**Leith Academy Parent Council**

**Minutes of Meeting held on 25th January 2024 7pm, on Teams**

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| **In attendance** | **Initials** | **In attendance** | **Initials** |
| Michael Irving (Head Teacher) | MI | Rodger Evans |  |
| Ben Stewart | HC | John Booth |  |
| Helen Clifford (Co-chair) | HB | Gillian Fisher |  |
| Xanthe Bird (Treasurer) | XB | Mhairi Finlay |  |
| Emma Shaw (fundraising) | ES | Joseph Cox |  |
| Vicky Allan (Co-clerk) | VA |  |  |
| Hilary Brown (Co-clerk) | HB |  |  |
| Susan Morrison |  |  |  |
| Nikki Dunne |  |  |  |
| Judith Weir |  |  |  |
| Rachel Hein |  |  |  |
| Gordon Paterson |  |  |  |
| Joy Harvey |  | **Minutes** |  |
| Evie Smith |  | Vicky Allan (Co-clerk) | VA |
| Jon Lewis |  |  |  |

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| **Item** |  | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Welcome and Introductions**  HC opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. Introductions were made. |  |
| **2.** | **Minutes and Matters Arising**  Minutes from last meeting were approved. |  |
|  | ***School trips***  MI explained trips are ‘back on the table’, but that there is greater scrutiny around what trips are getting approved – with factors including cost, sustainability, curriculum relevance. whether it only targets a certain group etc - and that the school are working towards guidelines. BS is lead for trips and excursions. Heads previously were getting frustrated by the amount of trips getting knocked back but that has changed slightly.  BS said the school has already had trip to Auschwitz, two kids went (run by Edinburgh Council), and a London trip is planned this summer for drama (more than 30 kids). In a better place.  HC asked if school can put something out about the new process in the bulletin of Head’s News, answering the kind of questions that tend to be asked, and detailing progress  MI said he would do so in bulletin [this was included in the Head’s News of 26 January]  HB asked what can be done to enable things to happen  MI said that first and foremost it requires a teacher to be interested, given the commitment involved.  HB asked if it would be possible to reinstate the S6 trip to Benmore/Lagganlia, and noted interest from S5s to do this  BS said that, if S5s are interested in doing Benmore, and he gets a sense of it quite soon, then could look at booking – easier to make happen because it is a council run centre |  |
|  | ***Canteen lunch queues***  MI noted that he had been monitoring the situation, staff have not witnessed any significant problems. He suggested parents should get in touch directly if there were any problems. |  |
|  | **Plants for greenhouse**  VA noted that Evie Murray, who runs the Croft community garden and is a school parent, has said she is keen for the Croft/Earth in Common to work with the school, but they don’t have much in the way of funding. BS said that Evie should get in touch with him as there may be some sources of funding available etc Leith Industrial School trust | **VA to feedback to EM** |
| **3.** | **Pupil leadership Team**  The team talked about a number of areas of work being carried out be senior pupils.  Tackling misogyny – a couple of pupils have developed a presentation for house heads to use in their PSE classes. Using statistics, legislation, the results of a survey of teachers and anecdotal experience, the presentation aims to stimulate discussion on misogyny and sexism to identify the issues and develop a ‘Gender 10’ action plan for the school. MI also mentioned that there was good work being done in terms of male mental health and positive role models, including next year Graeme Armstrong of Young Team back in school for second visit.  Pupil council – Pupil council has been trying to expand into different year groups, through assemblies and setting up a stall, which reached a lot of pupils. Have sent out a forms quiz to try to gauge interest in more halal and vegetarian options for cafeteria. Aim has been to focus on water fountains and they are hoping to replace – did not yet have figure but are doing their own fundraising and hoping for funds from Parent Council.  Also been looking at toilets – and have new locks coming.  Boys toilets recently got new hand towel dispensers.  Culture day coming up on 1 March, schoolwide, planning for which has now started. | **VA to link in with BS re culture day** |
| **4.** | **Headteacher’s update**  MI noted the following:   * S4-S6 Track 2 reports would be coming out to parents on 26 January * Term dates consultation for 26/27 and 27/28 and UK Government vaping consultation had both now closed. * Assessment window took place before Christmas * Successful Christmas concert, S3 drama performers did a winter Christmas show, S1s went to panto * Niamh McCabe got scholarship to China for 24-24 * choir singing, interhouse swimming, interhouse table tennis, advanced higher drama performance * YPI final (winners were group representing Fighting Against Cancer Edinburgh). * New out of class process for students being out of lessons (for whatever reason) involves blue passes. * Recently had a parents evening online – interesting to see difference with in person. When parents asked which they prefer tends to be a 50:50 split. * Austrian visitors in from Apple delivering a session on digital learning. * Leith Leaver’s hoodies being worn by S6 – MI looking at extending this across S1 – 5. Uniform supplier used for blazers and ties have a really good footprint. Cost would be £19 for the top. |  |
| **5.** | **Parent Questions/ comments raised**  One parent said she felt that online worked well for S1-3 parent’s evenings, but when they get to the exam years appreciated the in-person ones.  Another asked about Ukrainian students.  MI there had been some changes since the ship had gone.. While many of the youngsters were still at the school, many have moved on, some to different parts of Scotland. Most that had moved within Edinburgh wanted to stay at LA. (BS noted that there were over 100 Ukrainian students last year in the school. 70-80% of those who could stay, did, with a higher number of Ukrainian students in the junior school now). MI noted that the school feels suitably resourced in terms of staff – requested extension to that staffing support at the beginning of the year which was automatically given.  He also mentioned that there were students coming from all over the world, and there is always ongoing work done to support.  MF noted that, while the system seemed to be working well, there were concerns about the hygiene of the out of class passes being used in toilets – people putting them on the floor etc. Alternative options are being explored, such as a lanyard.  HB also noted that there had been a question from a parent about staffing in relation to providing cover for classes in the junior school. MI said staffing situation is overall good – but parent should get in contact with him about individual situation | **PC to get parent concerned about staffing to contact MI** |
| **6.** | **Work Experience**  At the previous meeting in November, PC had asked MI to provide an update to this meeting on work placements, in light of some concerns about how often they are now happening. MI had previously noted that Edinburgh Council had moved away from a blanket approach to a more bespoke one. MI noted that the current situation was a hangover from Covid, but that things had been picking up again over 2022-23. In particular, the Developing Young Workforce team in the Council, who oversee arrangements and the central online booking system for work placements, are trying to build back connections with employers. Particularly as they build up what is available, the council approach is to encourage students, parents and carers, and members of the community to identify potential opportunities themselves, which the council will then sort out. It normally takes around 6 weeks to agree a placement. If any young people are interested in pursuing a work placement – whether or not they have something specific in mind – they should speak to BS in the first instance, who will provide the link to the Developing Young Person Scheme. |  |
| **7.** | **Treasurer’s report and funds requested**  HC noted that the current balance in the Parent council account s £1951. Once deductions are made for previously agreed funding requests, available funds total £1776.29  HC noted that the Parent Council had received the following requests for funding:   * Money for litter pickers and orienteering kit from Geography (Ms Steele) £270.90 * Keyboards for music £1000 * Beauty equipment for the new Beauty Course £500 * Drama School show £500   Following discussion, the Parent Council agreed to fund the following:   * Fully fund beauty £500 * Part fund drama show £250 * Fully find geography £270 |  |
| **8.** | **Fundraising group**  ES said in talks at the moment trying to get a stall at Leith Gala, hopefully will do home-baking alongside tombola and other activities.  Would also love to do a school raffle with prizes from local businesses. In talks with Ms Sharkey who organised raffle at school concert about ways to sell tickets both inside and outside the school, exploring cashless opportunities such as parentpay.  People wishing to be involved or donate to the raffle should get involved via dedicated fundraising email. LeithAcademy\_PCFunding@BTInternet.com |  |
| **9.** | **Next meeting**  Thursday 25th April 2024 7pm, in person at the school. |  |