

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

Present: Catriona Luff and Fred Bell (chair), Margaret Hampton, Magz Smith, Carolyn Hargest, Susan Bailey, Romy Ritchie, Ian Gebbie, Stephen Preston, Julie Darling, Rachael Barlow, Gordon Jardine, Alison Brookes,

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

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 and Welcome**

Apologies as above. New members were welcomed to the meeting.

- **Minutes of meeting on 6 June 2016**

The School Fund Meeting has had one meeting and another date has to be arranged.

There were no matters arising.

Minutes agreed.

- **Parent Council AGM**

The following were confirmed as members of the Parent Council for 2016-17:

Julie Darling
Romy Ritchie
Carolyn Hargest
Margaret Hampton
Steve Preston
Catriona Luff
Magz Smith
Anne McTiernan
Jane Williams

The following were confirmed as ex-officio members:

Ian Gebbie
Ruth Gebbie PTA representative
Possibly Alison Brookes and Lucie St. John

The following were agreed as office bearers:

Chair: Fred Bell. (Nominated by Catriona Luff, seconded by Susan Bailey)

Vice-chair: Susan Bailey (Nominated by Catriona Luff, seconded by Anne McTiernan.)

Treasurer: Margaret Hampton (Nominated by Catriona Luff, seconded by Magz Smith.)

Secretary: Julie Darling (Nominated by Susan Bailey, seconded by Margaret Hampton.)

Catriona handed over chair of the meeting to Fred Bell.

Fred noted his thanks to Catriona for all her hard work and dedication in chairing the Parent Council over the last three years.

- **Schedule of meetings**

There are five meetings over the course of the school year from 7.00 to 9.00 in the school library. There are working group meetings in between the Parent Council meetings.

Dates for the year ahead:

Parent Council meetings:

5th September 2016 (AGM)

7th November 2016

23rd January 2017

24th April 2017

5th June 2017

Working group meetings

26th September 2016

21st November 2016

6th February 2017

8th May 2017

- **Counselling service in the school**

Graham advised that there has been a problem with the continuous funding of counselling in the school. Counselling is provided by Gail Taylor (a member of the church) and Mike Forrester. Gail had also written to the Parent Council looking for ideas about funding options. This is at an annual cost of £22,000. As the Local Authority is no longer funding this, Graham had put a ceiling of £10,000. For the coming year extra funding (£25,000) has been provided to the school from the closure

of Wellington but this will be for one year only. Parent Council members agreed that it was a very useful service and one the Parent Council would want to support. There has been an increase in mental health problems for young people alongside a decrease in the service available from CAMHS and a drop in funding for voluntary organisations. There are the extra pressures with exams and the impact of the assessments at National 5 level and the fear of failure. The benefit of school counselling is that it is available for all students, is easily accessible in the school and is less stigmatising than alternative counselling services. Graham advised that there has been an increase in demand for the service. Pupils and teachers can make referrals and parents are involved in the process. For the year ahead we will be fortunate in that Mike Forrester will also have two student counsellors with him who are completing their accreditation. Graham is looking for ideas as to how we might identify a sustainable funding model beyond this year. It was agreed that it would be helpful to discuss at the next neighbourhood meeting to hear how other schools fund counselling. Catriona will reply to Gail Taylor's letter.

- **Firrhill Sports Club**

Concerns were raised about the organisation of sports clubs in the school. The expectation is that parents need to volunteer to assist with extra curricular sports clubs, as it is difficult to get staff to commit, given activities are out of normal school hours. The football and hockey are in the main run by parents and students. There is currently no information on the website about the clubs and it is difficult to find out what clubs are available through the school. It was noted that Firrhill is a tennis academy but parents were not aware of this. It was agreed, given the limited time that this item would be put on the agenda for a future meeting.

- **Head Teacher's Report**

Graham shared his report with the meeting (attached with exam results analysis).

School roll: There are 1132 pupils enrolled in the school this year up 25 on last year. As staff is based on pupil numbers this means staffing should go up. They are already covering all of the classes so will be able to make use of the money in different ways.

Exam results: Graham updated on exam results (see attached figures). He will be able to provide more detail at the next meeting after he has received analysis from each faculty. The task is to consider how to improve and build on current successes. Graham also spoke about the need to address under achievement in some areas of the school linked to pupils from families in areas of multiple deprivation. Pupils from Decimal 1-3 tend not to take Highers. This is a complex picture linked to lack of ambition and there is a need to change the mindset of these pupils.

Catriona said it was important to work with families starting from nursery education to encourage parents to have higher expectations for their children. The school needs to create pathways that push to National 5s not just opting for National 4s. Expectations need to be high from Day 1. It should be "when" a pupil will achieve something not "if". It would not need a major shift for there to be a significant improvement in exam results, a 5% increase in results would be significant. Graham advised that despite the disruption last year results are good. Firrhill is 6th in the city

out of 23 schools. If everybody who sat 5 Highers got 5 Highers, Firrhill would have been second in the city. The school will get information from Insight and information on virtual comparator schools in the middle of September and will be able to offer more analysis for the next meeting.

Business support: There has been a 10% reduction in funding this year with a further 30% reduction next year. Business support has now moved to a Locality model and not based entirely in the school. This is difficult to manage and agreed this was a subject for more detailed discussion at the next meeting.

- **Assessments pressure for National 5s**

Alison Murphy joined the meeting.

She wanted to attend the meeting to update the Parent Council on possible industrial dispute and the reasons for taking action. Teachers feel that they are spending too much time on things that are not about learning and teaching. The burden of assessment in S4, S5 and S6 is a big concern. Alison advised that there are an insane number of internal assessments and this is having a negative impact on pupils and teachers. For example in Physics, the paperwork needed to moderate has taken 100 hours to complete. There have been various meetings with unions, Scottish Government etc. and initially there was hope that a resolution would be found. The SQA are acknowledging that there is a problem. The dispute is with the SQA not their employer. Teachers are boycotting SQA training events.

Teachers would like to resolve this speedily. A reasonable compromise has been put forward and is being considered by the Scottish Government, SQA and CoSLA. If it is not resolved, teachers might have to escalate action and this would have an impact on pupils. Ideally it will be resolved over the next two months but if not there will be increased action every term. The action is taking place across Scotland in all subjects; about 60 teachers in Firrhill are involved.

There has been very little publicity about this and Alison advised it would be helpful if parents could write to their MSP pointing out the negative impact of the current assessment process. Daniel Johnson MSP has asked to attend a Parent Council meeting so he might be a useful point of contact:
daniel.johnson.msp@parliament.scot

- **AOCB**

Prefects to be discussed at the next meeting.

- **Next meetings**

Working groups meeting: 26 September at 7.00

Parent Council meeting: 7th November at 7.00.

Headteacher's Report – 5 September 2016

Staffing Matters

Sarah Kerr	PSL
Katie Howells	CL Languages
Alan Koturbasz	Maths
Fiona McPhee	Drama (p/t)
Alison Thayne	English

Anthony Courtney Music

Lorna Eadie	Biology
Alice Jones	English
Kathryn Ganarin	Geography
Amy Liggett	Maths
Jessica Bennett	Music
Hannah McCaig	PE
Matilda Kirkwood	Art & Design

p/t Maths, p/t Languages and f/t Music – all posts filled. Awaiting paperwork to be finalised. Update – Mr Courtney has taken up his permanent f/t post in Music.

2016 Results

Essentially stand-still from last year. Slight dip in 5+ at Lv5 and at 5+ at Lv6. Up slightly in 1+ at Lv7.

S6 results up strongly in 1+ at Lv6 and 5+ at Lv6. No obvious impact on pupils as a result of the building disruption.

14 pupils achieved 8 N5 at grade A

11 pupils achieved 5 H at grade A

2 pupils achieved 3 AH at grade A

24 marker reviews submitted (two priority unsuccessful) – awaiting the outcome of others.

Some very good results across the school e.g. English, History, German, French, Geography.

QA1 meetings (for Faculties to report on their results and next steps for improvement) begin 26/9 – 14/10.

Building Works

Refurbishment of the assembly hall and dining area essentially completed before pupils returned. Some minor snagging items to be addressed.

Home Economics has been refurbished – some snagging to sort out but otherwise looking great. Feedback from staff and pupils has been very positive so far.

Unexpected decant from drama and the fabric room. Relocated to Languages and to PE/TU.

SLT Remits

Slight reorganisation of remits

Key items – JS Pupils Support, RP Curriculum, NM – Raising Attainment & Closing the Gap

English/Bus Comp swap between RP & JS

Year oversight: JS 1&4, RP 2&5, NM 3&6

Development Plan – Major Items

Curriculum Review – top to bottom analysis of what we do, when and with whom.

Key elements to consider regarding suitable learner pathways, closing the gap and raising attainment.

Behaviour Policy Review

Rights Respecting School – (Nov 7 meeting)

Reporting

Reducing Bureaucracy

PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Adopt/Adapt) approach encouraged across the school

Graham Hamilton

05.09.16

FIRRHILL HIGH SCHOOL

Examination Analyses 2014-2016 (August 2016)

S4 (n=196)	5+ at level 3 or better			5+ at level 4 or better			5+ at level 5 or better		
	13-14	14-15	15-16	13-14	14-15	15-16	13-14	14-15	15-16
Number	172	179	172	166	173	159	95	108	110
%	92	89	80*	88	86	73*	49	54	51

* Retrospective N4 qualifications still to be added – these figures will rise substantially

S5 (n=201)	1+ at level 6 or better			3+ at level 6 or better			5+ at level 6 or better		
	13-14	14-15	15-16	13-14	14-15	15-16	13-14	14-15	15-16
Number	106	117	124	68	81	88	34	45	49
%	60	62	62	37	43	43	19	24	23

S6 (n=189)	3+ at level 6 or better			5+ at level 6 or better			1+ at level 7 or better		
	13-14	14-15	15-16	13-14	14-15	15-16	13-14	14-15	15-16
Number	-	94	96	-	63	74	64	46	51
%	55	51	51	45	34	42	31	25	27