

MINUTES

Committee Meeting Tuesday 12th January 2016

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Jayne Wainwright (Headteacher), Mark Agnew, Petra Bacon, Carolyn Blanshard, Tony Smith, Martin Smith, Heidi Merrett, Louise Mayor, John Rawcliffe, Tim Dyer, Izzy Mackay, Clare Hickman, Sharon Chamberlain-Keen, Ruth Cohen, Elizabeth Anderson, Matt Day, Sally Purefoy, Sarah Petrini

Apologies: Madeleine Vercoe, Sara Bor, Sue Hearnden, Jane Welch, Carolyn Selley, Nicola Strawbridge, Frances Rogers

2. Matters arising from Minutes of the last Meeting

There were no matters arising. The minutes were agreed and signed.

3. Report from the Headteacher

Mrs Wainwright elaborated on the recent Celebration Evening for 6th form students: The school used to host a “speech evening” with guest speakers, for giving out GCSE and A-Level certificates and to celebrate the students’ achievements. This event got more informal over the years and was subsequently split into separate events for different age groups. In order to bring back a more formal setting and to provide an appropriate forum to showcase students’ talents, the Celebration Evening has been held for the first time this year and based on its positive reception, will hopefully be expanded next year.

The school held two evening carol services at the end of the autumn term. The traditional afternoon service had been dropped in order to save the cost on coach transport and staff cover. Instead there was a carol service in the Cottrill Hall at school for the whole school. Mrs Wainwright expressed her gratitude for the new Christmas tree that had been donated by the Parents’ Association, which is an artificial tree that can be re-used in future years. A big thank-you also goes to the student team, led by Tallie B., who decorated the tree very skilfully.

The purpose of changing from the current three-year 6th Form to a two-year 6th Form, which will affect the current Year 9 students and below, is as a result of national curriculum and examination changes and will put our CGS students on a level playing field with other schools. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is looking at plans to enrich the KS4 curriculum. Work on Independent Study Skills will remain part of the curriculum for Years 10 and 11. The current Year 9 students will be the first to take their GCSE exam at the end of Year 11. Tim Harris, the school’s new headteacher from September 2016, will be part of discussions around the shape of KS5, for

example, if all students will be able to take four A-level subjects, or if some will be limited to three subjects. The timing for choosing the GCSE subjects remains the same, i.e. students will have to choose in Year 8. The extended project will take place during Year 12. Tim Harris has already met with governors and senior members of staff to agree on these strategic changes.

The consultation process for the new admissions policy has been launched but has not yet received a big response from parents. The proposal is to change the Year 7 intake of students from currently four forms with 124 students to five forms with 155 students. This move is driven by the huge difficulties around school funding. All schools' income is based on the number of children on roll. Our school's current income is around £4m per annum. Eighty percent of expenditure goes towards staff costs. Where possible, savings have already been made, for instance by not replacing certain staff vacancies, thus cutting approximately £180k from the budget. However, in order to maintain the high quality of teaching and learning, it is very important to retain good staff. It is not clear how much future funding can be expected from the government, but on a nationwide scale the funding per pupil has decreased by 6%. The current forecast shows a deficit in the school's budget in a couple of years time. Therefore the only way to find additional funds on an ongoing basis is by increasing the pupil admission number (PAN). The increased intake will lead to an eventual surplus of £220k. This additional income could then fund the building of new classrooms. The planned expansion of student intake means that the school will face the new challenge of finding more of the right students to fill the extra spaces whilst maintaining the current standard. The above mentioned change to a two year 6th Form could also contribute to this as it will then be possible to take in new students in Year 12.

The bids for the renovation of Staff House and for the science projects have been submitted. There is also a bid to improve the current science lab. The total cost of these projects is calculated at £950k, and the bid is asking for half of this amount. The school will find out in March whether the bid has been successful. If it has been unsuccessful, then the work will still go ahead, but in smaller tranches, as and when the money is available. The first phase, which would include the science lab would cost around £350k. The Wolfson Foundation have pledged £26k as sponsors and the PA is committed to raise £100k.

4. Funding requests from School

A list of departmental bids for PA funding was circulated at the meeting. The PA agreed to the following requests:

- English Dept.: 30 new Thesaurus to replace the existing ones (£150.-)
- RPE Dept.: One set of mini whiteboards (£100.-) of two sets requested
- STEM Dept.: Monitor as notice board in the Feoffees Building (£237.85)
- Comp. Science: 4 Raspberry Pi computers & 4 Arduino boards (£363.36)

The funding requests from the PE Department and Mock Trial were suspended until more detailed information about these requests will be provided.

5. Treasurer's Report

A financial report was produced which showed the PA balance currently available at £15,728. The treasurer suggested and the PA committee agreed to make an additional transfer to the Space4Science Appeal of £12k into the dedicated school account, which earns a higher rate of interest than the PA's account. The treasurer reported that a

further £438 can be claimed in gift aid from direct donations to the Space4Science appeal (25% of £1,751). There were no further questions about the accounts.

6. Garden and Food Fair

Heidi Merrett reported that the next GFF will be rebranded as Garden and Food Festival. The new logo for this event was circulated and received very positive feedback. The GFF committee will be holding a preparation meeting on 2nd February at 7.30 pm at the Hare & Hounds; any volunteer helpers are welcome to attend. The GFF committee initially felt concerned that the food stall holders will want to sell their own food and that this would compete with our own barbeque stall. Tim Dyer who has been in charge of the barbeque in the past did not see a problem with this, even if there was some competition. An increased range of food stalls could be seen as enhancement to the scope of the next GFF.

The question was raised if the existing entrance fee of currently £3.- was appropriate or if it should be dropped in order to attract more visitors from the local community. The entrance fee raises about £1k on average, but it could deter people from coming to the fair or from spending money inside. The suggestion was made to either offer free entry, or to charge £1.- in conjunction with a voucher for a free cup of tea or coffee which would then direct the visitors towards the cafe & cake stall. A "Free Entry" could be turned into an advertising feature in order to also attract those visitors who only want to come in for a browse or only want to stay for a short time.

Another concern was raised with regard to the selling of raffle tickets; having both the entrance charge and the raffle together at the door was not popular with either visitors or the stall holders as we were seen to be taking too much money off them before reaching the commercial stalls.

It was suggested and agreed to send out an A5 flyer for the GFF with the information booklet for new parents in March / April.

7. 100/200 Club

The ticket sales for the 100/200 Club has reached a record high of 224 sold tickets; therefore the sale of any additional tickets is currently suspended. The treasurer will arrange to meet with the club organiser, Bhavna Chandra, and discuss the future strategy for the club.

8. Silent Auction

The organisers, Matt Day and Sally Purefoy, have managed to raise 30 lots at the moment, with 4 or 5 more still to come. The auction will go live online on Friday 4th March and run until Sunday 20th March. It was suggested to promote the lots on our Facebook page with a picture for each individual lot. An e-comm to parents will go out on Friday 4th March with a follow-up reminder e-mail. After the auction the successful bidders should be notified within two days. A thank-you letter will be sent out to the sponsors. Payments are to be made by cheque or BACS, but not by PayPal as they charge for each transaction.

9. Festive Evening & Winter Draw

According to the treasurer's report, the net surplus from the Festive Evening, which was held on 9th December at Seaton Town Hall, was £823.- and the net surplus from the Winter Draw was £1,611.

There was only little feedback on this agenda item since all three organisers were absent from the meeting. It was suggested to schedule a review meeting with Nicola Strawbridge who has volunteered to organise the next Festive Evening.

10. Sale of 2nd hand text books

Following on from a parent letter sent to the PA chair, the subject of funding text books had previously been discussed with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It was suggested to investigate if the PA should sell 2nd hand text books at certain PA events, as it is already done with 2nd hand school uniform. The text books could also be listed on our PA website.

11. AOB

PA book club – Jane Welch is looking for a successor as book club co-ordinator.

Website update – Discussion: should we upload photos of committee members?

Date for Summer Fete - last Wednesday of summer term – 20th July 2016.

Governor business – Report from Tim Dyer:

- The position of clerk to governors will become available; job advert at end of Jan.
- Someone with strong financial background is needed to support the governors.

12. Date of next meeting

This has been set for Tuesday 19th April 2016.

prepared by Petra Bacon