

Abbey Grange Academy

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting 18th October 2016

Present: Jenny Thornton, Mike Kemp, Marion Kemp, Janet Bove, Stephanie Cassidy, Jane Hollick, Martin Lamb, Susan Field, Catherine Kershaw-Guy

1. Chair's opening remarks:

Mike welcomed members and Jenny Thornton, who was representing Paul Cooper in his absence. He also mentioned that it was a privilege to have been invited to the recent dedication of the new Hall, which was also attended by our Bishop.

2. Apologies:

James Fenton, Timothy Jacobs, Emma Hawker, Paul Cooper, Richard Hamlin

3. Minutes and Actions from last meeting:

P.E. dept. – Jenny fed back that valuables can be locked up by teachers, but this does not include mobile phones. Changing rooms are locked during the lesson. The purchase of lockers is thought to be too expensive. PC members discussed this and felt that small lockers for phones would still be of benefit and outweigh potential cost parents may have in replacing lost phones. Suggested PTA could be approached for funding. Susan suggested small lockers for phones only can be bought in batches costing approximately £70 for 20-30 lockers.

Action – Susan Field to find more information and forward to Jenny Thornton.

Action – Jenny Thornton to discuss this further with leadership team and P.E. dept.

Website – is now up to date.

Action – PC will keep this as standing agenda item to continuously review and check.

Abbey Grange Facebook page – PC members made aware that any information to be added will go via school administration for approval so may take a couple of days to show on the page.

Minutes have been approved.

4. Matters arising:

PTA winter fair poster – Stephanie brought up issue on behalf of PTA. Unsure if e-mails to Alastair are being actioned. Jenny advised that the I.T. team has new members and roles have been divided across the team.

Action – Jenny will clarify with I.T. team and get actioned that winter fair poster added to PTA webpage. She will also liaise with Tracy Wood regarding sending letters out.

Milk planners – School is trying to rectify initial problem of homework not being deleted off student's planners once it has been marked as 'done' or 'handed in'. Individual teachers have to delete work on student planners and tests have been done where staff have deleted work, and this has reduced list in students' milk planner homework page.

There has been the odd occasion where teachers have added attachments to homework on milk planners and students have been unable to open them. Jenny clarified that teachers have been advised to save this information in digital resources, where students can easily access it. PC members mentioned that when homework is saved in a folder it appears that other students can access this information.

Action – Jenny to check whether this is the case and feed back to leadership team.

5. Parent Engagement

A general discussion was held on the challenges faced by a city wide school and the wish for Parent Council to become more representative of the school's ethnic and social mix.

It is felt that parents are able to engage with the school through its up to date website, and part of the PC remit is to monitor this and highlight areas to the school where the website is not up to date. Jenny clarified that only a few of the parents of Abbey Grange students have no I.T. access, but that this has been further reduced by provision of iPads to students (thus information can be shared at home. iPads are now provided to year 7, 8, and 9 students).

It is felt that parents may not have understanding of what Parent Council does, and therefore will not be approaching us with queries/ engaging with PC. The following have been suggested to overcome this:

- Clearer presence of PC members at parent's evenings.
 - Action – Marion/ Mike** to send letter to parents prior to parents' evening, informing them that PC member will be present. This letter also to include information on our role.
 - Action – Marion** to arrange for website page to include information on PC member being present at each parents' evening.
 - Action – Jenny Thornton** to arrange an order of several size M and L T-shirts, in Abbey pale blue colour, with clearly identifiable 'Parent Council' logo, for members to wear. PTA currently wear badge only.
 - Action – Marion** to feed back to PTA to discuss if they also want to have T-shirts when at refreshments stall.
- **Action – Marion** to arrange for some Parent Council information to be laminated, sheets to contained new school logo. This information to be displayed at small table where PC member will be.

PC was made aware of the links the school has with the Ethiopian community (Paul Cooper takes the lead on this) and the Ethiopian day held in July each year. There may be a way that PC can link to parents to this to develop parent engagement amongst the schools ethnic communities.

We also looked at the transition process in general; some parents bring their child to school on the first day and then look lost at the gate.

Action – Marion to discuss with PTA if a coffee morning could be planned for this day each year, run jointly by PTA and Parent Council, to support new parents.

It is further felt that parents may not fully understand the role of parent council, and therefore will not know how best to engage with it. A brief survey via 'survey monkey' will be a useful guide for PC to proceed on this topic.

Action – all members to send suggestions of questions to Marion in time for survey to go out and be completed prior to next meeting.

Action – Marion to forward survey questions to **Jenny** for final approval and **Jenny** then to forward on and arrange for survey to go out.

6. **Useful guide to Abbey Grange**

Discussion of this has been deferred to the next meeting due to time constraints. Emma Hawker had originally suggested this.

Action – Mike to contact Emma re suggestions for/ or starting the guide.

Action – Marion to arrange e-mail to go out to year 7 parents requesting information on any challenges they faced when their children started year 7 at Abbey Grange, any top tip they have or information they would like to know more about.

7. **School and staffing updates:**

SIAMS – this inspection took place at school today. The four key areas this inspection will have focused on are Christian character, collective worship, religious education, and leadership and management.

Hibret Hall – the new school Hall is now in full use! The word 'Hibret' is taken from the Ethiopian language of Amharic, and means 'Koinonia' – partnership, or community.

8. **Any other business:**

School census – issue raised by a parent that recent census completed by students had a question on 'nationality and place of birth' and felt that parents should have been advised of this. The parent has been advised to contact the school direct so this can be reported to the relevant person.

Action – Stephanie to advise the parent to e-mail Jenny Thornton, or contact school via general e-mail address.

Parent queries/requests – PC members may receive requests or issues from other parents, that they wish to have raised at a PC meeting.

Action – All members to forward these to Marion via e-mail, so they can be added to the agenda for the next meeting. If we have a contact for this parent we will also be able to reply formally when this issue has been discussed, or forward to the school if it is something that is more appropriately dealt with by someone else.

9. **Date and time of next meeting:**

Monday 14th November at 6.30pm