

Queensferry Community High School
Minutes of Parent Council Meeting - 27 January 2022
7pm via MS Teams



Minutes

Present :

Parents/Carers : Sarah Baird (SB), Alan Balanowski (Vice-Chair) (AB), Anne Marie Boyd (AMB), Steven Budge (SB), Sarah Clarkson (Chair) (SC), Mark Elder (ME), Tim Hall (TH), David Swanson (DS), Graeme McKinley (GM), Claire Whyte (CW), Louise Wilson (LW), Ditte Solgaard Dunn.

Teaching Staff/Other: Craig Downie (CD), Kevin Thomas (KT)

Minute Taker/Clerk: Sarah Bennett (SBe)

Apologies: Martin Bennett (MB), Katrina Closier (KC), Pamela Cranston (PC), David Flint (DF), Eileen Grant (EG), Jacky Knickbein (JK)

1.	Welcome	
	SC wished attendees a happy new year and welcomed them to the meeting.	
2.	Apologies	
	Apologies were noted and are listed above.	
3.	Minutes of last meeting	
	Minutes from 8 December 2021 were approved and will be sent out to the Parent Forum via the School App and emailed to Queensferry District Community Council and local councillors.	
4.	Chair's Update	
	<p>A Parent Council Newsletter was issued to the Parent Forum in December.</p> <p>SC and AB are looking to schedule a meeting with KT to discuss opportunities for young people with employers within the local community.</p> <p>SC will be supporting CD on the interview panel in the recruitment of the Deputy Head.</p> <p>Three members of the Parent Council have offered assistance with the School's positive behaviour policy and equality and diversity policy work and will proof read documents and offer feedback.</p> <p>ME has highlighted information available on the minutes from the Education and Families Committee on the 7 December where the issue of capacity at QHS was</p>	



	<p>discussed. Based on current projections, QHS will reach overcapacity in August 2024. ME spoke about the 4 options which have been discussed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Expanding the current QHS site with a possible annexe on the site of St Margaret’s Primary School (which will be relocated). This is not a practical option due to the lack of space. (2) Building a school in Kirkliston. Issues with this option are having to find a suitable site and purchasing said site with a likely condition of sale being the construction of more houses. The timescale for the construction of a new school from beginning to end usually is between 4-5 years. There would only be a projected roll of 550 at peak which would make it the smallest secondary school in Edinburgh. Officials do not believe that this is a viable option. (3) The construction of a West Edinburgh High School with intakes from Kirkliston and the new housing at Maybury and Cammo. It would be located at the National Business Gateway and would have a projected roll of 2200 making it the largest school in Edinburgh. (4) Young people from Kirkliston attending the new secondary school which is being built in Winchburgh. This was considered previously and discounted. The school is now under construction and there will not be capacity for Kirkliston pupils. <p>There will be an informal consultation between January and May 2022 and local residents will have a chance to add their feedback. Officials have said that it is prudent to plan for temporary accommodation on the present site at QHS.</p> <p>SC spoke about the need to make all parents aware of the information available so they can make a contribution and make the consultation robust. SC spoke with Councillor Louise Young who confirmed that the consultation will take place in the first quarter of 2022. Councillor Young aims to consult with education officers and will pass on any updates to the Parent Council.</p> <p>AB confirmed that himself, CW and ME will meet to discuss the Parent Council constitution. Action 1 – AB to feedback to Parent Council at March meeting.</p> <p>AB and PC met with the Council regarding the the volume of traffic on Station Road and Russell Terrace. The one way system on Queensferry High Street is still temporary however the Council are minded to make this permanent. There is currently still an opportunity contest this. Representatives from the Council are coming to South Queensferry for a walk along Station Road to assess the current situation. There will be funding available to put in place temporary and permanent changes to Station Road and Russell Terrace to reduce speed and the volume of traffic. AB will keep Parent Council updated on this issue.</p>	<p>AB</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Treasurer’s Update</p>	

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	The current balance is £5941.18.	
6.	PC Reps Update	
	<p>CEC Locality Rep Update – There was no update as there had been no meeting. Action 2 – Locality meeting will take place shortly and MB to update PC at March meeting.</p> <p>Cluster Group Liaison Update – No update. SB has reached out to Cluster Group.</p> <p>PSA Update – The PSA has not had the opportunity to meet or fundraise since 2019. CD confirmed that there is still no update on in-person meetings within the School but will provide an update when he receives information. The PSA has a small balance and asked whether the School would be interested in resurrecting the bidding for funds process. KT confirmed that PSA funds are generally used to purchase items and experiences to enhance the curriculum.</p>	MB
7.	Community Council Update	
	<p>David Flint had confirmed that the Community Council has not met and therefore there is no update. David Flint sent his apologies for this meeting.</p> <p>GM confirmed that the Community Council would like to meet with Michelle Gordon again to pick up on the engagement of young people in the local community.</p> <p>AMB confirmed that Edinburgh Leisure is meeting with the PE Department to discuss the general cleanliness in the PE Department; EL is responsible for the area from 4pm till 10pm and the School during the day. EL confirmed that 60 young people from QHS have signed up to use the gym and swimming pool.</p> <p>“Open all hours” will take place for S1’s and upwards every Friday evening at Queensferry High Sports Complex.</p> <p>Michelle Gordon has mentioned that the local community are very appreciative of CD and the Senior Management Team being present at the top shops during break and lunch times.</p>	
8.	Head Teacher’s Report	
	<p>CD and the School have received a huge amount of positive feedback. CD highlighted the incredible job that staff are continuing to do in difficult, incredibly challenging times. There has been significant staff absence due to Covid and isolation and staff have gone above and beyond for the young people at QHS. It has been difficult to arrange cover and the Senior Management Team has been</p>	



filling in. CD will shortly write to parents and carers to thank them for their support.

CD will be writing to parents and carers after the February break to reinforce the message that the point of contact between parent/carer and the School is the pupil support leader and/or deputy head teacher who will then liaise with individual teachers in order to assimilate a response. Individual teachers should not be communicating directly with parents/carers.

Staffing – The School is currently interviewing for a Deputy Head Teacher and Principal Teacher Raising Attainment and hope to make appointments very soon. Appointments have been made for a Pupil Support Leader, a Modern Studies/History teacher, a primary transition teacher and there are currently adverts out for 2 permanent teachers in the PE Department. CD confirmed that he has staffed in areas where he knows there will be demand namely Maths, English and PE. He will make further appointments when the new curriculum has settled down.

CW asked whether there is an update on recruitment in the Music Department and CD confirmed that the School has put in a probationer request for the next academic year. In the meantime, he has contacted a retired deputy head (music teacher) who may be willing to help the senior pupils a few days a week.

Curriculum – The School has shared plans with parents/carers, staff and young people and has received overwhelming support for the recommended changes. Young people will shortly receive their course choice options which they will take home to discuss with parents/carers and complete and will receive an interview with a member of staff to discuss and agree their choices. Young people will be able to choose the subjects they would like without being restricted by columns. The School aims to create a timetable which accommodates all choices although it acknowledges that it is impossible to guarantee that every young person will get exactly what they want.

Uniform – CD has made clear the importance he places on uniform in building a positive culture and ethos within the School. He believes that uniform is a great leveller and that wearing the School Badge should be important to pupils. From August 2022, there will be an expectation that QHS pupils wear a blazer to school. Pupils receiving free school meals will be entitled to a blazer free of charge. The School has spoken with the company providing the blazers and has negotiated a cost of £20 for all other pupils. CD will send a communication to parents/carers in February and there will be an opportunity for parents to pay in instalments.

TH suggested a slightly different approach where only pupils in senior years are required to wear blazers. CD's preference is for all year groups to wear blazers.



SC suggested the possibility of the School having a “thrift shop” where blazers are recycled.

AMB was concerned that some parents/carers have more than one child at High School which will prove costly. CB confirmed that it will only be pupils entitled to free school meals who will be entitled to a free blazer however being able to pay in instalments should ease the pressure.

LW asked whether young people will be able to wear jackets over their blazers if it is cold or raining and CD confirmed that they will be allowed although jackets should be removed whilst in the School.

Both SC and AB confirmed their support for the re-introduction of blazers. Further feedback was sought and there were no objections. CD was pleased to receive the support of the Parent Council.

Reporting – CD has acknowledged that reporting is not where it should be and it is a work in progress. There was nothing in place when CD started but, since then, KT has created a system. A working group has been formed to look at ways of reporting in the future and it will look to work with the Parent Council on this.

Assessment Windows – The School has been putting alternative assessment arrangements in place for pupils who require additional help; this has been a difficult task given the recent staff absences. The School will write to parents/carers with children with additional requirements asking them to contact the School with any enquiries or comments. There is an issue in the provision of separate accommodation for young people requiring special arrangements during assessment windows as there is currently not the room or adequate staffing. Staff have been gathering evidence throughout the first 2 assessment windows and will continue to assemble data during the third/last set of assessments. The School is waiting for the SQA to make a decision on the delivery of exams and CD will write to all parents/carers once information has been communicated.

MB had asked whether pupils will have the traditional study leave before and during the exam period. CD confirmed that if the exams were to go ahead then study leave would likely commence shortly after the Easter holidays.

TH asked for clarification on the current position in the Maths Department. CD confirmed that the part-time member of staff is now working full-time and that the newly Pupil Support Teacher is a qualified maths teacher and, although it is not the intention to use them for that purpose, there is always that option. Interviews are currently taking place for the Principal Teacher of Raising Attainment (Numeracy) and they will be looking for a probationer in the next academic year.



	<p>AB asked if it would be possible to avoid tannoy announcements whilst pupils are sitting assessments. CD confirmed that it would be impossible as assessments are sat throughout the school day however staff are aware that announcements usually occur straight after the second bell.</p> <p>KT gave a presentation on class charts and the investment the School has made in a new system to track the engagement of young people across their school day. Staff can reward positive actions and interactions throughout the day and note any issues which may have been encountered. These issues can be in the classroom or out of class during the school day. This allows staff to track any issues and have on the spot interactions with pupils. This reporting will be completely transparent and both young people and parents/carers will have access to the information. They will be able to see what has happened and what action has been taken to resolve an issue. The purpose is to track and monitor, intervene and celebrate success and it opens up a channel of communication between the parent and School.</p> <p>LW was concerned that this would have a negative effect on a child who works hard but receives no recognition. KT confirmed that the system is for rewarding young people who meet expectations every day, who engage, who are polite, who work their hardest and do not feel they receive recognition. It is a tangible way to celebrate success. CD reiterated that he has colleagues in other schools that have used the system and have reported a positive result. DS confirmed that this is used at his school and it gives the teacher the opportunity to build quality relationships with young people and is the best behaviour monitoring system that has been used for years.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>School Strategic Items</p>	
	<p>Pupils outside at break and lunch: SC enquired about the reasoning for pupils being asked to remain outside during break and lunch. CD confirmed that they would be encouraging young people to be outdoors as much as possible with the primary reasoning being their wellbeing. In good weather, it is important that young people spend time in the fresh air and sunlight and contingency plans would be in place for wet and cold weather. There is capacity for seating outside and the School is looking to invest in seating for up to 100 people. Some of the furniture on the second and third floors has been damaged with young people spending time there during break and lunch and staff are struggling to have breaks as pupils are outside classrooms. The School is hoping to have a designated space for S6. It was confirmed that there would be designated areas within the school for any pupils wishing to remain indoors,</p> <p>Parent Council Funds:</p>	

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	<p>SC confirmed that CD has a proposal for the use of Parent Council funds. The School would like to have contemporary trophy cabinets in the entrance area and has asked if the Parent Council could fund these. Smart new award boards would be backdated with previous winners. CD confirmed that he would like to introduce a Head Teacher's Award. In addition CD proposed a Parent Council award, the criteria to be decided by the PC. SC confirmed her support for the use of funds and suggested that the PC award be a values-based award in line with PC parent discussions about different types of achievement. SC asked for feedback from other PC members. AB was supportive. TH asked whether the Parent Council should be providing funding for school equipment instead and CD confirmed that funding is already in place for the provision of material to run the curriculum successfully. ME added that the Parent Council already sponsored two awards in the English Department so this fitted nicely with current PC support. SC asked for any other feedback before confirming that she would liaise with CD over the best way to procure the cabinets. Action 3 – SC and CD to work together.</p>	<p>SC/CD</p>
10.	AOCB (Any other competent business)	
	<p>No other business.</p> <p>The next Parent Council will be held on the 22 March. AB will bring a revised constitution to this meeting. Action 4 - SC asked for members to get in touch if they have anything to add to the agenda.</p>	<p>All</p>

ACTION LIST

1.	AB	AB to feedback on update to Constitution at March meeting
2.	MB	MB to update PC from Locality meeting at March meeting
3.	SC/CD	Work together on purchase of trophy cabinets
4.	All	Contact SC with any items for March agenda.