

Minutes From Parent Council Meeting Held On 14th November 2016

Attending: Adam Crossley, Molly Dawson, Lisa Yeaman, Eileen Fitpatrick, Lesley Sexton, Tracy Quinn, Ray O'Neil, Gill Ryan, Claire Friel, Denise Burns, Trisha Morrison, Lisa Dick, Tracy Crossan, Neil Smith, Jo Mcgettigan, Anne Marie Mcginlay, Alie Hilda de Vires, Sharon Welsh,

Apologies Andrew Solomon and Leona Cook

The meeting opened at the later time of 6.30pm, due to an error in a text message sent from the school, with a welcome introduction, school prayer and attendance list.

1. Live n Learn & Scholar

The Parent Council discussed and agreed to organise a parents evening in order to present Live n Learn to parents. This company do workshops around exam management and study strategies and techniques with the pupils in S4-S6. It's always very popular with the pupils and the PC thought it would be great for the parents to get an insight too. This evening will be open to parents of all pupils and will be held later in January 2017. Three PC members have volunteered to arrange and attend the evening, along with Mrs Friel. It was agreed to arrange a presentation from Scholar at a later date.

2. Head Boy & Girl Update

The halloween disco called Fright Night held for the S1 – S2 pupils was well organised and well attended with some great costumes. A buddy lunch was held with the S6 pupils and their assigned S1 buddies to see how they have been coping since starting in August, a request was made for some new games for the next buddy lunch. S1 pupils are assigned S6 pupils if it is noted that they require extra help to settle into the High School, these pupils are assessed through the transition period and through PSD classes. There was a Memorial Mass and Remembrance Mass held with wreaths and a cross donated by the PTA. The S1 pupils had an Elizabethan Experience where they had a taste of schooling in the Elizabethan era and a falconry display. A Career Focus week was held with each year group concentrating on different aspects of obtaining a job, such as S2 had outside speakers coming into the school to discuss numeracy and literacy in the workplace and S5 pupils were taught CV writing and interview skills. Scott Direct has also donated an air compressor to the school to aid in the new vocational mechanics course.

3. School Website

Mrs Friel gave the parent council an update on the revised school website which took place over the school holidays. The school used the software platform WordPress to create the latest version. The pupils were consulted over the look and feel of the website and what it should contain. It was decided to simplify the menus and have sections for both pupils and parents, the faculties, beyond the classroom and a quick links section. The school can also obtain information from the website such as noting which sections are used. The faculties are responsible for keeping their sections up to date with teachers given training to take ownership of their own department's details. There is also a scrolling text line for latest news. There are quick links to resources such as GLOW and Scholar and pupils are encouraged to use the website for homework and projects

4. Feedback from Literacy & Numeracy Event

Feedback was provided regarding the event which was held for the S2 pupils to show how numeracy is used in the workplace with outside volunteers showing pupils how they use numeracy in their jobs.

It was noted that there were not enough parent volunteers and more information was needed from the school regarding the event in the hope that it would attract more parent volunteers.

5. School Menus

The school menus are devised by the local council and are based on a nutritional points based system. The parent council learned that the school doesn't have an input on the menu choices and decided that the PC could meet with the council to discuss the menus as there seemed to be a difference on the choices offered each day compared to what is advertised. The parent pay system is also not showing the correct items that the pupils are buying causing the parents to believe that their children are making poor nutritional choices when it seems that this isn't always the case as some catering staff are not correctly scanning all items that the pupils are buying and are scanning items of similar price. Mr O'Neill confirmed that the school is aware of this issue and will discuss with the person responsible for the kitchen. There was a matter raised that some pupils did not always have somewhere to sit to eat their lunch, Mr O'Neill explained that extra tables have already been purchased and pupils can ask for the extra seating. Pupils are no longer allowed to take food into classrooms as this privilege has been abused by some pupils leaving their litter behind.

6. Uniform Supply Issues

Parent Council member Lisa Dick contacted Scot Crest over the lack of availability of certain items of uniform for the new school term in August. Scot Crest replied apologising for their lack of stock explaining they had experienced issues with their main supplier. It was discussed within the parent council whether the school should stay with Scot Crest as the main uniform supplier, it was agreed we should not change suppliers at the moment, but to monitor the situation. This is a current problem as there is no stock of outdoor jackets with the maroon lining, the parent council was asked if pupils should be able to buy the jackets with the grey lining but it was agreed to keep all outdoor jackets the same and wait for the new stock to become available, the school has a small supply if pupils need any while waiting for the stock to arrive.

Uniform Bank – this has been rolled out a couple of times at school events but it has been mentioned that it would be a good idea to have a PC and PTA stand with the uniform bank at all school events with PC members volunteering to run the stand. The uniform bank is now mentioned on the school website. It has been decided that the uniform should be free but with a donation box available. There still needs to be more promotion with leaflets being left in places such as at the Alloa food bank. It was suggested that an advertising banner be used at events, Neil agreed to organise the banner with Tracy and Lisa offering their help with the printing as they both have contacts in the printing business and asking the pupil council if they have any ideas with regards to logos and slogans.

7. Car Park and Transport Update

The Stirling bus timetables are changing as of Monday 21st November with buses arriving about 5 – 10 minutes earlier at each bus stop. The new timetables will be displayed on the school website. There has been a complaint from local community about the amount of litter around the schools car park. This is not caused by the pupils but by a group calling themselves the Stirling Cruisers who are using the car park as a race track one evening each month. The Police are aware of this group and are working with Stirling Council to try to stop them from using the school car park. The Council managed to close off the car park during November and it is hoped that this has now discouraged the group from using the car park, but this will be reviewed at the next parent council meeting as the group only meet once a month.

8. Report From Mr O'Neill

The Denny study group is now up and running. It runs on a Wednesday evening with a varied group of volunteer teachers. There is a survey running on the school website for all parents. The library re-design has started with designs being sought and costings coming in from FES. The new training centre is well under construction and it is hoped should be finished by the end of December. The school is looking for business partners to help with the courses, maybe retired tradesmen to help teach the pupils. The centre will have a mechanics course downstairs and other various trades upstairs. The school is looking to approach FES for sponsorship and one of the PC members mentioned that one of their Directors is an ex-St Modan's pupil. There was a public vote in Tesco with the Autism provision being one of the candidates, the vote is now closed and the results shall be released in December. Hopefully if the autism provision wins they will receive funding for a school farm setting within the provision.

9. AOB

One PC member raised the subject of the grading on the tracking reports not being consistent with the comments made by teachers at parents evenings. Mr O'Neill and Mrs Friel advised that parents who have any questions about tracking should contact the school.

A parent also commented that not all events held outside the school but attended by St Modan's pupils were being promoted and celebrated. The PC was advised that a great deal of time and effort is spent celebrating all achievements of young people both in and out of school but inevitably not all will be captured. It was suggested by the PC that these events should be tweeted by parents copying in @stmodans so that the school is made aware to re-tweet to all followers.

A parent commented that there was little access to PSD teachers on Parent Information Evenings since not all staff attend these. Mr O'Neill explained that teachers were contracted to a 35hr working week and worked well beyond their contractual hours, including providing a very wide range of voluntary activities such as supported study, clubs etc through good will. Teachers are not required to attend all school events but this session it has been negotiated with staff associations that all teaching staff will attend at least one of 3 information events in the session over and above the usual parents nights etc. Parents were reminded to contact PSD teachers if they have any concerns about their child.

The date for the next meeting has been set for 20th January at 6.15pm.

