

Grantown Grammar School Parent Council
Minutes of meeting 25th May 2021

7.30pm via Zoom

Present:

Trustees of Parent Council:

Nicola Dingwall (chair)

Donald McDonald

Sylvia Macfarlane

Gordon Strang

Jane Cox (Treasurer)

Jaci Douglas (minute taker)

Neville Elstone

Sara Brown

Tanja Perch

In attendance:

Cllr Muriel Cockburn, B&S Councillor

Claire McGonigal (Headteacher)

Mike Causey – parent forum member

Welcome

Nicola Dingwall, Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

Apologies

Apologies: Harriet Moll , Catherine McAuly-Brand, Robinson Ros and Roz Watson,

Minutes from meeting of 23rd March 2021

Agree as accurate - proposed by Gordon and seconded by Donald.

Matters arising

Outdoor equipment fund – thanks from Jaz Hepburn for everyone who supported incl Jane.
and thanks from Chair to VABS (Jaci to pass on)

No further matters arising that are not on the agenda incl SQA, Prom, fundraising

Finance report

Jane Cox, treasurer updated that the account Balance is: **£11,747.16**

Movements this month are:

£1,131.88 from the Covid Fund for Comfort Packs for students;

£7990.31 from the Covid Fund for Outdoor Ed equipment.

Both grants handled by VABS and money has been paid to the PC - transfers of the same amounts made to GGS Fund for both.

Jane reminded that £3 340.12 is ring-fenced within the balance (so £8407.04 unrestricted) for the history project. Claire to look at proposals for a local history project (History of Grantown, battles, logging all walking from school) that could use funding for new walking boots etc as well as a small prize.

Funding request from Claire: Had been hoping for sponsorship to cover costs of Marquee for 3 end of term events - £3000 total cost – large amount but keen to provide these opportunities for end of term celebrations.

Replying to questions, Claire confirmed there were no other funding requests coming through and previous outgoings were not needed this year such as medals for sports day as they were being made in house, prizegiving – looking at something different as book tokens not so popular so no cost there.

Some trusts that could be approached for funding – Donald to approach Dulnain Bridge Dev Trust, Community Council etc for additional funding – could other villages be approached for contributions from their local funds/wind farm funding? Nicola to liaise with Donald.

PC agreed unanimously to request up to £3000 to fill any deficit after other avenues have been explored.

Headteachers Report

Claire McGonigal gave the following report

Assessment Windows 1 and 2

- Assessment Window 1 over
- Assessment Window 2 started on Monday 24th May
- 2 full assessment chances is unique to GGS
- Huge amount of work for pupils, but many have the grades they were going for after first assessment window and aren't sitting assessments in 2nd
- Letters are being given to pupils per subject as soon as we have the assessments from Window 1 marked and at least internally double marked
- Huge amount of work for staff - everything is at least double marked internally, then samples jointly moderated between schools, again other school's samples are double marked, and finally a verification sample for SQA.
- Provisional Results of final grades will be shared with parents and pupils on 21 June 2021 – and bar any unforeseen issue this will be grade they get from SQA
- Far more intense than a usual exam diet for everyone.
- Coursework can be used to 'back up' a grade but needs to be very close
- All pupils were able to choose a small 'comfort' gift for stress (from VABS comfort bags) and also release stress with some kit such as swingball, quoits etc
- Questions from PC:

- ◇ Cllr Cockburn – any 6th year student wanting to repeat a year? Claire -None this year
- ◇ Gordon – any consideration for splitting assessments up into smaller chunks so not a whole paper at a time – Claire - problem is the time as trying to give pupils a day between an assessment and then need marked, verified and to SQA. Any individual requests get in touch as can look at variations according to personal circumstances
- ◇ Letters in some way helpful but staff specific – some had taken time to talk to the pupil and so a ‘red’ was not always need to panic- some departments not done so well- Claire to look into it
- ◇ Nicola – letter with target grades was helpful but also complicated
- ◇ Compliment the art department – who were clear about grade changes – can other teachers be realistic about what is possible - Claire -other subjects do not have this flexibility
- ◇ Media reports on inconsistencies across Scotland which are worrying for parents (e.g. study leave, assisted study in some schools) – any scope for this in GGS? Claire - supported study /drop ins is offered by most departments but before and after school is hard due to school buses etc.
- ◇ Departments need to highlight the support offered – Claire to chase. Suggested putting onto google classroom so parents can see on parents email?
- ◇ Any news on appeals procedure? Claire - unsatisfactory that SQA not get info out yet – Claire will get gather info when it comes in and run it by a sub group of senior pupils parents on PC to ensure it is understandable and then share wider. It is a human right to have an appeals process so there must be something in place.

General school life

- Lunchtime clubs have started up
- Some negative behaviour - fire alarms and falling outs
- BGE pupils in general being extremely accommodating of and supportive to Senior Pupils doing assessments
- Outdoor Education has resumed and pupils are back out on rotation – good for them to have a bit of normality.
- 2 inservice days - Monday 7 and Tuesday 8 June

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

- Together with school calendar / Working Time Agreement will be written in August
- Mainly focus on literacy, numeracy, HWB
- Also focus tracking, reporting, target setting - attainment and achievement
- Getting basics right again after the last 2 years
- It will take about 2 academic years to get school calendar back in right order for parents’ nights etc as at the start of the year BGE will take precedence

- Pupils, staff, parents and partners will have input into the SIP – will also be at PC meeting in August

Change of Timetable - 14 June

- Last day for current S6 is 11 June 2021
- New timetable and pupils go into new year group on Monday 14 June
- New common room for S6
- From August movement of library, new HWB Hub, new literacy Hub – will be able to 'hang out' in these new spaces
- 14 June - Sports Week with Sports Day on Thursday 17 June
- 21 June - Junior summer dance
- 22 June - Senior Graduation - only S6 and leavers parents
- 23 June - Senior Prom 'Our Last Summer' –invite pupils who have left through year
- 25 June - End of term

Question: Muriel Cockburn – what are GGS Summer of HOPE plans? Claire - All GGS pupils will get a HLH voucher and P7s will get some outdoor ed. Cllr Cockburn said she was keen funding was shared in local areas and utilised to support the children and young people in the town.

Donald McDonald – with fire alarms going off – policy of not allowing pupils to go to toilet unaccompanied seems to punish those who have done no wrong. Claire -this rule will be ended soon but needed to show consequences of some pupils actions as alarms going off twice, once during assessments, was extremely worrying.

Highland Parents Council Partnership – update from meeting

Nicola attends these on behalf of GGS – last meeting was a presentation by THC Education Dept on the Assessment process. Main issues as inconsistencies across Highland as well as Scotland and not hugely reassured by THC officers.

Issues for discussion

PC Admin:

Nicola explained that all parents are members of the Parents Forum and the Parent Council are nominated and elected from that Forum and are formal trustees of the Parent Council. Any parent Forum can attend a PC meeting but cannot vote but can be co-opted over the year as per our constitution.

Notice of the PC meeting goes onto the PC Facebook page but there is an invite sent directly to all Parent forum members. Parents can contact the PC and ask to attend or else be co opted onto the PC.

Difficult to fill office bearers positions and as this is the last meeting until Sept, be good for people to be thinking about who will take over these posts including time for a handover.

Jane and Nicola will both be standing down next year when their children leave the school.

Harriet is struggling to fulfill the secretarial or admin role.

Claire to see if there is anyone who can take on admin/clerk which has a small honorarium

Nicola will write a newsletter (unless anyone wants to help) and get that out to all parents shortly to update on work of PC

Fundraising – covered earlier in agenda but PC and Claire to think of projects and ask pupils for next term and we can discuss at next meeting.

AOCB

Futures for Students careers fair, 8th June for 5th and 6th year. Claire to check

Vote of thanks – Nicola passed on her thanks to Cllr Cockburn for attending and to Claire and the staff for their hard work.

Huge thanks and a sad goodbye to Gordon Strang who is leaving the town for new adventures – grateful thanks for all his support in both his role supporting the school and in his capacity as trustee and best of luck from everyone.

Gordon Strang therefore notified his intention to tender his resignation at end of term

Date of next meeting

7th September 7.30pm – still over zoom or a mixture of virtual and in person – especially for those parents who are new and have never met any one.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm