



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

**ROSS HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL
Meeting of Tuesday 26th November 2013**

Present: J Belton (Chair), R Powell, J Robertson, A Muir, A Welsh, N Neighbour, B Esamal, S Thompson, P Reynolds, M Collins, L Morrison, Cllr S Akhtar, N Nicholls (Clerk)

In attendance: N Spiers (Head Boy); L Turnbull (Deputy Head Boy)

Apologies: H Williams, Cllr K McLeod, Cllr D Grant, Cllr J Gillies

Minutes	Action
<p>1. Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>JB welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies as above.</p> <p>2. Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2013 were approved by RP and seconded by AW.</p> <p>JB and PR had discussed bus service problems with Andrew Mclellan who was responsible for arranging the Council's bus and taxi contracts and carrying out spot checks on services. The smooth running of services for pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN) was the Council's priority at the beginning of each new school year. An occasion when a driver of the Elphinstone bus had driven past pupils had been taken up with the contractor. Single and double decker buses were running on the Elphinstone route. JB noted that pupils with bus passes would not necessarily use the bus every day. The email address for transport queries was transportservices@eastlothian.gov.uk. Mr Mclellan was looking into the issue of the Ormiston bus being timetabled to arrive at the school too early in the morning. It was agreed that dialogue about this issue should be kept open.</p> <p>PR said that there were around 80 hits on the school website per day. Parents were happy with the new layout of the newsletter although the start time of the Christmas concert should have been included. Shannon MacKenzie had been nominated by staff to take part in the Queen's Baton Relay in view of the huge amount of charity work she had carried out.</p> <p>3. Head Teacher's Update</p> <p>Two new English teachers had been appointed pending disclosure checks. Mike Halcrow would be retiring at Christmas. Interviews for a Geography teacher would take place on 4th December. Interviews for a Principal Teacher Citizenship would be on 9th December. Interviews for a permanent Deputy Head Teacher in the ASN Department would take place next week. BE, JB, and RP would participate on the interview panel. Interviews for a permanent ASN Principal Teacher would take place after the Depute had been appointed. The P7 Parents' Evening had been very successful – feedback from parents</p>	<p>PR JB SA</p> <p>BE JB RP</p>

had been excellent. **PR** was grateful to staff for running a second parents' evening for Pencaitland parents who had not received their invitations to the first event even though they had been posted. **JB** praised the quality of the presentations given by the Head Boy and Head Girl. P7 parents and present pupils had been impressed with the look of the new school activities booklet.

School good news stories had featured regularly in the East Lothian Courier and the Evening News. A group of 2nd year pupils had reached the finals of a construction challenge competition. Lots of cupcakes had been sold in aid of Children in Need. 105 Christmas shoeboxes had been collected and dispatched by senior pupils. **NS** thanked the Parent Council for funding transport costs. **JB** asked **NS** and **LT** to pass on the Parent Council's thanks to office bearers for organising this appeal. 40 members of the school football teams had been on a trip to Wigan Athletic and Manchester City grounds. The school had received impressive feedback about the behaviour of pupils on the trip. Feedback about 4th year work experience had been fantastic. The school had been working with Community Wardens on the High Street to encourage pupils to use litter bins by offering prizes. A 6th year pupil had spoken to year groups about having respect for the local community. Remembrance assemblies had marked Armistice Day. The Head and Deputy Head Girls had spoken at the School Leaders' Conference. PCs and laptops in the school had been upgraded and there was a Council commitment to set up wi fi in school so that pupils' own devices could be used. The school Christmas concert would be held on 11th December.

PR was grateful for the Parent Council's support and input in relation to the consultation on proposed curriculum change. All parents had been invited to two consultation evenings (120 parents had attended) and the text of the consultation was on the school website. Parents at the meeting and the Parent Council had supported the proposed changes and **PR** had now written to all parents about this. .

At the consultation evenings concerns had been raised, particularly by parents of 4th year pupils, about the new National 4 and 5 qualifications. **PR** had asked Departments to communicate with parents earlier rather than later about whether pupils would be presented at National 4 or 5; unlike Standard Grades, pupils could not be presented at both levels. Parents and teachers would be able to discuss progress at any time during the period leading up to exams (including 3 tracking and monitoring reports, a parents' evening and prelims). National 5 courses were designed to make the jump to Higher less onerous. There were also National 3, 2 and 1 qualifications. If a pupil failed an (externally assessed) National 5 exam the school would retain course work as evidence to put towards an internally assessed National 4 qualification. The school would aim to ensure that pupils were sitting the right level of qualification in the first place. Pupils attaining a National 4 in a subject would be able to sit a National 5 in the 5th year and go on to Higher in that subject in the 6th year. Alternatively they could study different National 4 and 5 subjects in the 5th and 6th years.

Prelims for National 5s would provide exam practice. There would be no prelims for National 4 qualifications as pupils would not be sitting an external exam. The exam appeals process had returned to how it originally was, and only in exceptional circumstances (for example illness) would the mark in a prelim be taken into account in assessing a pupil's final exam result. The school would consider in the future how many prelims were needed to provide exam practice. East Lothian Council would be considering whether or not study leave should be given to pupils taking a National 4 qualification as they would not have to revise for an exam. **PR** confirmed that there was sufficient information about the style of National 5 exams to set useful prelims and that the introduction of the new Higher exams in East Lothian was on track. Prelims would take place over three weeks in January and February.

The Council's Quality Improvement visit to the school had been postponed. Four new rooms for use by the pupil support base had been created. The school's email communication system would probably be launched next summer. Parent Council members had been helping to collect email addresses at school events.

4. Energy Drinks Project

PR said the consumption of high caffeine energy drinks by pupils off the school premises at lunchtime appeared to be causing some behavioural problems in school. Many of these drinks had warnings that they should not be consumed by children under 16. **NS** said that there had been health and well being assemblies on this topic earlier in the year but pupils were buying these products again. **SA** said that she would investigate what other councils had done to try to reduce sales of these drinks to children under 16. Parent Council members suggested tying this in with promoting healthy, possibly Fairtrade, options instead

SA

5. Finance Update

There was still a vacancy for a new treasurer. **BE** said that there was £296 in the Parent Council's bank account [an "easyfundraising" cheque of £20.65 would also be deposited]. **BE** was making arrangements to set up a new bank account with RBS. **AW** would be added as cheque signatory to the bank a/c.

BE

6. Parents' Queries

AW had heard that there were courses for newly qualified drivers, subsidised by the Council, and asked if this was something the school would be able to offer pupils. **SA** said that Recharge in Tranent had run this type of course last year. Pupils might also want to help out at a new mid-morning group at Ross High Rugby Club, for men with early onset dementia to talk about sport, as part of their community commitment education. **AW** would find out more details. Recharge ran a breakfast club for pupils at the Rugby Club and there was a Co-op sponsored breakfast club at the school for some pupils.

AW

7. Fundraising

JB thanked everyone for donations of prizes for the school Christmas concert raffle. Prizes could also be handed in at the school office. **N Neighbour** had obtained a number of prizes from local businesses. **MC** was coordinating the raffle and members of staff were also donating prizes. Senior pupils would help with ticket sales on the night. **RP**, **N Neighbour** and **AW** would meet before the next meeting to discuss other fundraising ideas including promoting the school's "easyfundraising" link.

ALL

**RP AW N
Neighbour**

8. Any Other Business

SA handed out copies of a poster for the Christmas Fair and switching on of Christmas lights in Tranent (organised by the Community Council) on Sunday 1st December

Date of next Parent Council meeting: Tuesday 28th January 2014 at 7.00pm. [No Parent Council meeting in December.]