

WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

EDUCATION SERVICES

MINUTES OF ARMADALE ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 15th September AT 7.30pm. in Armadale Academy CONFERENCE ROOM

1 PRESENT

Mr C Hornell	Mrs L Thomson
Mr A Sharkey	Mrs C A Johnston
Mrs E Birrell	Mrs K Smart
Mr R Orr	Ms L Waddell
Mrs M Cochrane	Cllr S Borrowman
Mrs L McInulty (Chairperson)	
Mrs J McKay (Clerk/Secretary)	

*A special welcome to some new parents who were present for this meeting only
M Murray, S Caddell and M Chalmers.*

APOLOGIES Cllr J McGinty

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Mr R Orr and seconded by Mrs L McInulty

3 MATTERS ARISING

Employment of staff for evening Lets

Mr Hornell informed Parent Council that a new sports steering group will be set up, and he has a meeting with Chris Weitz, next Tuesday, to discuss the details of an Grant Application for Armadale Academy. Chris Weitz will submit the application on the school's behalf. The total amount of the grant could be £40,000 and it is hoped that the funding from the grant will pay for one or two members of staff to be employed in the evening and weekends.

Mrs McInulty asked if the £40,000 was for 3 years, and if this was the case would a new application have to be submitted each year. It was not clear if this was the case and more information will be available by the next Parent Council meeting.

Mr Hornell informed the members that the new all weather pitches will be ready by mid November.

Until the funding becomes available the evening and weekend lets will be managed by Robin Fleming (Business Support Manager) and Jan McKay (Admin Officer).

Role of the Community Police

Mrs McInulty raised the question of have a Community Police presence in school on a regular basis, she also pointed out that Bathgate Academy and Deans Community High School have Community Officers based in their schools.

Mrs Birrell replied that the information given at the last meeting, Item 7 on the previous Agenda, it was agreed that the requirements for Armadale Academy clearly stated, Community Officers will be invited along to school on arranged dates or when the SMT agree that some serious incidents require the Community Officers presence.

Mrs Birrell added that she had had no communication with Community Officers since June when they were present for the Primary 7 / S1 visit.

4 STAFFING & ACCOMMODATION UPDATE

Mr Hornell suggested that this item could be omitted from future Agendas. He said that he would issue a Head Teacher Report with this information and send it with Agenda and Minutes to each Parent Council member.

Staffing Update this meeting :

Six new Probationer Teachers – in English, Modern Language, Maths, Art & Design, Music and PE departments. Probationers are allocated 0.7FTE for teaching with an additional 0.3FTE with a recognised mentor.

One new permanent member of staff : Mr Hornell - Head Teacher.

Retirees from previous Academic year were Mr Johnstone (Head Teacher) Mrs Brogan (Art Department), Mr Brown (PE Department) Mrs Smith (HE Department) Mrs Brown (SFL Department)

Three teachers going on Maternity Leave: 2 English Teachers and 1 Maths Teacher.

West Lothian Council Sickness and Management policy has been implemented throughout the Council and includes teaching and non teaching staff.

Tough Choices - the Council are addressing the proposed cut in budgets by implementing a reduction in Education support staff. Further information will be discussed at future meetings as the details are made known to Head Teachers.

Car Park availability – the middle car park is still out of bounds as it is the temporary Fire Assembly point.

Council members are concerned about the speed of traffic coming in and out of the school grounds, and wondered if traffic calming measures were to be introduced. Mr Hornell replied that the school will be discussing with Dawn and Local Council about the responsibility of all parties with regard to these measures. Mr Hornell also added that the school management are monitoring the situation and will report findings to those concerned.

Mrs Cochrane and Mrs Johnston wished to raise the issue of the Crossing Control person, endangering both pupils and drivers by crossing when the traffic signals are at green.

Any issue about the crossing patrol should be referred to WLC schools transport department.

New all weather facility – the all weather pitches should be available from mid November. Mr Hornell informed the Parent Council that the PE department and S6 will be marking the opening of pitches with a special event, more details at the next meeting.

5 SQA EXAM RESULTS

Mr Hornell distributed a report showing this year's pre appeal results.

The school achieved excellent results from 4th year. This was achieved through the dedication of good teaching staff, the quality of courses selected and students who were willing to put the time and effort into their selected subjects.

The report distributed was a condensed version of the large amount of data which is available. S5 results are important for government statistics as it provides an indication of the number of pupils who are now continuing with further secondary education.

The S5/S6 results were disappointing this year as there was a reduction in the number of passes from previous year's results.

The school hopes to improve this academic year with the implementation of new initiatives including mentoring, with S5 students taking part. Mr Orr (PTC Science) is one of the mentors and early indications show that at least forty one pupils will be offered mentoring. It is hoped that staff will mentor small groups of about two or three pupils. Several staff have also volunteered for mentoring duties.

Mrs McNulty asked if there would be finance available to allow the mentoring to continue, as the Council are cutting budgets as discussed through Tough Choices.

Mr Hornell said that he hoped they would be able to fulfil the mentoring requirements this academic year.

6 FINANCE

Tough Choices - this is the Council's programme of cutback to Services, and they will affect secondary schools over the next three years.

Mr Hornell said that it had been discussed at the last Head Teacher's meeting and it was indicated that the larger schools would be most affected.

The Council has agreed to clear the school's deficit from the last financial year, but changes will still have to be made to allow a break even out turn for this financial year.

Parent Council members were asked if they could assist in fundraising ideas to increase the balance for the School Fund. With additional income in school fund it would allow the school to provide more teaching resources.

Councillor Borrowman asked if they would consider a Ceilidh or Sportsman Dinner to raise funds.

Mrs Johnston said she didn't think that there would be much uptake on these events.

Mrs Birrell said that Mrs McDonald through her Community Links Group has tried to raise funds but it hadn't been successful.

Mr Hornell said that there would be a fundraising event for the opening of the new All Weather pitches and hoped that this would generate some income.

Councillor Borrowman also suggested that a joint Gala Day fundraiser might also be possible. He also asked if the new Sports Facility could be named after Alan McClory.

Councillor Borrow then discussed the possibility of the available Budget being reduced over the next four years, but that extra funding may be available through external agencies.

7 CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Mr Sharkey discussed the implementation of CFE, and that Armadale Academy had already started some initiatives with previous year's S1. (see item 6 of previous parent council minutes).

Curriculum for Excellence has officially begun in schools and the new Inter Disciplinary initiatives have started. Mr Sharkey added that more information and events will be available on a parent website on the progress of Curriculum for Excellence.

S1 pupils won't be sitting certificated exams until S4, it is not clear the format of exams but they will be certificated.

The last presentation for the present certificated exams Higher and Intermediate 1& 2 will be in 2014. Parent members are obviously worried about the outcome of the new Curriculum for Excellence.

8 REPORTING

It has been proposed that the new first year pupils will have a progress report sent out prior to the Parents Evening on 4th December. The proposal would be to ask teachers to comment on the various qualities of a pupil, using the hand out, "purposes of the curriculum 3-18", given to parents this evening, as a guide. Parents would then have the opportunity to make their views known on the S1 Parents Evening. A Showcase Evening for parents would also give pupils the chance to show their parents/carers what they can do by highlighting the qualities they have learned through Curriculum for Excellence.

9 OPEN EVENING

Mr Hornell held an Open Evening tonight at 7.00pm, which is the reason the Parent Council meeting started late. The event was a welcome to parents and also to try to encourage more parents to become involved in the Parent Council meetings. About thirty seven people attended also several members of the Parent Council. Four of the parents who attended joined the official Parent Council meeting as guests. It was a successful evening.

10 AOCB

Mrs Thomson enquired if the new S1 had settled in alright this academic year? Mr Sharkey had said there had been challenges and some boys had been involved in a few incidents, but these have been addressed and they have been disciplined through the normal procedures.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING Wednesday 24th November 2010 at 7 pm in Conference Room