

St Andrew's Academy Parent Council Meeting

Monday 17th August, 2015 at 7pm

Present: D McGlinchey (chair), K Henry (HT), P McFadden (DHT), B Avarl, L Murray, J McKeeman, T Granger, A McHugh, J Kelly, J Ballantyne, S Kearns, H Valentine, P Donaghy, S Hallan (minutes), T Brogan, S McNeil, J Calder, M McAllister, P Docherty

Apologies: C Kerrigan, C Carroll

The meeting opened with introductions around the table as there were some parents attending for the first time and then the Parent Council prayer.

Minutes of the last meeting weren't discussed due to time constraints on the evening's agenda. Any comment or correction to be forwarded to the Chair.

Mobile Phone Mast

There was a brief discussion on concerns over a proposal to place a mobile phone mast near the school. Mr Henry had invited representatives from O2 and Vodafone to come along to the meeting to address concerns. It was agreed we would listen to the presentation and that we should ask why they had chosen that site, what other sites had been looked at and any other questions that arose following the presentation.

Two representatives, Ginny Hall and Sean ??, joined the meeting and started by giving out handouts which included details of the search undertaken, drawings showing the proposed 20m pole on Hurler Rd, drawings of the existing site that is to be removed, an example photo of an existing 20m pole, Radio Frequency Assessments, fact sheets and panoramic survey reports for the proposed site.

They advised that the landowner of the site where the existing mast was situated (Old Farm Road) had told them he no longer wanted it on his land so it had become necessary to find an alternative site. As it was an established network, it needs to be as close to the existing site as possible. The proposal was to relocate to Hurler Road with a 20m slim line pole and 2 cabinets. They assured us there were no health risks associated with such developments and that they have already consulted with local authorities and local residents. There were huge limitations with surrounding areas due to trees. They were unable to tell us why the existing landlord wanted them to move but they would see if they could find out.

They talked us through the sites that had been considered and reasons why they weren't suitable. It was frustrating that a couple had been discounted simply because they hadn't responded to the request.

As 90% of students come in from that direction on Hurler Road, it was suggested that an alternative position might be next to the bus stop near Kersland school (due to close), which is the other side of the road. It was accepted that there wasn't any evidence of health & safety risks from the mast but there were concerns about how much space the pole and 2 cabinets will take up on the pavements and the risk of children climbing on to the cabinets to climb over the school fence.

We also need to be mindful that EE are also on the Old Farm Road and are likely to be looking for an alternative site.

They agreed to go away and look at our suggestion of the alternative site.

Once they had left the meeting we had a brief discussion where we agreed that a 20m pole seemed extremely high and if we were to object we needed a strong reason – aesthetics, width of pavement, are cabinets likely to be bigger with 5G.

SQA Results

Mr Henry talked us through the early analysis of the results and will give us more detailed information at a later meeting. He expects the results for 4th year to increase by 15 to 16%. It was encouraging that nearly 50% students got a minimum of 5 at level 5 and he was very pleased with that result but is puzzled by the level 3 and level 4 figures. St Andrews had the second strongest set of results in the Authority.

5th Year results are looking OK and Mr Henry is expecting the target for 5 National 5's will be higher this year.

In 6th Year results were good and St Andrews is still offering the widest range of advanced higher in the Authority

The message to students will be the longer they stay on in school, the better they'll do.

Staffing Update

Mr Henry reported that the new school year has started reasonably settled. There are a couple of vacant posts but there are discussions on-going on how to fill. There are currently 10 probationers in place.

The school is looking to do more on literacy/support for children coming from primary school.

Wanda McMillan has started as new deputy head and Collette Fraser has been appointed in a substantive deputy head position. Gary Lamb has been appointed as Principal Teacher on Mathematics.

Parent Forum Meeting

Letters are going out inviting parents to attend the meeting week commencing 24th August. This is an opportunity to engage the whole parent body.

Head Teachers Report

This year the school changed timetable early and Mr Henry thanks Mr McFadden for all his hard work making this happen. In particular it has given 3rd and 4th years a really good start and allowed everyone to get back into it very quickly.

The new first years are settling in well and helpers/buddies are being assigned.

We are still receiving a high number of placing requests. The school roll is expected to settle at 1335 but at the moment 1st year (242), 2nd year (224), 3rd year (262), 4th year (254), 5th year (219), 6th year (170).

Interviews for Head Girl and Head Boy will take place soon. There have been a lot of applications and Mr Henry is hoping the outgoing Head Girl and Boy will be available to help with the interviews.

Project Helios was a great success for the school. It was entirely led by students and Mr Henry told the meeting how the weather balloon had landed on the Isle of Man and was rescued by the local vicar who collected it on his bike! It was transported over on the ferry and returned safely home to St Andrews.

The Rome music trip looked stunning and the students have asked if it can be an annual trip. They are also looking at running the Uganda Trip annually but on a smaller scale every second year. The China trip was amazing and there is a meeting this week to look at the pictures and review the trip.

Any Other Business

Mrs Valentine asked if Mr Henry was happy with the dress code of the students. He was pleased to report that the children are looking very smart and it has been a good start to the year. They will continue to try and promote blazers and address any non-uniform issues but there is a need to be mindful that there are no lockers and the recent media reports on clothing grants.

Date of next meeting

Monday 26th October 2015 at 7pm. All welcome.