

**GROVE ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT GROVE ACADEMY
ON TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2015**

Members in Attendance

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|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Dawn Archibald | 8. Debbie Clark | 15. Ana Lopez |
| 2. Stephen Bain | 9. Valerie Clark | 16. Julie Lynch |
| 3. Cllr Laurie Bidwell | 10. Lesley Elder | 17. Tara Malik |
| 4. Ufuk Bikez | 11. John Hamilton | 18. Fiona McIntosh |
| 5. Gillian Boland | 12. Graham Hutton | 19. Deepa Narayanan |
| 6. Paul Callaghan | 13. Clare Jefferson | 20. Dorren Phillips |
| 7. Alex Clark | 14. Penny Lewis, Chair | 21. Karen O'Rourke |

1. Welcome

The meeting was opened by the chair, Penny Lewis. Everyone was welcomed.

2. Apologies for Absence

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| 1. Fiona Anderson | 4. Sally Hart | 7. Susan Kidd |
| 2. Alison Benns | 5. Mary Holligan | 8. Elaine King |
| 3. Cllr Ken Guild | 6. Carole Jenkins | 9. Alice Turpie |

3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting

There were no corrections made to the previous minutes. The previous minutes from 20 May 2015 were adopted as presented. Proposed by Deepa Narayanan and seconded by Clare Jefferson.

4. Matters arising Approval of minutes of previous meeting of 20 May 2015

There was one issue that arose from the previous meeting:

4.1 Letter to Dundee City Council (DCC): In the previous meeting Penny Lewis was asked to write to the DCC to ask about the current situation regarding supply teaching. However since this was at the end of the academic year, it was felt that the timing of the letter was moot. Graeme Hutton explained that the supply situation at Grove Academy is better than in previous years due to the availability of a select pool of supply staff that are prepared to come into the school 'at the drop of a hat'. The short notice response time is making it much easier to provide supply cover within school.

5. Annual General Meeting

5.1 Report by the chair of the Grove Parent Council: Penny Lewis provided a review of the activities of the 2014/15 Grove Parent Council. Refer to annex 1 for her speaking notes. Penny has been in the post of chair for one year. One of the main benefits of being chair has been the insight gained into both education provision as well as the policy debates at a city and national level.

The Grove Parent Council has established links with both the National Parent Forum of Scotland (<http://www.parentforumscotland.org/>) and the Scottish Parent Teacher Council (<http://www.sptc.info/>). The National Parent Forum of Scotland was set up to give Parent Councils and Parents an opportunity to discuss and raise educational issues of mutual interest or concerns at a national level. SPTC is a parent-led membership organisation dedicated to sharing information and advice to make parental involvement in Scottish schools as good as it can be.

The Grove Parent Council has made modest progress in the 2014/15 academic year including: (i) recruitment of a new Clerk; (ii) inputs into Dundee education policy and debates; (iii) establishing stronger links with Friends of Grove and attending a consultation meeting with Friends of Grove; (iv) improving links with Grove Parents via the Facebook page. The Grove Academy Parent Council

Facebook page is available for the distribution of information. It can be found via a search for 'Grove Academy Parent Council', or by following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Grove-Academy-Parent-Council/1622471291319712?fref=ts>. The Parent Council still rely primarily on the use of their mailing distribution list comprising of approximately 600 email addresses comprising of parents, community members and staff.

One of the main issues affecting education at a city-wide level has been the adoption of the Curriculum for Excellence and the decision around the new N4 and N5 curriculums. The Parent Council raised their concerns in 2014/15 with the limiting impact that the new curriculum holds for language learning.

In March 2015, the Parent Council with the endorsement of 60 parents wrote to the Scottish Executive to express our concerns about the current provision of certain subject teachers and supply teachers in the city; a response was received in April.

In 2014/15, at a city level the education department was largely focused on estate management and school mergers. Many of these high profile issues did not affect Grove Academy, however we followed the debates and kept the pulse of the public consultations. One of the greatest gains made by DCC in 2014/15 was the eradication of music tuition fees and hence the broadening of access to music in schools.

In 2015/16 the national priority issue was set by Nicola Sturgeon as improving national attainment. (Refer to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-34108173>)

5.2 Elections of office bearers for 2015/16 for the Grove Parent Council: Following a discussion, nominations were taken for new office bearers. The outcome of this process was as follows:

Chairperson: Penny Lewis
Proposed by Clare Jefferson and seconded by Debbie Clark

Vice-chairperson: Dawn Archibald
Proposed by Gillian Boland and seconded by Deepa Narayanan

Treasurer: Stephen Bains
Proposed by Clare Jefferson and seconded by Penny Lewis

Clare Jefferson will remain on as clerk to the Parent Council.

Penny suggested that the appointment of a communications officer would enhance the work of the Parent Council. At this time, no decision was made and it will be raised at a later time.

5.3 Treasury: The Grove Parent Council do not have any funds at this time. The Parent Council elected to join the SPTC in November 2014 and paid a nominal fee to the SPTC. Stephen Bains agreed to talk to the council about access to the funding available to the Parent Council.

5.4. Approval of minutes of previous AGM meeting: There were no corrections made to the previous minutes. The previous minutes from 9 September 2014 were adopted as presented. Proposed by Karen O'Rourke and seconded by Penny Lewis.

6. Friends of Grove

John Hamilton and Karen O'Rourke from Friends of Grove (FoG) attended the Parent Council meeting. In September 2014 Grove held their 125 year celebrations. Refer to the link for more information: <http://grove.ea.dundecity.sch.uk/news/grove-125-celebrations-a-huge-success> Since

that time, Friends of Grove has been less active. In June 2015, the Parent Council and FoG held a meeting to look at collaboration and how the PC could better support the work of FoG. In the Parent Council meeting a discussion was held about the role of the Friends of Grove, and the reciprocal relationship between the Parent Council and Friends of Grove, following which a number of parents and alumni volunteered to join Friends of Grove. These included: Deepa Narayanan; Debbie Clark; Julie Lynch; Dawn Archibald; Tara Malik.

A discussion was held over various fund-raising methods that the FoG could engage in, and experiences were shared. FoG will continue to work autonomously of the Parent Council, and FoG will report back at the next Parent Council meeting on their progress.

6.1 Funding and funding priorities: For the past year, Grove has been hoping to allocate funds to install and maintain WiFi across the school. At this time, there is limited WiFi access in the sports centre which was installed by Dundee Leisure. Recently Grove was awarded a grant of £3,500 to help install WiFi hubs for learning and teaching through an application to the Local Council Planning Partnership (LCPP). In addition to this, the LCPP awarded £3000 to deliver 'Life to the Full' classes to S3 covering relationships. Raising the balance of the funds for the full installation costs of school WiFi would be a priority.

The school's existing funding raising supports a charity and the school fund. Parent led fundraising should be undertaken independently, as the pupils are already engaged in their own funding priorities.

7. Rector's Report

Mr Hutton provided an comprehensive report on the provisional academic results, staffing, the school improvement plan, recent achievements, tentative planned trips, and feedback on the prize giving ceremony.

7.1 Academic results: Although the final results are not yet available, Mr Hutton says that the provisional results show a strong level of attainment at Grove for the National 4 and National 5 level, especially when comparing the attainment at Grove Academy to Dundee and the National attainment levels. It should be borne in mind that Grove wrote the new curriculum N4 and N5 exams while not all secondary schools at a national level have yet progressed onto the new curriculum. A summary of the provision 2015 SQA results show that at N4 Grove Academy had 90% pass compared to a national pass of 93%. However in mitigation the fact that some national schools have not yet transitioned to the new, somewhat more difficult, new curriculum. Similarly at a N5 level, the provision 2015 SQA results show that Grove Academy had 91% pass compared to a national pass of 80%. Furthermore, of the registered roll of 231 pupils at the end of S5, 75% held one or more highs; 51% held 3 or more highs; and 29% of the roll held 5 or more highs.

Of the registered roll of 206 pupils at the end of S6, 74% held one or more highs; 57% held three or more highs; and 39% of the roll held five or more highs; 26% held one or more advanced highs; 10% held two or more advanced highs; and 4% of the roll held three or more advanced highs. Refer to annex 2.

7.2 Staffing: There are a number of new staff at Grove. These include a new deputy head, as well as staff in the following subjects: history; maths; English; modern studies; PE; business study. The school have re-advertised for the following vacancies: RME; home economics; and a temporary support worker.

7.3 School Improvement Plan: As mentioned in the previous minutes, every three years, Grove Academy develops a three year School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP is a mixture between a mission statement and a business plan. It guides decision making and identifies the priorities for the

school. The SIP will be finalised in the new couple of weeks. Refer to annex 3. The SIP will start in 2015/16 and has five project areas as follows:

1. Attainment and Wider Achievements
2. Improving Learners' Experiences
3. Building our Curriculum
4. Improving our Capacity in Meeting Learners' Needs
5. Embedding a Culture of Self-Evaluation

7.4 Achievements: There are a number of major achievements worth noting involving Grove Academy pupils. Mr Hutton proudly displayed a series of newspaper clippings. We would all like to extend our congratulations to the following people:

- S4 Grove Academy pupil Agnijo Banerjee who scored full marks in his Advanced Maths high paper.
- Niamh Harper who achieved first place in sailing at the Inter-continental Championships in Italy
- Raymond Patterson who achieved a Bronze award in Trampoline
- The placement of three S2 Grove Pupils Robyn Archibald, Anne Bennet, Claire Roberts in the Jam Final at the Dundee Food and Flower Festival. Refer to annex 3.

Pupils from Grove Academy took a number of lead roles in local drama productions across the summer.

The school had a very successful student exchange with the visit of a group of Japanese students at Grove. They presented the school with a beautiful gold lead picture of a pair of cranes.

7.5 Trips: There are a number of trips planned for the next year. The following list is provisional, and the final decision on some of the trips is still pending, as the school need to ensure that there is sufficient staffing to provide cover over the time of the trips especially in the busy time of June 2016.

- Japan, October 2015, student exchange.
- Berlin, December 2015, two groups of 40 pupils
- London, June 2016, modern studies
- European battlefields, June 2016, history
- Uganda, July 2016
- Washington and New York, October 2016

7.6 Prize-giving: In a dramatic departure from previous years, the Grove Academy moved the junior and senior school award ceremony from the Caird Hall back to the school. Feedback from parents was positive. Annex 1 is the programme from the junior prize giving. The school hall was used for the first time, however it was perhaps a bit too small for the event, and the school is considering moving the event to the games hall. However, special floor covering would need to be installed to make this a suitable venue.

8. Communications

One of the main aims of the parent council is to improve the quality of communications between Grove Academy and the parents.

9. Any other current business

9.1 Private tutoring: The Parent Council asked Mr Hutton to explain why the school distributed the information pack from the private tutoring company the Student Support Centre. He explained that the correspondence clearly stated that the school did not endorse this tutoring company, but they

wanted to share the information about the service for those parents that were interested. Grove Academy obtains a small stipend for all the return slips they receive and these funds are added to the school fund. There were 280 reply slips returned from this distribution. Some parents felt that this was misleading. Mr Hutton explained that from time to time he allowed other companies that provide tutoring support access to the school. For example, the 'bright Red' series of training manuals are often sold at school events at discounted rates. Mr Hutton did re-iterate that most staff are available after school or at lunch times to assist pupils that are needing additional support.

9.2 Teaching hours: A brief mention was made regarding recent press coverage about the level of teaching that pupils in Dundee secondary schools receive. Mr Hutton explained that there are 190 school days and each pupil is assured of 27.5 hours per week tuition.

9.3 School groups: The Parent Council raised the possibility of contributing to the beautification of the school grounds. Some of the ideas raised included the possibility of new school gates, or new school benches. This is an on-going issue.

9.4 EcoClub: Updated information on the activities of the EcoClub was handed out to the parents in the meeting. Refer to annex 7.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 10 November 2015.

Some of the items on the next agenda will include:

- The new Tayside initiative on relationships, sexual health and parenting, Dawn Archibald
- Maths teaching in school – Yvonne O'Brien, Maths Department
- GIRFEC and the named person

List of Appendices

Annex 1 Parent Council Chair's report, Penny Lewis
Annex 2 Provisional SQA results 2015
Annex 3 Broughty Spotlight screen grab
Annex 4 Draft School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2015-18
Annex 5 Mr Hutton's Report
Annex 6 Junor Prize giving ceremony programme
Annex 7 EcoClub report