

## **St Margaret's Parent Council Meeting – September 2024**

Attendees: Kirstin Shemilt (Chair), Jilly Burns (Vice Chair), Stephen McCullagh (Treasurer), Lorna Boyd, Claire Roxburgh, Lynn Thomson, Collette Moran, Sophie Rarity, Stuart Young-Murray, Sigrid Lurinsky, Mandy Taylor, Lesley Anne Riad, Fiona Ferguson, Kazia Zduniak, Phindile Ezeanya, Monica Allison, Shazia Imran, Kirsty Sharma, Tafadzwa Kangara, Christine Clark, Chuks Mordji, Paddy Conway (DHT), Anne Crookston (DHT), Isla Wright (HT), Corrie Boyd (DHT) and Mr Martin Dobie (Church Rep).

Apologies: Chris Segovia

---

**Welcome** – Kirstin opened the meeting by welcoming everyone attending and commented on how nice it is to see some new faces join the session.

**Previous minutes** – No points were outstanding from the previous meeting.

**Opening Prayer** – Mr Dobie.

### **Annual General Meeting**

- Kirstin Shemilt was nominated by Stephen McCullagh for the role of Chair - seconded by Jilly Burns
- Jilly Burns nominated herself for the role of Vice Chair – seconded by Stephen McCullagh
- Stephen McCullagh put himself forward for the role of Treasurer – seconded by Kirstin Shemilt
- Collette Moran confirmed she would be stepping down from the role of Secretary. No nominations were received for this role – remains vacant.

### **Parent Council Constitution**

- Martin confirmed he has a copy of the Constitution, and it was agreed this should be typed up and an electronic copy sent to both the School and Parent Council (PC) email. Monica Allison kindly agreed to type this up into electronic format.
- It was agreed this Constitution should be brought back to the PC meeting and reviewed on a regular basis (exact timescale tbc, but likely an annual basis).

### **Terms of Reference**

- Stephen confirmed this document is the sister of the PC Constitution and the purpose is clarifying what role the PC plays in decision making e.g. in particular members should be consulted on decisions that have a material impact of pupils and parents such as uniform policy and house structure.
- Kirstin added that this document will help us all understand the role the PC has to play in St Margaret's Academy.
- Isla confirmed the PC has charitable status.
- Stephen stated that in his role of Treasurer he would take responsibility for the PC financial accounts. Isla agreed the school was happy to pass on the relevant information.
- A fundraising calendar is being published soon by the school.
- Mandy suggested Easyfundraising could be a worthwhile fundraising opportunity.

### **Schedule of key dates across the year**

- Several parents noted that it would be useful to have a yearly calendar of important dates and events to aid with planning and to allow them to support their children. For example, prelims, parent's nights, work experience times etc.

- Isla confirmed the school would be happy to circulate key dates.

#### **Uniform policy – statement from PC**

- Kirstin stated a number of parents felt the uniform policy had change significantly e.g. encouraging blazers for all pupils, maroon jumper/blazer and removal of hoodies. She added the PC felt that they had not been adequately consulted in advance of the substantial changes to uniform policy. She stated the new policy goes against the current sentiment of reducing the cost of the school day, particularly during a cost-of-living crisis and the importance of having parents on board. The PC accepts that the uniform policy will not change but members felt strongly that the school understood how parents felt.
- Isla confirmed there were learning points to be taken from the situation and extended an apology for any anxiety caused.
- Isla agreed further clarify is required and a simpler uniform policy wording will be confirmed, starting from the core/base line and then staging up.
- The school poverty proofing statement will be published on the school website this week.

#### **PE Department**

- Sophie wanted to raise awareness of the talented girls who are playing football at St Margaret's and requested support from the school and/or parents to ensure there are opportunities for the girls to have training sessions so they can progress to the next level.
- Sophie has several parents who are willing to help and agreed to pass these to Isla. Isla agreed to see what can be done from the schools' perspective to support the girls who have their next match on 28<sup>th</sup> October.
- Paddy added there is a need for parent helpers for excursions too. Volunteers can email the school to put their name down for volunteering opportunities.

#### **School performance and attainment**

- Isla and Paddy showed several charts illustrating the attainment of pupils in S4/5/6 and across different socio-economic quintiles. Please see slides attached. It was agreed it would be motivational to share some of the details with pupils.
- The SLT noted the huge success of achievement in St Margaret's Academy for L5 and L6 across the school and the sector. St Margaret's has scored highly when compared to previous comparator 2019 (pre-covid) and the school are very happy with the results.
- St Margaret's attainment also scores higher compared to the sector in relation to SIMD data.

#### **Communication**

- Isla asked for feedback on how to improve communication with parents/carers.
- Items discussed included, several number of ways to communicate and sometimes this can be overwhelming, possibly use school app but not all parents using, school website, group call etc. The need for one platform for communication would be beneficial and the school are investigating this.
- Pupil progress tracker is very useful at the end of the year, but the mid-year tracker does not provide clear information about individual pupil progress and contains only very generic information.
- Face to face parent evenings have been missed and parents are looking forward to these returning.
- New school telephone number incorrect on website

#### **Participatory budget spending**

- Pupils have been consulted and have several requests. Isla requested PC members input on considering their requests. All agreed members would be happy to complete a survey to assist with this.

**Head Teacher Report**

- See report attached.
- There are several new Probationary Teachers and other changes to the staff team. Isla requested that any parents/carers should contact her or the Deputy Head Teachers if there are any concerns or questions.

**AOB**

- A request was made to share attainment data based on gender and race with the aim to help bridge the gap. Isla agreed to progress.
- The issue of locks on toilets was raised, especially in the PE department. Plans are in hand to resolve this issue in the short term.
- Issues still require to be discussed at a future meeting: homework and fundraising.