4. Parental Engagement strategy 2018

MD is doing a monthly information sheet to the parents with for example staffing updates, since this can be useful for parents to know about. It will also have a question sheet for parent queries and dates of happenings in the months ahead.

Cllr JM mentioned that there is a chance to have a say about the local transportation, as there is a consultation on just now for plans in the future. A great opportunity for the youths to get involved and take an interest in and view for the future in regards to especially walking and cycling routes.

BS suggested imbedding useful links for University choices for easy access for everyone. She also suggested adding year group so the parents know whom it is relevant for and a contact of where other suggestions can be sent. There has recently been an Oxford University information meeting so this will be added too.

Cllr JM offered to send on information about a waste project competition for inclusion in the next newsletter. This is to encourage young people in Secondary Schools to come up with ideas and the best project wins the prize money.

Cllr JM

GW thanked MD very much for this, is absolutely brilliant and will be very useful.

The Parental Conference is on the 28th March. There were some technical issues in signing up online, however all workshops can be signed up for on the night and a leaflet will be handed out with workshop times on arrival. Kids are welcome too as there is an area set aside for them where they will be kept an eye on. LT offered to advertise this on the parent's night too. This will be a very well attended evening, which is fine as more workshops can be added and rotated if needed. NN said that it is really important to get new parents in early and on board to stay engaged, as this is when they can be a bit nervous about transition from Primary School to High School.

LT

NN submitted a response to East Lothian Council in regards to the Education Bill - Empowering Schools Consultation. Some of these responses have been made public on social media and in the local newspapers.

- A concern mentioned is putting a legal framework in place, which can make parents hesitant to want to help in schools and in Parent Councils.
- Another concern is what the collaboration between parents and the Head Teacher would look like? What is it going to do? What are the details? We have a fantastic school system that works already, why change it? And what will the new changes be? Will East Lothian become invisible in the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RIC) run in Fife?

GW said that there is a risk for ASN students when there will be a helpline instead of proper help from someone caring who knows the school and the children already. A discussion followed on the concerns raised as it has created more questions than answers and uncertainty rather than clarity.

NN said that it would be better to fix the few schools that needs it with best practice from other schools instead. GW thanked NN for all the hard work in this response.

5. Finance Update

Balance of bank account at 31st January 2018 was £349.51.

6. Area Partnership

The Area Partnership is holding their next meeting on 6th February at Ross High.

DM said it would be mostly about the housing strategy around the local area. Plans for roads and pedestrians. Cllr JM suggested inviting Simon Davies to the next meeting.

AA will follow up on the red box that was donated by the Area Partnership to RHS.

AA

Cllr JM said that the 10-year Area Partnership plan for the infrastructure in East Lothian has not yet been approved with the Scottish Government. There has been a Regional Planning meeting too and we are still waiting to hear when the plans will be approved. This also includes the budget for the next 10 years.

7. School Improvement Plan

AA gave an update on some of the things that will go on the School Improvement Plan, which will be finished soon. This will include anything highlighted in a mini review, which will take place at the beginning of March. Parents are needed as a focus group for quality indicators and VB will email the Parent Council members to get in touch if they are available to come in and help with this.

VB

8. Fundraising

NN has been in touch with Soulacoaster who will do the gig in the school on Friday 20th April. They asked to start at 8.30pm and finish at 11.30pm, which also works well with the two School bands. NN is still waiting for the posters that are designed by students and a shortlist is almost ready which will be circulated shortly. GW suggested to advertise to get the tickets asap as it will be busy and will have a maximum number of 200-250 people to attend.

There will be someone at the door to 'stamp' everyone so they can leave and enter again as they wish. Plastic cups will be bought for everyone to use for their BYOB. A first aider will also be there.

9. Parents' Queries

There was none.

10. AOCB

Cllr JM passed on a suggestion from Councillor Shamin Akhtar if Ross High School would like to commemorate a medal to Val McIntyre's sister, as she was a former pupil, for the involvement she had in Alcohol Scotland? She was the frontrunner for the minimum alcohol change that has just now come into effect and she was mentioned in the newspapers for this.

Cllr JM as the Chairperson for the East Lothian Twinning Group suggested that Ross High could have a twinned School in another country? Since this is really good for pupils to learn language, culture and vice versa. The Parent Council members will look into this as they all agreed that it is well worth exploring, for example with the Rotary if Tranent has a twinned town? Suggestions were made to explore Costa Rica as an option and this will be discussed further at a future Parent Council meeting.

Cllr JM expressed a special thanks to Ross High School for organising such a nice and thoroughly enjoyable evening at a recent Burns Night.

AA is putting together a learning and teaching policy about homework. This is for numeracy and literacy, students in S1-3 and is being promoted as part of Mathletics. It is important that the homework is relevant and pushes for quality rather than quantity with set expectations. RA said that setting homework targets are really important.

BS asked how getting the Mathletics certificates can be monitored? as it goes by points and selflearning skills, is it a good idea for it to be accessible on the phone? AA suggested it could perhaps be per House and connected to rewards? As it needs to be easy to manage. Also important to let the parents know because otherwise, the students might not do it. DM suggested emailing homework reminders to parents. RA said that underlying ethos for homework was discussed a few months ago and AA will take this info into account when writing the homework statement.

The yearly quality survey to all parents are to go out again as a Surveymonkey. AA asked if the Parent Council members agreed to use the same one as last year? RA suggesting taking out the questions that had the lowest responses, making it shorter and quicker to answer. AA will email out the suggestion of the survey to the Parent Council members to have a say before finalising.

Date of Next Meetings:

Next Parent Council meeting 27th March 2018

AA