



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

**ROSS HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL
Meeting of Tuesday 24th October 2017**

Present: G Walshe, N Neighbour, A Muir, B Esamal, J Robertson, D Hill, R Averbuch, D Middlemass

In Attendance: P Reynolds (Head Teacher), M Donnelly (Principal Teacher), G Forsyth (Teacher), Cllr F Dugdale, Cllr B Small, Cllr K McLeod, V Brown (Clerk)

Apologies: B Sanchez, N McMillan, Cllr C McGinn, J Dall, Cllr T Trotter, C Douglas, L Taylor

Minutes	Action
<p>1. Introductions and Apologies GW thanked everyone for coming along to the meeting. Apologies as above.</p> <p>2. Minutes of last Meeting and Matters Arising Lyn Taylor and Neil McMillan has been in touch and are both keen to be full members of the Parent Council. Since there are two spots available, GW asked if the Parent Council members would approve this and it was unanimous.</p> <p>Soul music band “Soulacoaster” is able to come on Friday 20th April, and PR will book the hall. It was discussed if this should be a “bring your own bottle event” as there could be an issue with getting a license for serving alcohol. PR however thinks it’s worth checking this and if so, there could be a bar instead. There will be no costs for the band, however they are happy with a donation if given. There are plenty of youtube clips of them playing that will be used as advertising. Ticket price was discussed at £10. They are also playing on the 24th November in Voodoo rooms, Edinburgh if anyone wishes to see them.</p> <p>The Recruitment & Selection training took place on 9th October and it was suggested that a Parent Council member attend this training at some point this session.</p> <p>The Burns Night organisation is going really well with only one speech slot left to fill on the programme. This will be discussed at the next Parent Council meeting.</p> <p>The Christmas Fayre will be held on the 9th December at the School. There will be food, crafts and raffle among other things. It’s £10 per stall. However, pupils only have to pay £5 per stall and can keep the money from what they make. PR said that last year was a pilot made with local churches to use the monies from this to support Christmas parcel gifts for the elderly, which was very well received. PR is looking into whether this could be repeated this year. If only relying on donations it might not be as good of a gift so if the Parent Council can use the monies earned from the stall at the Christmas Fayre, a nicer gift can be bought. DM will check at the meeting on the 25th October. GW also mentioned “jinglebags” as a suggestion instead of Christmas parcels, which also need donations. The Parent Council was also encouraged to have a stall and this is to be decided at the next meeting.</p> <p>The School lottery decision was rolled over to the next meeting.</p> <p>The AGM minutes for 2017 was approved. Proposed DH, seconded NN</p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting on 26th September was approved. Proposed by DM and Seconded by RA</p>	<p>PR</p> <p>DM</p>

3. Head Teacher's Update

PR said that Home economics are working with Edinburgh College this year. Also there are only a small number of applications for physics and chemistry as permanent Teacher positions. It's not a crisis however it would be great if this could be filled. Well done MD for securing the position as Principal Teacher, everyone is delighted.

There is a need for more guidance teachers for the S1 pupils. However increased role means increased budget. Every pupil needs to feel that they have one person they can speak to and Ross High is becoming the largest school in East Lothian with the lowest number of guidance teachers so it is really important to get this support in place as a priority. PR said that there is work to be done for the budget and staffing during this years but can't go over budget.

PR and Nicola Duncan have visited a free school in Birmingham that has a School experts in character. The trip was very useful and Ross High will apply for a grant through Character Scotland.

Equality is a priority for the school and its important to promote rights, diversity and tolerance. It is important to highlight that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated. The school are working closely with a wide range of groups to ensure voices are heard and key issues, such a mental health are addressed.

PR said that Ross High has received some lovely worded letters recently from parents and one parent even wrote directly to Head of Education Fiona Robertson. It's really nice to hear positives and PR really appreciate it.

The Book Festival McMillan coffee morning on 29th September was really successful.

Attainment is really important and needs to be high. GF said that this year is focusing on aspiration and the confidence and improvement in the pupils are amazing. The parents were really impressed with the speakers and are fully on board. It's important to give them a push at the beginning of the year rather than parents finding after months that they lack in effort.

First year went to Skye Videos and made a documentary on the Kardashian kids family. They really enjoyed it. RA mentioned that it's a great confidence builder and that P7 has done this as well.

Ross High keeps performing incredible well winning sports competitions. Golds, silvers and achievements.

The sponsored walk raised lots of money and included a murder mystery which was lots of fun.

There has been an Attainment Reviews which was very comprehensive and went on for 2 hours. They really complimented the capacity of the School and it was a really positive however sometimes difficult meeting. Lots of good questions asked.

There will be a School training with 7 QA Teachers from England on the 21-22 November. They are coming to work with the school and to give feedback.

4. Homework Policy

Ross High doesn't have a homework policy at the moment and PR asked the Parent Council's views on this. There is not much research around homework however what type of homework is important, quality rather than quantity. There is more homework through the secondary years where S1 doesn't have as much as for example S4 has lots of homework due to tests.

DH said that no homework policy is needed because it's really important that the pupils take responsibility themselves to get the benefit of homework and it helps them to focus. Also they know when to do what so no need for parents to chase them up. DM

said that sometimes pupils with chaotic lifestyles struggles with homework and does need help. RA said that it's really hard to compete with tablets, phones and social media. It's about forming good habits and enhance ability to self motivate which can help with lack of confidence. Quality homework plays an important role.

PR some pupils can manage their own homework better than others and libraries are available during and after school. Teachers are aware of pupils with chaotic life styles and they are already getting more support. Also the research done in education has now changed significantly into more homework for both Primary and Secondary schools. Still, some schools doesn't have it at all and is still doing well.

GW suggested time management training and how to structure their own homework, which teaches them from first year to coordinate this themselves. Also that rather than have homework to be finished for the next day, to have set homework to be handed in in a week's time so they can choose the homework done and prioritise better.

NN said that in the Parental engagement work she has done, the homework needs to be relevant and it's important to have home learning, which is a part of the project.

MD said that the pupils have been watching videos in class and are learning really well from that. AM suggested teaching the pupils life skills rather than homework. JR remember seeing some reports sent out about homework where google classroom was used and the Parent Council members agreed that this was really good.

PR suggested putting a homework policy in place where the right homework is important. Quality homework rather than quantity and to use google classroom. The Parent Council members agreed to this.

5. Finance Update

Balance of bank account at 1st October 2017 was £254.48

6. Area Partnership

NN gave us an update on the Area Partnership where a new chair and vice chair is being sought. The Parent Council members agreed to put forward Donald Grant as a chair nominee and Liz Hutchison as a vice chair. DM said that nominations are closed and sent in and NN will pass on the nominees for Ross High.

There has been an independent review done on all 6 Area Partnerships for East Lothian. This is available if anyone wants it, please just get in touch or on website?

Cllr KM said that 150 people attended the evening for Tranent's "Recharge" which was a great night.

7. School Improvement Plan

This will be on-going over the year. Cllr BS said that Oxford University and other similar universities have a low attendance of Scottish students and he is working towards trying to get more students to see it as an option to go there, with for example trips paid for to be able to attend open days. He will speak to education about this.

GW proposed sending pupils to university open days earlier, such as in 4th year instead of 5th or 6th so they know what they need to do and the qualifications needed to get there. RA mentioned that field trips can help to raise aspirations, for example visiting Oxford or Cambridge to find out more about the opportunities of studying at universities there. AM stressed that more effort should be made to promote opportunities of all universities, including fee tuition fees and bursaries which can help address financial barriers of attending the establishments

PR said that support and help is available for the students considering higher education and that it's important to get communication out to the parents also so they too know about University open days and when they are. DM said that attending the open days

will help them make an informed decision about if University is for them and if so, which one to apply for. Cllr BS will speak to Neil Craik-Collins regarding this.

BE mentioned that a booklet might be a good idea, to highlight "what I wished I knew in 4th year and only found out in 6th". Everyone agreed this was a good idea, even earlier so the pupils can start planning about after High School. GW also mentioned modern apprenticeships that don't need a degree because some companies will give courses and qualifications for their apprentices and then also a well-paid job.

8. Rights Respecting School

This was rolled over to the next meeting.

9. Fundraising

The Burns Night will be held on Friday 19th January 2018. Focus next meeting on this.

10. Parents' Queries

There was none.

11. AOCB

The P7 Parents and Pupils night will be held in Ross High on 1st November at 7pm.

GF has sent out the survey about the Parental Engagement conference and has received 115 responses so far from one week only. PR said that this is enough to give an indication of what people want to discuss and see there and is really positive, first time being done. It will be held around March 20th, to be confirmed.

GW said that there was a huge group of teenagers dressed in black clothes on the road late at night between Ormiston and Tranent. PR knows about this and road safety and cycling will be discussed again.

Cllr FD said that the Fair Funding consultation is now closed and they have sent a reply to this to keep having budget set by local authority, and not centralised and not making Head Teachers into business managers. Also she mentioned that the East Lothian Education Trust is there for anyone struggling to pay for trips however it needs to be applied for. PR will include this in a flyer and there might be a possibility to do a group application for trips.

Date of Next Meetings:

Next Parent Council meeting 28th November

Area Partnership meeting: 7th Nov public RHS

ELAPCM meeting: 22nd Nov