

**DOUGLAS-EWART HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL**

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018 from 6.30pm**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** H McColm, H Smith, L Fisher, S Simpson, K Hyslop, S Sneddon, M Byrne, D Chang, A Perry, F McElrea, R Christie, J Sloan, K McCormick, H McGeehan

1. Prior to the AGM and regular meeting, parents met with Maureen Smith (Education Officer) to discuss re-advertising the Head Teacher role. Helen welcomed everyone.
2. Jill, as our vice chair, had represented the group at the first round of interviews and explained there were 4 people on the panel and it was a unanimous decision not to invite any of the candidates to a second interview. Maureen stated that while this was disappointing, she was neither surprised nor concerned at this stage. There are often more applications when a post is re-advertised as some people don't apply first time round as they assume it is a "done-deal". The timeline Maureen suggested was agreed:  
Run advert from 6th January 2019 with a closing date of 28th January.  
First interview 5th February. Final interview w/c 18th February.  
Slight tweaks to the previous advert will be made, including stressing the requirement for leadership qualities. Maureen will make amendments and forward to Jill for approval. To reach a larger audience, a soundbyte/short video for social media was suggested.  
By mid-February we will know the likelihood of securing a Head Teacher. Maureen will discuss with Mr Cowie his preferred retirement date. All agreed it was important to have a "Plan B" in mind to allow Mr Cowie his deserved retirement.
3. Apologies had been received from: Cllrs McColm, Inglis & Haggmann, C Adams, A McClymont, F Simpson, F Donald, C Garrity, J Cochrane.
4. The minutes of meeting held 17th September 2018 were approved by Shona Sneddon and Rory Christie.
5. Matters Arising:  
Transport (bus) update – correspondence was forwarded to members after the last meeting. Discussion took place. The main concern is when, due to a bus shortage, pupils are reallocated to a different bus. Currently there is no record kept of this change so the school/parent doesn't know which bus a child is now travelling on. Jill will communicate with Douglas Kirkpatrick and request a list system is operated, where it can be noted which bus each child has been reallocated to on a particular day. This list should be given to the school office so it is accessible should the parent need to know the whereabouts of their child.

Update on promotional video – Mr Miller is happy to work with pupils to produce a video over the course of this academic year. Jill will correspond with him to progress a short video/soundbyte to promote the Head teacher post in January. Members suggested the short video should highlight the school's scenic rural location and wide range of activities with voice overs by pupils. Innovate, Include & Evolve are our school's aims and the Headteacher we're looking for will have great leadership qualities and want to make their mark in our community. The use of drone footage and a whole school group photo was discussed. Some ideas for the longer promotional video included support for Special Needs and transition.

6. Correspondence forwarded to members since last meeting was National Parent Forum's Newsletter and Sir John Jones' website details and video. Many members had watched the video, agreed he was an extremely inspirational speaker and would be keen to attend one of his events.
7. Statement of Account from Treasurer. Balance £607.70. Karen will update the list of account signatories with the bank and add Rory on. She noted no invoice for SPTC insurance had been received. Members thought it was now being paid by the authority. Karen will contact SPTC to confirm.
8. Head Teacher's Report and Q&A

PE - Two candidates applied for the temporary post but none suitable, now being re-advertised. Swimming coaches are currently working alongside non-PE teachers to provide cover for the senior phase. (A Teacher is required to be present for insurance purposes, while the coach has the subject knowledge. These additional costs are being met.) Discussion taking place with PE dept as to how to cover junior phase from January, when a Maternity leave starts. It is likely to be team games using coaches to ensure Physical Activity is provided, rather than Physical Education. The request of a coach to train as a teacher was informed by authority that they will be "kept in mind if any approach to "Grow Your Own" should be relevant".

The Drama teacher is leaving next month. The post is advertised. In addition an English post has been advertised in the hope of filling at least one post and being able to cover both subjects within the department. The current Drama teacher intends to ensure the pupils have covered the whole course prior to her leaving.

Mr Patterson is returning to DEHS to take up a PSE role and will be the Developing the Young Workforce staff member for the junior phase.

As indicated in the last Newsletter, concern over aspects of discipline has been noted. Assemblies are taking place to highlight these, in particular Social Media, manners & respect. Mr Cowie is currently reviewing the school's behaviour policies with staff and pupils and will consult Parent Council too. Several suggestions were discussed.

Mr Cowie has met with Stranraer College and Transforming Wigtownshire group with a focus on both vocational opportunities for pupils and also making DEHS a community hub for social care, health and education. Our 80 minute period system of timetabling is unique to Dumfries & Galloway but makes it possible for our students to attend Stranraer College within the school timetable. It is a system which is being copied in Perth's newest High School.

The school's involvement within the Community for Armistice was praised and noted by many, including the Lord Lieutenant of Wigtownshire.

A parent had noted the debate as to teaching just six National 5s (when previously 8 subjects had been studied at any one time) had been in The Press. Mr Cowie stated the current system of retaining a core curriculum for longer (till end of S3) meant pupils had a better understanding of more subjects prior to them selecting subjects for further study and so it was also easier to pick up additional subjects later in the school. Part of Mr Patterson's remit will be

to improve the understanding of the National qualifications and Pathways, of the junior phase pupils and their parents.

A parent had attended the Galloway National Park presentation and admired how well the DEHS pupils had conducted themselves – they gave their presentation in a confident, energetic and passionate manner to an audience of 300. Credit to them and their teacher.

Mr Cowie expressed his personal thanks to the outgoing Chair, Mrs McColm for all she had done for the school and his expectation that this proactive action and interest will continue in the hands of Mrs Sloan.

9. Councillor's report – none as all Councillors had other commitments for this date.

10. A.O.C.B – Julia Muir-Watt of the Whithorn Trust is offering Ancient Bones workshops. Hazel will forward the details onto Mr Cowie.

Plans for a visit by a language school based in Catalonia to Wigtown in the summer of 2019 are being made.

Forward notice - Joyce Cochrane will be looking for families to host students.

A Careers Night will take place in the school this Thursday – this was a very worthwhile and well supported event last year.

First week in December, S1 parents will have the opportunity to meet with their child's support teacher.

Meeting closed 8.50pm