



Harlaw Academy Parent Council

Minutes

Thursday 22nd November 2018

Present

Catriona Allan (Chair), Graham Blance (Acting Head Teacher), Fiona Lawrence (Deputy Head), Tara Todd (Treasurer), Lynne Gowans (Secretary), Timi Ejiofoh, Carol Baverstock, Sarah Dingwall, Alison Walker.

Apologies

Ruth Adair (Vice Chair), Cllr Yuill, Jacqui Lang, Cllr Donnelly, Cllr Lumsden, Cllr Henrickson

01. Welcome

Catriona Allan welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave apologies, see above.

02. Points from Last Minutes on 13th Sep 2018

Ruth Adair informed us Shell is running a Girls in Energy course beginning January. Fiona Lawrence advised that Harlaw currently have a similar course run via Heather Paterson in Tech department, for both boys and girls. Girls in Energy has also been offered to pupils on the course choice form in previous years, but with little uptake.

Marcliffe running a hospitality event, Anne Douglas attending with some pupils.

Donna Cuthill from ACC has been sent information regarding constitutional changes within Harlaw Parent Council, these were agreed at the AGM in September.

Harlaw PTA is no longer in operation. Catriona Allan hosted a meeting at home with the current office bearers, unfortunately Carol Bremner was unable to attend, but it was agreed that a sub-committee of the Parent Council would be formed to oversee fundraising. It is hoped two members from each school year will be recruited to help with this. We are currently awaiting confirmation of PTA bank balance, this will be updated at next meeting.

The Pupil Voice came up with a list of items to be introduced or refurbished at Harlaw. A few of these suggestions were also discussed at the office bearers meeting; the importance of safety in the school

car park being the main issue, local workers are using Harlaw as free car park, putting the safety of pupils at risk. Ideally a barrier would be erected but there may be other options that can be considered, this will be discussed in more detail when we know how much money is available to spend. David Innes had suggested we write a letter to Councilors / MSP's regarding budget cuts, car park safety will be highlighted in this correspondence. (CA)

Other suggestions;

School signage covered area in school playground to enable all weather protection at break and lunchtime were also highlighted by the Pupil Voice.

Water bottles do not fit in fountains, it was suggested that children transitioning from primary school could be given a water bottle in their welcome pack.

A smart TV screen in the canteen / snack bar would be an asset to the school and would keep children informed of activities on offer at school and highlight items from the bulletin, this can also be looked at in the PTA budget.

03. Parent Council Chair Report

Chair attended Aberdeen Parent Council forum, Harlaw PC meetings are in line with other schools in the city with similar numbers attending meetings.

Discussion on communication took place and some schools are using apps to communicate with parents. Fiona Lawrence advised that Harlaw were keen to keep Groupcall and Expressions as way of communicating with Parents/Carers. Groupcall is used for all families who have given the school email addresses or mobile numbers, Expressions is an opt in service which you can sign up for and receive school information.

Report in local press that Aberdeen Grammar has been given 150k to refurbish school kitchen, Mr Blance advised that this was also to cover for structural damage and drainage at the school, the local authority savings are still ongoing with level of funding cuts for schools still unknown. Harlaw is currently undergoing window refurbishment, this work will be completed in time for the new school term. Part of the playground has been sectioned off during works but has not been too much of a problem for the school.

More Parent Council information is required to be updated on the school website, this is a big ask for Fiona Lawrence, who already has a very busy job to do. There was a discussion that the PC have their own website – suggested that the PC look at other school's PC websites.

A short questionnaire is currently being compiled by the PC for use at parents evenings to ask if any parents/carers have services or manpower to help school, even simple things like a man with a van could be helpful to the school or you may work for a company willing to partner with the school or match fund monies raised by pupils. This would be conducted by senior pupils who can fill in the form along with parents/carers waiting to see teachers (LG)

Accord card machine queues are extremely long on a Monday with children topping them up for the week. Parents can upload money onto cards from any phone or computer, unfortunately this takes overnight for the card to be updated, you can sign up for a balance to be sent via text on a Sunday evening or when the balance gets low. Installing another machine is currently not an option at the school.

04. Treasurers Report

Balance as at 24/11/18 £166.90. Cheque handed out at meeting £60 for clerk fees, leaving a balance of £106.90.

DATE	Money Received	Description of Money received	Description of money spent	Transaction Amount £	Newsletter Printing Costs	Scottish Parent Councils Association	Clerks Fees	Harlaw Academy Website Development	Contribution to school prizes	Miscellaneous	Current AC Balance
01/04/2018	£446.90	Balance b/f									£446.90
28/06/2018			Sarah Souter	£ 60.00			£ 60.00				£386.90
19/09/2018			Lynne Gowans	£120.00			£120.00				£266.90
01/10/2018			Health/Wellbeing event donation	£100.00							£166.90
Total	£446.90			£280.00	£0.00	£0.00	£180.00	£0.00	£100.00	£0.00	£166.90
									Balance to be c/fwd		

We are still awaiting confirmation of funds for 2018/19 from ACC.

05. School Report – Mr Blance

We have two new staff members in English and Biology. We say goodbye to Mrs Brodie in Computing, Mr Bell in Maths and Miss McCrone in English. We are currently advertising a new Maths teacher, Design & Tech, English and Computing. This is a similar situation citywide. Recruitment adverts will continue to be placed.

Four student teachers started this year but two have decided that teaching is not for them and have subsequently left.

Mr Bell has been instrumental in getting our pupils to the final of the Northsound Schools Quiz, winning the event three times. He is leaving so a different member of staff will be needed to co-ordinate this next year.

Teaching unions are unhappy about offered payrise and strike action is an option, the school is currently risk planning for the above.

School is currently restructuring the junior phase due to the loss of 2-3 teaching staff, this will continue to give the pupils a broad general education but it may alter from year to year.

Mr Innes's Presentation, the Big Picture, was launched the end of last school year, covering three respects, our first term covered respect for people, this term we covered respect for community with an armistice presentation produced by some 3rd year pupils and presented to all school years.

Learning and Teaching, the local authority are visiting the school in December to go over how the school has performed in the last year. Harlaw senior management team will visit sixteen different 2nd year classes to capture what learning and teaching looks like for a 2nd year pupil.

Current analysis is taking place on last years SQA results, so far results show Harlaw is starting to improve against our comparitors. Each Faculty will be looking at how they are doing, how their subject is doing and how they can make a difference. With the information we can look at how upper years are doing, which courses are working and what needs to be done to prepare pupils for exams.

Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) for 3rd year pupils to be carried out.

Promoting Positive Relations Policy is currently being developed by staff, this was first launched in September to help maintain positive relations with staff and pupils.

17 Norwegian teachers visited Harlaw and could not believe the extracurricular choices and activities available to pupils at the school. Since October pupils have taken part in ; a senior basketball trip, Defenders anti-bullying training course at Kaimhill for primary pupils, advanced higher biology trip to Aberdeen University, senior maths challenge, Vex IQ coding event, Safe Drive, Stay Alive road safety event for S5, intro into film event at Vue cinema, various career ready events, health and social care event at RGU, Northsound Energy Schools Challenge, this doesn't include the activities that take place at lunch time and after school on a regular basis.

Pupils have also been involved in the Young Inspector Programme along with Bridge of Don and Bucksburn Academies, speaking to pupils on how they see their learning and teaching.

Ross Thomson MP visited school to speak about life in politics and Kevin Stewart MSP came along to speak about CPR and Saltire awards.

06. Former Pupils Report

Apologies, full report will be available at next meeting.

07. A.O.B.

Catriona Allan attended 5th Year parents evening and spoke with careers advisor, mykidscareer.com website has lots of great resources for parents/carers, the school will update the website with this information shortly. (FL)

Parents options evening for S3/4/5/6 options to take place on 30th January.

IT workshop to take place at future meeting, date to be advised.

It was suggested at meeting that videoing Parent Council workshops may be beneficial for parents who cannot make meetings.

The school has acquired surplus office furniture and monitors from Practitioner Services (NSS).

08. Date of next meeting

24/01/19 @ 6.30pm