

Grove Parent Council meeting minutes

Grove Academy Staffroom, 7:00 pm, Tuesday 13 March 2018

Attendance

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|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Dawn Archibald | 5. Jim Cochrane | 9. Clare Leslie |
| 2. Stephen Bain | 6. Andy Creamer | 10. Deepa Narayanan |
| 3. Carla Barbour | 7. Graham Hutton | 11. Doreen Phillips, Chair |
| 4. Michael Charlton | 8. Clare Jefferson, Clerk | 12. Fiona Wood |

Item 1 Welcome

Doreen Phillips, the deputy chair of the Grove Parent Council, chaired the meeting. Doreen welcomed everyone and invited all attendees to introduce themselves. Dawn sent apologies that she would arrive later on in the meeting. Due to this the order of the agenda was rearranged to start with item 6. However the minutes are typed up in sequential order.

Item 2 Apologies

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| 1. Taletta Jamieson | 3. Julie Lynch | 5. Cllr Philip Scott |
| 2. Ewen Jenkin | 4. Fiona McLaughlin | |

Item 3 Approval of the previous minutes

Doreen guided the meeting through the minutes from the previous meeting (30 Jan 2018). There were no changes made to the previous minutes. The minutes were adopted (proposed: Dawn Archibald; seconded: Clare Leslie).

Item 4 Matters arising from previous minutes

The following issues as they arose from the previous minutes:

4.1 Update on the process concerning the all-weather pitches at Dawson Park and PE Provision: The Grove Parent Council sent a letter to Paul Clancy, Executive Director of Children and Families Service, Dundee City Council, to express our opinion on the matter. To date we have had no response. Mr Hutton reports that there has been some repair work conducted on the all-weather pitches. However the school is still reluctant to use the pitch as it remains below standard. Grove Academy is no closer to resolving this issue. Graham will discuss this issue with Bruce Burnett and report back to our next meeting. Recently Grove Academy undertook the walkthrough of the facilities at Dawson Park and feel that these are sub-par.

4.2 Update on timetabling: Andy Creamer updated the meeting on allocating the timetable for the 2018/19 session. Most of the work is complete. Grove Academy is just waiting on feedback from the other secondary schools to confirm spaces before confirming any campus arrangements to facilitate the fullest possible range of choices for pupils.

4.3 Minimising plastic bottle use and recycling: Graham Hutton will report back on this issue at the next meeting.

4.4 Date of Parent Council meeting: The date of the next Parent Council meeting has been changed to 22 May.

Item 5 Correspondence/meetings attended

5.1 Correspondence

- a. As previously discussed, our Parent Council sent a letter to Paul Clancy concerning the the all-weather pitches at Dawson Park.
- b. **Pupil Parking and Safety Committee Meeting, Wendy Cringle, Secondary School Representative:** We received an email from Wendy updating us on the Pupil Parking and Safety Committee Meeting. She requests that we inform her of any transport issues affecting Grove Academy. Parents raised a number of issues, most notably that parking was an issue after school as many parents drive onto the school property to collect their children. This results in tail-backs onto Claypotts Drive. In addition to this, this situation makes congestion so that staff are unable to exit the school property at the end of the school day. There is also an issue with parking on Camperdown Street and Grove Academy is concerned about blocked access to the emergency area in the event of fires. Clare will send an email to Wendy outlying this discussion.
- c. **Taletta Jamieson, Parental Involvement Officer,** sent a number of emails with information for the Parent Council. Most notably was the reminder about upcoming City-Wide meeting and the meeting with Paul Clancy.
- d. **Julie Lynch** sent an update on the activities of **Friends of Grove (FoGA):** The Doors Open Day is scheduled for Sunday the 16 September. This will follow the official V & A opening on 15 September. The focus of the Doors Open Day will be on the War Memorials; research into the names is well underway, with only four not yet started on. A survey by the War Memorials Trust is still to take place. An alternative or additional exhibition has been suggested for November and FoGA still need to work on what is possible and practical. The next meeting of FoGA is on Tuesday 17 April at 6.30 pm in the Conference room - all are welcome.

5.2 Meetings attended

None

5.3 Upcoming meetings

There are two upcoming meetings, namely: City Wide Meeting (27 Mar 2018 7pm) and the meeting with Paul Clancy (26 Apr 2018 7pm). Doreen has volunteered to attend both of these meetings.

Item 6.1 Grove App, Michael Charlton

Michael Charlton, school librarian, provided an overview of the Grove App. He spoke about some of the current issues of the App. The developers have advised that the issues should be solved by running the latest version of the app. Parents can send feedback to Michael on the App via the Parent Council.

Parents enquired as to why they could not have more information on the calendar. Grove Academy explained that they limit information about the times and location of pupils on public platforms due to safety and privacy concerns. Parent reiterated that they like to be kept informed and to have as much pre-notifications of events.

To date, the Grove App usage statistics are approximately 1500 for all platforms, of which 900 downloads are for iOS only; however the rate of download has levelled out.

Item 6.2 Library services at Grove Academy, Michael Charlton

Michael Charlton provided an overview his role as librarian. There are a number of projects and initiatives headed up by library services as follows:

a. Improve the level of reading: A recent study by the University of Dundee has shown that across the UK the level of personal reading of secondary pupils is three years behind what is expected for the age group. Michael outlined the rollout of a project to address this and to improve personal reading by encouraging pupils to engage in reading for pleasure. Under this project, the library tries to incentivise reading and to ensure pupils choose a level of reading that will challenge pupils. This project encourages pupils to step outside of their comfort level.

b. In 2018, the library is running a literacy programme which aims to improve the cognitive skills of S1 pupils to investigate and actively engage with texts. This should assist pupils in their research and investigation skills. Grove is trying to embed the idea of reading for pleasure at the S1 level and instil a culture of reading.

c. Besides reading, the library encourage pupils in a number of pursuits within the library setting such as War Hammer, Dungeon and Dragons, Manga Club and board gaming. Monday in the library is a quiet day providing a safe space to work. The library is also a good environment for research.

d. S2 Oracy: This programme aims to increase the spoken language skills of pupils. It aims to increase the level of confidence of pupils in terms of speaking in front of groups. Pupils need to learn to improve their rhetoric and public speaking skills.

In summary, the main focus of the library programme by year-level is as follows: S1 focus on literacy (reading and writing skills); S2 on oracy (spoken language skills); S3 pulling these skills together in Scottish Studies.

In the discussion, there were a number of questions and answers. The library provides advice to pupils on what is appropriate to read. The primary concern is that pupils are reading for pleasure, challenging texts should be encouraged but not at the expense of a reading culture. The library complements the work of the English department which ensures that pupils advance their close reading skills through the 10 minutes a day reading initiative. The Grove Academy library has a good budget within which to buy new material. The librarian selects and purchases the material in the library by drawing on many sources including: word of mouth, following reading trends, reading synopses and early book reviews; using information from schools Library Management System; tying into Dundee City Council Leisure and Culture Library Services; and networking with other librarians at secondary Schools within Dundee.

Finally, parents can encourage their children to read by suggesting they spend time in the library. The library is accessible with extended opening hours from 08:30 until late afternoon. The school has a very good library. It has 30 computers and it manages a set of 30 ipads for class lessons.

Item 6.3 My Homework App, Andy Creamer

Andy Creamer, Deputy Head, provided a summary of the process of launching the My Homework App. All parents and guardians were sent a letter on how to create a login account via the post. Parents are able to access their child's homework allocation and feedback via the App. Parents cannot communicate with teachers directly via the App. Parents are able to receive notification via their mobile device or the web browser. Approximately 500 pupils have installed the App.

In the discussion, parents expressed their support for the My Homework App. Staff have also given positive feedback on the potential of App.

Item 7 Anti-bullying guidance and policies, Graham Hutton

As a result of the revision of the national Anti-bullying guidelines, Dundee City Council is required to revamp their anti-bullying guidelines. The Council were meant to launch their review of the guidelines by 2 March 2018. However this release is delayed and only once this document is released can Grove Academy review their anti-bullying policy. A reminder will be sent to those parents who have not yet logged in.

Item 8 Cost of the School Day and how to develop a School Hardship Fund, Graham Hutton

In the January 2018 Parent Council meeting, Mr Hutton distributed copies of the Report on the *Cost of the School Day* report which raises ideas on how to poverty proof the school. This includes ideas such as: capping the costs of school trips; looking at ways to subsidise school trips for pupils on free school dinners; recycling dance outfits (via undertaking a swish to swap dresses for prom); and looking at the broader implications of non-uniform days (for example, for pupils who cannot afford branded clothing).

Grove Academy is currently exploring ways to develop a School Hardship Fund. This includes using raffles to raise funds (for example, using prizes such as iPhone X, iPads etc.). It was noted the school would need a special licence to run a raffle. In the discussion, Graham mentioned a number of funding organisations that Grove could approach to boost the School Hardship Fund.

Dawn asked if there was anything parents could do to support the school in these initiatives. Graham suggested that a parent representative participate sit in the short-term working party on the Cost of School Day/School Hardship Fund. This will be led by Carla Barbour, Deputy Head.

Item 9 Report by Rector, Graham Hutton

9.1 Staffing: Grove Academy currently has an almost full staffing complement. There is still a Business Studies vacancy (maternity cover). There are three posts advertised for 2018/19 for maths, Business Studies and Computing.

9.2 Achievements and events:

- Grove pupil Agnijo Banerjee recently won a silver medal in the International Maths Olympiad in Romania.
- The trip to the Hadron Collider in Cern, Switzerland, was successful.
- GeoBus visited Grove Academy.
- Representatives from 20 schools visited Grove Academy to look at the various ways we are developing the young work force and to exchange ideas. There were also sessions on the Advanced Engineering Project.
- Study Support: Grove Academy is using the Scottish Attainment Fund to support pupils' learning. The study support is aimed mainly at those receiving free school meals and those facing barriers to learning. Letters have been sent out to relevant parents. Pupils also need to sign up to participate in Easter Programme. Some of the budget will be used to purchase past paper booklets.

- Grove Academy undertook the walkthrough of the biology and the PE department.
- In the discussions with the departments on the Prelim Achievement Discussion (PADs) there were two issues raised namely the lack of attendance of the S6s and the lack of revision of pupils for the prelims. As a result the prelims, staff are currently reviewing the study levels of some pupils and making changes and deferments.
- A successful concert was held at St Stephens Church for the Wind and Pipe bands (with support from Dundee Heritage Trust).
- S5 and S6 Ceilidh
- Assemblies this week have highlighted the participatory budget initiative (Dundee Decides) where all pupils were encouraged to vote on local amenities.
- Ross Hutton, Ella and Thomas Kobine competed in the English-Speaking Union Scotland (ESUSCOT) Public Speaking competition and won through to the final round.
- Grove hosted two visitors from America and a further two from the Netherlands to learn about leadership opportunities in Scottish schools.
- Mr Hutton attended an evening at Abertay University Business School which highlighted the courses and opportunities available to students and discussed proposals to involve even closer links between Grove and Abertay, including reciprocal visits by staff and students, competitions and the donation of a prize. Mr Hutton had also visited the Abertay library and felt there was a lot we could learn with regard to the development of our own library, as had been discussed earlier.

9.3 Future events

- Due to staffing circumstances, there will unfortunately not be an Easter concert this year.
- Dundee Annual Music Concerts at the Caird Hall
- Grove is looking at confirming the date to plant a tree in memory of Morven Mackenzie.
- There will possibly be a German trip in December 2018 (to be confirmed).

Item 10 Any other current business

10.1. Parent Council database and the General Data Protection Regulation: The Parent Council needs to decide on what we need to do in order to comply with the new Data protection legislation which comes into effect on 25 May 2018. Our mailing list database contains 551 people and we need to have a signed consent from each person in order to retain this information. We held a discussion about whether we need have such a large database in light of the Grove App which is useful for distributing the minutes. Perhaps we only need a small database of the current attendees of the parent council. This issue will be further discussed at the next Parent Council meeting. Clare will approach both Michael Charlton and Taletta Jamieson to further investigate our compliance and report back to the next Parent Council meeting.

Item 11 Dates of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 22 May. This is the final Parent Council meeting of the 2017/18 session.