

Parent Council

TUESDAY 8/11/2022

Forrester High School

Present; Lorraine Kneebone (Chair), Jackie Barn (Deputy Chair), Stephen Rafferty, Sandra Donaldson (Secretary), Samm Hamilton, Letitia Wilson, Hilary Brown, Julie Scott, Gillian Murray, David Givan, Susan Stevens, James Hardacre, Sarah Segovia, April Forsyth, Donna Lumsden, Guests Chelsea Wilson (SfL Teacher), Craig McDonald (Maths Teacher), Cllr Euan Hyslop

1. Welcome Meeting commenced at 7pm. Welcome to new attendees.

2. Apologies/ action points. Emma Spence (Treasurer), Julie Scott, Kate MacPhie

- JB, LK and KMacP to discuss coffee meeting for parents – To be discussed later
- JB and JH to look at PC page on new website – JB and JH now to look at – getting there but still working on it
- SR to gauge what's happening with homework and SMHW – Trying to link with Teams. Some teachers are posting twice which is why some subjects getting notified via SMHW. Teams has the facility to link up but most schools don't have the functionality. LW suggested even sending prompts when tests are coming up. Euan to ask Council about this
- KMacP to email for funding – not at the meeting and no emails received. SD to contact KMacP
- Volunteers to brainstorm for ideas how to reach out to wider parental groups. Feedback from Hearing Parents Voices Connect forum about running campaigns. Powerpoint sent out but all schools finding it hard to reach out to parents who aren't engaging with the school/PC. Still considering approaching clubs outside school
- Volunteers for attendance at parental evenings. No volunteers yet – SD to email dates
- Annual comms re role of PC – c/f
- SR to canvass interest for replacement for IMacG - Chelsea Wilson is Irene's support for learning role and has agreed to attend PC meetings

3. Treasurer Report and Funding Award

Craig McDonald attended meeting for funding for basketball. The basketball started up again after Covid 19 restrictions were lifted. Started of with 15-20 pupils but has now grown to 64 across 3 groups. In the Edinburgh School Basketball league with 14 fixtures. The Forrester Teams currently only have bibs to wear from the PE department whereas other teams have full kits. The teams are enthusiastic but disappointed that they don't have kits like the other teams. The Bibs don't even have logos.

Currently 2 teams are fully up and running:

Junior Boys

Senior Boys

The girls team is relatively new and are still looking for fixtures.

RJL is a local company and full kits would cost £300-£450 per group. Bigger companies have quoted approx. £500 so the quote by the local company is very reasonable. The bid is also requesting for new basketballs as they are currently using the same balls as the PE Department which are well used, and have been kicked around, becoming deflated and deformed. There is a school deal of £220 for a set of 10 BBL basketballs. Whilst they are being encouraged to do fundraising, additional funding would be greatly appreciated.

Background to funding given by LK for new members of PC to explain in the past funding has been given for:

Badge makers

German books

Easter snacks

The ask is for £300 per Team and there are 2 teams, which would be £600.

Cllr Hyslop suggested approaching Dower House/Corstorphine Trust which is a benevolent fund and he is aware they recently made a donation to Corstorphine Dynamos. Total funding for strips and basketballs would be £300 x 2 for strips and £220 for balls - £820. Unsure whether balance of £1433 was before or after latest award from Council – SD to email ES to find out balance.

As far as sponsorship from local businesses, the school cannot approach them and this needs to be done through PC. Reach out to local community. DG asked timescales , urgent? Also pointed out that although girls team more recent, should consider putting something in place for them also for equality and anticipate a future funding bid. CM to email powerpoint presentation to JB who will approach the fund.

There is a further bid for covering the cost of the football referees. The school wants to have as many activities as possible. There are currently teams in S1, S3 and S4-6. Trying to get one organised for S2. Don't want to ask the parents/pupils for money because this might discourage them from playing, however they also require strips, and there are referee fees of £30 per week which are currently being paid by the teachers (came to light also being paid by teachers for basketball referee fees).

The fees are due for home games and cannot be funded by the school. If there are no volunteer parents need to pay the referees and pay in cash. Current system not sustainable. The S3 parents are looking after that team. The house captains can be used as coaches. Struggling to get volunteers for S1. Therefore for 10 home games, this will cost £300. This is not as much of an issue for the seniors so mostly S1 funding at this point.

The school is currently looking to get refereeing into the curriculum. All teams become ambassadors for the school. Long term plan needed – sponsorship? Active Schools won't help. PC all agree funding should be given but to look for grants/sponsorship also. JB to approach Corstorphine Trust/Rotary Club.

Final funding proposal – parent night representation of PC – dates to be emailed out as previously discussed, but LK thought it might be an idea if the HE department could make pots of soup to dish out, with PC providing funding for the ingredients. Have already missed the S1 parent night and think the S4 is on 24 November.

4. Headteacher's Report:

Staffing

- SR highlighted some of the issues regarding the onboarding of staff. He explained that delays, including the PVG process were outwith the school's control
- The CDT post has been advertised 3 times
- We are not really seeing a bank of staff going back to teaching or coming out of retirement
- The school is doing what it can to minimise the impact of staff shortages by, for example, rotating classes
- LK said that staffing was raised at the locality group and that this is affecting all schools.
- The amount of lead time for positions is proving challenging
- There is a task force between Scottish Government and local Council but there is understaffing across the country.
- There are various levels of approval and this has recently change with an additional level added. This has been improved somewhat as SR is now able to approve at the initial level.
- Schools are not allowed to refuse particular supply teachers so it is difficult to ensure they are always suitable
- LK suggested that there doesn't seem like there is workforce planning – HB said when she qualified for her degree there were only 6 teachers qualifying for maths and 60 for Biology. HB also highlighted the issue of teachers leaving to work abroad due to pay
- Universities getting funding but not plugging gaps in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)
- SR and EH to liaise for a submission/report/motion to Amanda Hatton, Head of Education
- PC to pull together an email outlining the issues and DG happy to look over
- Gaps in staffing has also unsettled students and put an additional strain on our teachers

On 15-16 November there will be a shared classroom experience visit by the Edinburgh Learns Team. It is likely that Inspectors are due next year. Currently a review of when all schools were last inspected. The Edinburgh Learns team will be 5-6 people and will not be visiting student teachers or cover teachers. The visit will be supportive but challenging and will hopefully present an honest picture. This will develop action points and will focus on 2-3 things. SR writing to parents tomorrow and school is having assemblies to reinforce school values.

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

Course choices are currently made in both S3 and S4 but some schools don't do this. We would like to move to a position where courses are chosen in S3, and these would be changed going into S4 only in exceptional circumstances. HB stated that in some schools they are sitting NAT5 Numeracy now.

Tariff points have become a proxy for student outcomes, some schools are getting students to take more courses because more Highers, for example, boost their tariffs. There is an improvement plan on the website. There are challenges from teams outside the school as to whether what's in the plan challenges pupils.

Duke of Edinburgh currently has 60 pupils on the course and 3 fully trained members of staff.

As time was running behind, SR will send out full action plan to SD to send out to PC.

5. Wellbeing and Equality and Enhanced Support Base Updates

Attendance in school is a National issue and this has worsened since Covid 19. Might be due to different work patterns etc. Some pupils have stopped coming into school and when in S4, Education Welfare won't get involved. The school is supporting through phone calls/text/emails/planning meetings. This is causing a huge resource strain on Guidance Teachers. The school's Pupil Support Officer has been successful in getting some pupils back into school and we have recently been allocated an Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

YPI is going well and volunteers required for judging. There will be presentations on 15 December 6-8pm and volunteers required for judging. LK gave background about winner and £3,000 paid to the winning charity. Unsure whether judging is actually on 15 December. SD to confirm with KMacP

6. PC workstream Priorities Discussion.

Holly Nicholson unable to attend meeting regarding survey – need to find out appetite for youth club – anonymous questionnaire - c/f. Parent Zone needs a lot of work. Getting there but further meeting and ask to launch. CV writing is going well and everyone JS has helped has managed to get a job. She can offer help for part-time work as well as full-time.

7. Teacher shortages and Time to Recruit

This was covered in the Head Teacher update

8. Any Other Business

- National Discussion on Education closing on 5 December – reminder. Link to be sent out
- Vaping in schools/school premises. Raised at Council and motion passed for information links/posters. Linda Bauld reached out to by Craigmount. Discussions underway – will maybe be running Zoom call

9. Teacher Recognition

Meeting ended abruptly at 9.05 and unable to cover this

Action points

- JB, LK and KMacP to discuss coffee morning meeting for parents
- JB and JH to meet with SR to continue working on PC page
- SR to see if functionality on Teams for homework can be done
- SD to email KMacP to see what PC funding required
- Volunteers to brainstorm for ideas how to reach out to wider parental groups
- Volunteers for attendance at parental evenings – SD to email out dates
- Annual comms re role of PC
- SD to email ES for account balance
- JB to approach Corstorphine Trust/Rotary Club
- SD to email dates of parents nights for volunteers
- SR and EH to liaise for a submission/report/motion to Amanda Hatton – Head of Education
- PC to pull together email to Council and DG to look over
- SR to send action plan to SD to send out to PC
- SD to confirm with KMacP whether judging of YPI is also on 15 December, same night as presentations.
- SD to send out reminder about National discussion on education survey closing 5 December

Proposed dates of PC meetings:

20 September 2022

8 November 2022

10 January 2023

7 March 2023

25 April 2023

13 June 2023 (AGM)