

Dalry Schools Parent Council

Meeting, 22nd November 2018

TL;DR (Too Long; Didn't Read) Minutes

Primary

- ◆ The librarian is leaving and won't be replaced.
- ◆ Consultation on a new school day is coming. No change to start, end or total class time, but a shorter lunch break and longer morning/afternoon breaks to balance up teaching sessions.
- ◆ There will be meeting after school for all primary parents in December for a general update and to start a playground improvement project.

Secondary

- ◆ The librarian is leaving and won't be replaced.
- ◆ Consultation on a new timetable is coming. No change to start, end or total teaching time, but 35 periods instead of 30 per week to allow teaching time to be more evenly distributed
- ◆ S4 subject choices are planned to include subjects in both DS and CDHS for pupils at both schools.
- ◆ The PC will produce a prospectus to encourage more S1 entrants

Parent Council Organisation

- ◆ Consultation and discussion on the future form and shape of the PC will start in the New Year but won't be quick

Volunteers are Needed ...

- ◆ To help with the primary library
- ◆ To produce the secondary brochure
- ◆ To help with the transition (P7) parents tour of the secondary on Thursday 6th December at 2.45pm
- ◆ To raise funds

Next Meeting – Primary Parents

- ◆ (Date tbc in December) at 3.30pm

Next Meeting - Parent Council

- ◆ Thursday 21st March at 3.30pm (primary business), then at 7pm (secondary business)
All parents will be welcome to attend either session or both sessions.

Full minutes are available at www.dalrysecondary.info

Dalry Schools Parent Council

Meeting, 22nd November 2018

Minutes

Present

Ian Johnston (chair), Richard Kiernan (acting clerk), David Finlay, Martin Temple, Lorraine Ishak, Andrea Ramsay, Melinda McGaw, Anne McEwan

In attendance

Mr Scrimshaw (HT, primary), Mr Smith (HT, secondary), Mrs Gillies (DHT secondary), Vanessa Morris (parental engagement officer, DGC), Mary Smith (chair, Kells PC), Mungo Bryson (incoming chair, CDHS PC)

1. Incoming chair's statement

Education in the Glenkens is good, but can be better (education can always be better) and will only get better if parents and schools work happily and constructively together. The chair looks forward to working with everybody involved.

2. Membership & Office Bearers

At present the PC membership unclear but work continues to establish who is a member, and a definitive list should be available for the next meeting.

Approved: Appointment of a clerk at £40 per meeting. This will be advertised in all four Glenkens village shops before the next meeting. In accordance with the constitution, parents of children at either Dalry school, whether or not PC members, cannot be paid for PC work, but might volunteer for this role. **Action: Chair.**

3. Treasurer's Report

There is no treasurer at present. The chair believes that there is about £500 in the account, will confirm with Andrew Bielinski (ex chair). **Action: Chair.**

4. Primary Report & Questions: Mr Scrimshaw

Written report attached.

- Jane Banner (librarian) is leaving at end December from a protected post, and can't be replaced. The library continues to be well used, and future parental support with running it would be welcome.
- Consultation with staff, pupils and parents on a new school day will start soon. Mr Scrimshaw proposes to even out teaching sessions by reducing the lunch break from 60 to 50 minutes and increasing the morning and afternoon breaks from 15 to 20 minutes and from 10 – 15 minutes. Start, finish and total class time will be unchanged. Smaller children in particular often find an hour too long at lunch and ten minutes in the afternoon barely gives time to get coats on, go outside and come in again. It is hoped to stop using bells for the primary.
- Playground is awkwardly laid out at present. The official nursery playground is far too far from the nursery and access to the nice bit of the primary playground is not easy. It would be better to have a new nursery playground at the back of the school and improved facilities for primary children.

Q *When will 30 hours nursery be implemented?*

A By August 2020

Q *Is fundraising possible?*

A Definitely, but there is very limited staff time available. Parents' help in this area would be very welcome. There are many possible sources: biosphere, Galloway Glens, wind farm ...

Chair: Evening PC meetings not popular with primary parents, many of whom are at the school in the afternoon to collect children. Chair with Mr Scrimshaw will arrange a meeting for primary parents after school soon, partly for an update from Mr Scrimshaw and partly to launch a playground improvement project

5. Report and Questions: Mr Smith & Mrs Gillies

Written report attached.

- Consultation on a new timetable is underway. This would move from 30 periods (six per day) to 35 periods (7 per day). Start, finish and total class time will be unchanged. This will end rotations for S1- S3 and allow equal time for all S4 subjects (at the moment S4 Maths and English only have four periods per week). 35 periods should allow better use of teacher's contracted contact time, and may become D&G mandatory anyway. There has been a positive response from staff, and parent consultation will start soon, with implementation planned for change of year groups in June.
- Interviews for office staff arranged and will take place soon. At the moment the office is often unstaffed, making communication difficult.

Q *When will be the effect subject choices for S4 be known?*

A It is hoped to offer effectively a combined Dalry/CDHS choice form, including CDHS-taught options for DS pupils and DS-taught options for CDHS pupils. Teaching location and consequences (travel etc) will be made clear on the form. Transport arrangements still have to be worked out.

Q *What happened to the one-to-one pastoral sessions listed in the school handbook?*

A Now rolled up in PSHE, with termly individual interviews with the PT head of student support.

Q *Concern was expressed that pastoral care could be better.*

A In a state of change, with new roles and responsibilities being established. The new timetable may free up more PT time for pupil support. Parents were reminded by Vanessa Morris that matters affecting named children should not be raised at PC meetings.

Chair We will return to this in a future meeting, and may invite the PT for student support to join us to work on possible improvements. **Action: Chair.**

Q *Could parents raise funds for a librarian?*

A. Yes, but would have to be time-limited project to avoid employment issues – temporary staff must be made permanent after two years, and the council will not fund another permanent appointment. A junior librarian scheme may be possible.

6. Transition & Publicity

Mrs Gillies: The previous system of weekly mornings of secondary subject classes received mixed feedback from children, so instead a new scheme of less frequent themed sessions is in use. P7 parents have been invited to a school tour on Thursday 6th December at 2.45pm. PC presence at that would be welcome.

Chair: Faced with a falling role, Kells PC produced a prospectus to sell the school to parents in the area, parents thinking of moving to the area and parents from elsewhere who might make placing requests. The projected role for Kells this year was 21 and it currently has 25. Chair circulated Kells prospectus and proposed producing something similar for the secondary school, partly to persuade parents who might send their children straight to CDHS to send them to Dalry first and partly to generate placing requests from parents who would prefer a smaller secondary school

Q Why?

A As well as giving more information to prospective parents it affirms existing parents' support for the school. Quoted testimonials are a very powerful argument.

Agreed: expenditure of around £300 on professional design of prospectus. Target January for distribution to P6 and P7 parents in feeder primaries and further afield before secondary choice. Anne McEwan volunteered to help with content, more welcome. Chair will contact JS/LG for usable pictures. **Action: Chair, AMcE, JS/LG**

7. Parental Involvement - Vanessa Morris.

There was a lot of information, all available online by searching the D&G website for “parental involvement”. Edited highlights follow:

- Involvement is parents working with schools for school improvement and engagement is working with schools to support their children’s learning.
- Parental involvement principles are laid down by the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. DGC policy dates from 2009 and Vanessa Morris is now updating it. She aims to produce a single long document combining legal requirements with best practice and advice, and also a much shorter summary. Suggestions for improvement are welcome, and PC chairs will be advised of a December closing date.
- DGC would like copies of constitutions and up-to-date membership lists.
- PCs are independent bodies, and must form their own policies in areas like GDPR stuff
- DGC is a corporate member of Connect (formerly Parent Teacher Council Scotland) which provides many useful resources. Groups and individuals can join.
- DG PC forum meets monthly – the next meeting is on Monday 26th at CDHS.
- Collaboration is key, not just consultation. When things go wrong communication is usually the issue.

Q *Can a joint primary-secondary Dalry PC continue?*

A Yes. It’s a matter for the parent forums (all parents) at the two schools, and the council takes no view on the matter. NW Campus in Dumfries has one PC with three subgroups to limit meeting length.

JS We must remember that the primary and secondary are in different partnerships.

Chair We will start consultation with parents about the future shape of the PC. This won’t be quick, so meantime we will try different meeting formats to involve as many parents as possible with the current system. Some form of cross-partnership primary working would be useful, so we will look for opportunities for joint events with Kells and Carsphairn PCs.

8. DGC Budget Challenge

DGC needs to make £30m savings this year. The budget challenge allows anyone to suggest where these cuts should be made, and is available through the council website.

9. Forthcoming Events

Primary

- Pantomime Tuesday 4th December
- “The Greatest Snowman” Monday 17th December (evening)
Tuesday 18th December (afternoon)
- Christmas Lunch Thursday 20th December

Secondary

- S4 Careers Fair (CDHS) Thursday 29th November
- Christmas Fayre (CDHS) Thursday 29th November
- S4 Reports Friday 7th December
- School Dance Wednesday 19th December

All Glenkens Schools

- Christmas Service Friday 21st December

Further ahead

- Education Scotland Family Learning Day February
- Education in/for the Glenkens Conference April

10. Dates of Next Meetings

Primary Parents December ??

3.30 – 4.30pm General update then playground improvement project.

Parent Council Thursday 21st March

3.30 – 5pm Primary matters (Mr Scrimshaw in attendance)

Dinner adjournment

7 – 8.30pm Secondary matters (Mr Smith and Mrs Gillies in attendance)

This is an experiment to encourage more primary parent attendance.
All parents will be welcome to attend either session or both.

Many thanks to all who attended and particular thanks to Richard Kiernan for taking notes.