

**minutes of meeting held on: 05 February 2014**

**Leith Academy Parent Council**

**Minutes of Meeting 5 February 2014**

<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Trisha Emblem (Chair)	TE	Colin Brown	CB
Diane Anderson	DMA	Anna Bowman	AB
Jackie Beer (Treasurer)	JB	Rodger Evans	RE
Jack Simpson (Headteacher)	JMS	Hilary Marsh	HM
Fiona Fitzgerald	FF	Hilary Brown	HB
Bridget Linton (Clerk)	BL	Raval Korzeb	RK
Niki Chalmers	NC	Anna Sinicka	AS
Malgorzata Mieszczak	MM	Susan Dougal	SD
Grant Bulloch	GB	Maire Johnston	MJ

<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	
Councillor Gordon Munro		Bridget Linton	
Councillor Adam McVey			
Christine Wallis	CW		

<b>Notes</b>	<b>Action</b>

Agenda Item		
1.	<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p>TE opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. Introductions were made.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Noted above.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 November 2013</b></p> <p>Accepted as an accurate record.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Parent Council Website</b></p> <p>It had been hoped that the LA ‘Refresh’ would make updating the Parent Council page on the School Website simpler. As this has not been the case we will continue plans for a separate website in the meantime. CW’s son Jamie has already done some work to develop this for us but it was thought that as CW’s connection with LA will finish in June, it would be preferable to develop this further with those remaining at LA for some time to come. GB has been involved with the Craigentenny PS website and offered his assistance. He pointed out that the main issue will be maintaining the site once it is up and running – this can be organised by giving the password to those who volunteer to do it. An ex gratia payment to Jamie will also be investigated.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Headteacher’s Report</b></p> <p><b>Budget</b> - The Council vote on the above will take place on 13 February but is likely to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) That there will be no financial support to reduce class sizes for S1/2</li> <li>ii) Consortium classes for Advanced Highers in S6 – JS loses £18k that would have been earmarked for this – equivalent to .5 FTE.</li> </ul>	

JS must now identify where savings can be made while having the minimum impact on provision for pupils. The reduction equates to 2.5 teachers. Bearing in mind the potential uptake for next session (S1 likely to be 136 – currently 173) savings in Pupil Support, HE and Music are being considered. This will further impact what can be offered, including Maths and English class sizes. Wherever he can make savings, surplus money can be put towards supported sets.

MJ asked about Advanced Highers for the current S5 – 12 pupils is likely to be the minimum number for a class to be viable, meaning that it will be very likely that pupils will have to travel between schools to study the subjects they prefer. This makes timetabling extremely problematic and as yet the question of travel costs between schools still needs to be answered. JS agreed that this may result in pupils moving schools completely if their preferred timetable is available somewhere else.

DA suggested that periodic ‘snapshots’ be taken to monitor the potential reduction in attainment as a result of these cuts.

It was also noted that the proposals to cut the School Library Service have now been withdrawn. Instead they will join up with the City Library Service.

JS recommended to the meeting the Diversity Day on 20 February arranged by Sue Cook. There will be stalls, food for sale, guest speakers including a ‘mystery’ Hibs player and an actress, with the Diversity Show taking place in the evening. All to celebrate the increasingly diverse school population

### **Speed Careers Event**

6. A variety of dates were suggested for this twilight session for S4/5/6 which it is hoped will encourage pupils to consider careers they may otherwise not have thought of. LEAPS and the Careers Service will send representatives and Councillor Adam McVey will also be there. An invitation was issued to those present, and their families and friends – it is not necessary to have a child at LA. CB said he and his wife would be interested and RE also volunteered. Careers leaflets would also be welcome. Anyone interested, please email Christine Wallis on wallisandco@hotmail.com

Potential Dates: - 26, 27 February, 10, 12, 13 March and week commencing 24 March.

7.	<p><b>School Year Dates</b></p> <p>The proposed term dates for the next three sessions were circulated and it was noted that 2015/2016 will be a seven week summer holiday. No concerns were recorded at the meeting, but those present were encouraged to email if there is any issue they need to raise. It was also pointed out that the fifth In-Service day will now always be a Thursday to coincide with possible elections taking place.</p>	
8.	<p><b>National 4s and 5s</b></p> <p>BL raised the timing of the prelims and the large amount of homework still being issued to S4 just prior to the exams. DA also commented on reports of the stress some pupils were experiencing. JS had spoken to teachers on this issue prior to the meeting, and they confirmed that the timing follows the necessity to timetable the three internal assessments the pupils must pass to ensure that they are entered for the exams. The ongoing homework should be viewed as a revision tool.</p> <p>There may be Easter Revision classes, but this will depend on sufficient teachers volunteering to take part.</p> <p>JS agreed to arrange an information evening for S4 parents mid-March to provide advice for parents as to how they can best support their children at home.</p> <p>NC suggested that S3 parents would welcome a similar evening towards the end of the Summer term in advance of them starting S4.</p> <p>Nationals in a Nutshell were recommended to parents, especially for those still having to guide their subject choice.</p> <p><a href="https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/NPF/nationals-in-a-nutshell/">https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/NPF/nationals-in-a-nutshell/</a>.</p> <p>A decision should be made by the SQA by 31 March regarding old and new Highers, with teachers choosing according to whether the pupils on their courses would be disadvantaged.</p>	JS

9.	<p><b>Finance Update</b></p> <p>The balance of the account is £2433.25. A request had been received from the Prom Committee and it was agreed to donate £150.</p> <p>HB asked what Parent Council funds are spent on and it was agreed that we really should look at potential expenditure.</p> <p>AB suggested funds could go towards transport costs for the rugby players travelling to Broughton HS for training. However it was agreed that this should be organised by way of a rota of parents. Longer term items such as team strips would be considered if the club made a donation request.</p>	
10.	<p><b>North Neighbourhood and CCwP Meeting</b></p> <p>Provide a forum for parents to consult on similar issues facing schools across the city, such as school meals, the IT Refresh and handheld devices. They also run training courses for parent councils. There is a link on the LA website. A new representative will be needed when DA's daughter leaves school at the end of the session. This is usually the Chair of LA Parent Council. DA invited anyone who would like to accompany her to the next meeting to contact her at <a href="mailto:andersonm46@gmail.com">andersonm46@gmail.com</a></p>	
11.	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p><b>(i) Raised by FF – Benmore for S1s</b> – no information has been received by parents yet – JS to check.</p> <p><b>(ii) Raised by AB – the lack of homework in S1.</b> It was agreed that this is a perennial problem and the school website was recommended as containing a guide to support home study.</p> <p><b>(iii) Raised by SD – Handheld Devices</b> – JS confirmed that there are no plans to introduce this to LA until such time as all pupils are to receive one. Perhaps when the BT contract is renegotiated, this may be part of the conditions. However it will not be taken forward without confirmation both of investment in training staff, and the funding of the devices.</p> <p><b>(iv) Raised by RE – S1 Football</b> – the team are training but not playing in matches. S3 parents also feel that there is a lack of communication. DA will refer this to the North Neighbourhood</p>	JS

	<p>Meeting and JS will contact Craig Renwick, Active Schools Coordinator.</p> <p>(v) <b>Raised by CG – English Homework</b> – due to the secondment of Mrs McKinnon, the class are being taught by more than one teacher, all of whom seem to be relying on their colleagues to set homework. JS will speak to the PT.</p>	<p>JS</p> <p>JS</p>
<p><b>12.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>24 April 2014</p>	