

**Firrhill High School  
Parent Council Annual General Meeting  
Draft Minutes 5 September 2016**



**Present:** Catriona Luff (chair), Alison Brookes, Rachael Barlow, Lorraine Horsburgh, Julie Darling, Marta Ahamefule, Gordon Jardine, Margaret Hampton, Magz Smith, Carolyn Hargest, Susan Bailey, Cheryl Primrose, Ian Gebbie, Romy Ritchie, Carrie Wade, Marianthy Yiannopoulou, Stephen Preston, Fred Bell, Ruth Gebbie.

**Apologies:** Jane Williams, Lucie St. John, Paul Grice, Ruth McQuillan, Councillor Elaine Aitken, Amanda Leslie,

**Staff:** Ros Ranger, Graham Hamilton

**Secretary:** Anne McTiernan

**Distribution:** All above plus Cllr R Lewis, Cllr G Corbett, Cllr A Burns, Cllr D Key, Cllr J Rust.

- **Apologies**

As above.

- **Welcome**

Catriona welcomed everybody to the 2016 Annual General Meeting of the Parent Council and the Parent Teacher's Association. See separate minute of the PTA AGM.

- **Minutes of 2015 AGM**

The minutes of last years AGM were reviewed. There were no matters arising. Catriona Luff proposed and Fred Bell seconded acceptance of the minutes.

- **Chair's report from Catriona Luff**

Catriona summarised the highlights of the previous year.

There have been a number of staff changes over the last year. In particular, Nick McLellan was Acting Head Teacher until Graham Hamilton took up post.

There were the significant challenges faced by staff in managing to deliver lessons when part of the building was closed down following the concerns about the safety of the building. Thanks to all the staff for their flexibility and creativity during this difficult period.

In October, the Parent Council ran the first S1 Parent's night. This was an opportunity for new S1 parents to meet up in an informal setting to discuss their initial

experiences and to hear from school staff. Feedback from parents was positive and there are plans to run a similar event this year.

The school hosted the Holocaust Memorial Day with support from staff, students, PTA and Parent Council members.

The Gold Duke of Edinburgh is up and running with 9 students about to complete the award.

Trips to Vietnam and Iceland are planned for 2017.

Work on the website is on-going.

Catriona took the opportunity to thank all those involved in the Parent Council. In particular thanks to Ruth and the PTA for their work in supporting school events and fund raising. Thanks also to Graham and Ros, Margaret the treasurer, Anne the secretary, Stephen and Susan for attending external meetings. Catriona advised that she would be standing down as Chair. The meeting noted their thanks to Catriona for her hard work during her time as Chair.

- **South West neighbourhood meetings- Stephen Preston**

There are two meetings a term and Stephen attends on behalf of the Parent Council. It is an opportunity for High Schools in the neighbourhood, Balerno and Currie and linked primary schools to meet to discuss shared issues.

- **Consultative Committee with Parents meetings**

These meetings take place three or four times a year and Catriona Luff and Stephen Preston attend. The committee is a key part of the Parental Engagement Strategy of the Council and an opportunity for parental involvement in shaping local education policy.

- **Treasurer's report**

Margaret Hampton presented the treasurer's report. See separate report. There were no questions.

- **Working Groups**

A huge part of the parent council work is undertaken by a variety of working groups. The groups have been set up to allow parents to support the school in lots of different areas. Each group fed back on the work they have done in the past year:

**Environment Group- Carolyn Hargest (See separate report)**

The Environment Group works directly with pupils and staff and links in with the school's Eco Committee. The group is involved in a number of projects including supporting the school to care for the gardens, e.g. Anne Frank garden, litter collection, and other external projects, e.g. the Milestone House Shed Project, arranging collection of glasses and sunglasses once a year in March for Vision Aid and swift

nest boxes. The group is also involved in organising the Rag Bag Unit for the school to raise funds for the school and the work of the Eco Group. Work on the wetlands continues. Carolyn has also taken a lead in producing the Firrhill Newsletter and also leads on the Piping group which involves children from cluster Primary schools. New members are always welcome and no specific skills required.

### **Business and Enterprise Group- Mairi Yiannopoulou**

The main task of this group is organising the annual Job Fair in June each year, which involves 50+ parents sharing with pupils information about their jobs/careers. The Job Fair has received positive feedback from pupils and parents. This group also arranges for parents to give advice on CVs and facilitates mock interviews. The group are keen to hear from anybody who would like to attend future Job Fairs.

### **Communication group**

The Communications Group is responsible for reviewing and keeping the website up to date. At present the website is moving over to new format designed by the council. There have been significant delays in this moving forward which has been frustrating for the group.

### **Health and Well Being**

The group runs 2/3 events a year giving parents the opportunity to discuss and get advice on matters pertinent to the health and well-being of teenagers, e.g. loss and bereavement, study techniques, the teenage brain. One of the most successful events this year has been the course Raising Teens with Confidence run by Ruth McQuillan and Morag Carmichael. About 40 people attended over a 6-week period. They hope to run this course again. They also ran a session on Internet safety in October 2016.

The Parent Council is always keen to hear from parents who want to get involved. If you cannot commit to the Parent Council, you can get involved in the working groups, which meet four times a year. The Parent Council are keen to hear from parents if they have ideas about any other working groups that would benefit the school.

- **Parent Council Membership**

Catriona thanked Parent Council members Paul Grice and Mari Yiannopoulou, who are stepping down from the parent council this year. Catriona is stepping down as Chair; Anne McTiernan is stepping down as Secretary and Margaret Hampton's time as Treasurer has also come to an end. There were six vacancies on the Parent Council. Catriona and Anne advised that they were happy to continue to be part of the Parent Council and Margaret would be happy to remain as Treasurer if there is nobody else interested in the role. Fred Bell noted his interest in the post of Chair. Julie Darling and Alison Brookes are interested in being part of the Parent Council. Membership and office bearers will be agreed at the next Parent Council meeting taking place immediately after the AGM.

- **A.O.C.B.**

There were no other agenda items.