

**CASTLE DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL
PARENT COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting held on 15th March 2018**

Present: Mr J. King (Chairperson), Mrs S. Hall, Mrs. L. Smith, Dr. S. Little, Mrs E. Budde, Mrs S. Broatch, Mrs L. Callander, Mrs S. Ross, Mr S. Henderson, Mrs G. Hodson.

Apologies: Dr. J. Oliver, Mr D. Stevens

In Attendance: Mr J. Smith (Headteacher), Mr I Howie (Councillor), Mrs. L. Porteous (Clerk)

1. Welcome

Mr King Welcomed everyone, especially Mrs Suzanne Broatch, a new member to council. Apologies were noted.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. Any Matters Arising will be covered later in the meeting.

3. Head Teacher's Report

The Council members agreed it was very helpful to have received and read this prior to the meeting

Staffing: Mr Smith explained that overall though staffing numbers have been cut, Castle Douglas is still slightly over-staffed. The situation regarding staffing is still unclear and until those who have applied for Early Voluntary Retirement know whether they are offered this and if they accept the offer is known it is difficult for the school to plan for the next session. Because of this the whole option process has been delayed. Hopefully the Home Economics problem has been resolved with Mrs Farquhar (Dalry - timetable manoeuvring) and working extra hours, also Ms Isla Porteous from Kirkcudbright (moving surplus hours from Kirkcudbright Academy to CDHS). It is unknown whether the school can afford a PT Humanities - Mr Bell will continue his role as Acting PT until the summer.

School Improvement Plan: This is on track for this session. The school needs to move forward with the proposal for Nurture and PEF needs more consultation prior to spending the funds available. It was noted that many parents whose children are entitled to free school meals, do not apply once they reach secondary school age. The school are explaining to P7 parents at Gateway Meetings the need to fill in the form annually to claim this entitlement.

Dalry Partnership: Dalry have no objection to holding a joint Parent Council Meeting with Castle Douglas. There is no reason in CDHS constitution and no objections from members to this happening. Council thought that as a Dalry member already received CDHS Minutes, it would be helpful for CDHS to receive a copy of Dalry Parent Council Minutes.

Insight Update: The INSIGHT dashboard data for Castle Douglas shows a very positive picture for all of the metrics. However, when the metrics are drilled into we can identify a common message of an area where improvement could be achieved which is improvement for the 20% lower attaining pupils. Our data for attainment versus deprivation is not significant; Castle Douglas follows the National trend, however, this does support what the other metrics are telling us that there is headroom for reducing the gap in attainment between the higher and lower SIMD deciles.

Xpressions App: This is an app on smart phones and means the school can send messages free to parents. As yet, a trial with S2 parents is being run but any parent with a smart phone can download the app and use it.

Snow Days: There are a couple of lessons to be learned from the two days the school was closed. It was unfortunate the heating broke down on the Friday. Negative social media comments were not helpful. There was an issue with the back road (Milton) bus not running on the Monday – totally out with the school's control but a complaint was raised with the bus company.

Option Process: This is now underway after the aforementioned delay. S2 option forms will not be issued until maybe next term as some staffing issues need to be clarified prior to this happening. Consultation feedback from parents and pupils is on the website. Both parents and pupils liked the idea of the school day starting at 9.00 - straight into a class. The school is now able to offer SVQ at levels 4 and 5 in Horse Care, provided by Barstobrick Equestrian Centre.

Mr Smith outlined some school successes and alerted parents to a Coffee Morning on 17th March by S6 pupils to be held in the school.

The Spring concert will be held on Tuesday 20th March at 7.00 in the assembly hall. Volunteers are being sought to help serve teas and coffees.

4.,5., 6. - all covered in Head Teacher's Report.

7. S4 Prelims

It was noted by Council Members that some prelim results had been very bad. Mr Smith explained Nat 5 has changed this year and some subjects have a 3 hour exam. No in-school assessments are going towards exam results. If poor results are caused by poor performance on the part of a teacher, there are procedures which would be implemented. Management are monitoring some situations. If pupils perform poorly the school does not look solely at exam results but the body of evidence prior to deciding the best option for a pupil. This may be to drop a level or to take a higher over two years rather than one.

Council agreed the school have some excellent teachers, many of whom go out of their way to help pupils and this is very much appreciated by parents.

Mr Smith explained the benefits of giving predicted grades and why the school does this.

8. Informal Database of Volunteer Speakers

The Parent Forum suggested building a database of parents who would be willing to come into school to speak to pupils about their careers. Mr Smith thought this would be a good idea and helpful to some pupils who have difficulty making career choices.

9. Any Other Business

Volunteers to help serve Teas and coffee at the Spring Concert are Gilli Hodson and Susan Hall. Gilli will buy £30 worth of Shortbread biscuits at Irvings Shop.

When asked if the school could fund buying new netball outfits, Mr Smith told the council the school has absolutely no money and running buses to sporting events is a real problem. Fund raising needs to be done to help pay for this.

Young teachers need to sit a mini bus driving test which costs about £1000. Older teachers can do Midas training through the council. Mr Smith to look into the cost of parents doing Midas training - if they were willing to help drive a mini bus.

All members of the Parent council said they were willing to help with fund raising.

Perhaps worth school applying to Tesco for funding with new sports trips.

Mr Iain Howie mentioned the Winifred Kennedy Trust which has funds to help anyone with a disability or caring for someone with a disability. Forms available from Messrs. Hewats.

Castle Douglas Scout Troup are going to Kenya to help build toilets. Mr Smith gave his approval to fund raising for this within the school.

There being no other business the meeting closed.

Date of next Meeting is 24th May