

Minutes of the Parents Council Meeting

Held on Tuesday 14th July 2009

At 7.00pm in the LRC Longfield Academy

Present: Alaric Bonthron (AB) – Chair, Simon Beamish (SB) – Principal, Melanie Tomkins (MT) – Secretary, Jane Legge (JL), Stephanie Turner (ST)

Apologies: Sue Lawday (SL), Katrina Adams (KA)

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June were agreed.

2. Update on Actions set

The Uniform and Transport questionnaires the Parents' Council sent to parents - MT to ask Brenda to update on these.

3. Simon Beamish – Principal Update

As far as the decision from Planners and Government Executives are concerned all this has been done which is really good news. The archaeological dig is now underway and the school have arranged for some History students at Key Stage 3 to be involved in the process so they can go and have a look and see how they work. SB went on to explain that they expect Carillon to begin putting their buildings in place to work from in late July and the diggers to begin laying the foundations in early August. Because of the slightly later finish than was hoped the projected end is March 2011, bearing in mind the original view that we would have the new school by September 2010, although we are behind, we are still ahead of the final cut off date.

He explained that Mr Frank Green (FG) has said he has been looking at some research which involved 'ideal times for Academy's to open' and it suggests that the ideal point in the year is Easter the reason being if you open in September you tend to have a lot of disruption to the beginning of the academic year which usually stays with you throughout. Those Academy's that have opened in January have experienced similar problems but those that have opened in Easter have been in the advantageous position of working from the old buildings. From this research the

best time to move is at Easter and that is the position Longfield Academy is in. JL asked if we will still have our sports fields while the building work is being carried out and AB and SB replied that they are still there - they are at the top and will not be touched, the build is taking place at the front and it will not affect them. AB then asked if there is a likelihood that the school will have to close, as the Leigh did, to move into the new build and SB said there is an inevitability that we will have to move things over and they will have to take some time somewhere but whatever happens they will do what they can to minimise the disruption and to minimise the time when the students are not at school.

AB asked how the decision to rollover the timetable was going and SB said that there is a thorough analysis of that in September but at present all of the feedback received has been positive; the students behaviour has been better because they are focussed again and they are doing the subjects that they have chosen and the teachers are positive as well. The parents agreed that it is the right thing and feel it is working well.

AB then asked a question from Penny Wilshire (PW) who could not attend the meeting: are there any significant planned staff changes for the new term as she has had a good response from her son about the new staff who have been teaching him PW says that she finds this very impressive – SB said that they are fully staffed for September there are no vacancies at all. AB asked if we have lost any staff other than the usual amount and SB replied no that there are actually very few staff moving apart from a couple of retirements, one moving for promotion and one member of staff has left to travel the world – there is a maximum of eight staff changes which is a low rate of turnover. From September they are appointing the Directors of Learning, who are the most senior people in the school below Vice Principal level, after that they will get all of the other positions of responsibility in place and the support staff as well so that the whole staff restructuring will be done by next Easter - the system will become fully operational at that point. JL asked when they need supply teachers do they try and fill the position from inside if someone is available for those lessons or do they automatically go outside and SB said at the current time they have two cover supervisors who are first port of call when a teacher is away and their job is to cover for absence – one of them is a trained teacher – and look to appoint another on Thursday, so from September the school should be in the position

of having its own in house team of cover supervisors and teachers, if they do not have enough people inside that's when they would go to supply agencies.

PW then asked when will parents be informed about the uniform card which she also thinks is also a good idea SB replied there is a letter going out with the newsletter at the end of term.

AB then asked what happened with the option that FG gave to parents who could not get a place at the Leigh; they could get a place at Longfield Academy and SB said that out of these, two took up places the third one is still considering. The student roll for September is 140 and the capacity is 180. AB said that until it reaches 180 students they will not have to do anything about the selection process that FG has to do at the Leigh SB said that the Leigh is in the position of having 5 or 6 applicants to one place and we have 40 students lower than we need in year 7 but he feels the transport situation is a big issue, he went on to say that the new build and the improved results this year will help and the roll should improve quickly. AB said that the reality is that it comes down to transport at this time.

As there were no other questions Simon Beamish left the meeting at this point and added that if there are any further questions or e-mails we would like to send through he would be more than happy to answer them for us.

Action: The Parents Council would like the Rules and Regulations on a card or a letter refreshing things for parents and information on how to lodge a complaint in the new school structure.

MT to contact Brenda with regards to the Transport Questionnaire the Parents Council sent out and to ask when the Uniform Questionnaire will be sent.

MT to ask NW what response they had on their Transport Questionnaire that was sent out.

4. AOB

Communication – the parents agreed that the lack of communication is an issue with wrong letters being sent home and lack of information i.e. when the school had half day at the end of

term. AB said that most people have access to a computer nowadays and suggested that maybe on the front page of the website there could be a 'latest news' addition to inform parents of such events as finishing early, hot summer days – students do not have to wear blazers, open or not when it snows etc and feels that a simple update on the front of the website to inform parents would be an answer to the problem.

Action: MT to ask Neil with regards to an 'update' box for parents on the website.

The parents then discussed the use of social networking sites i.e. Facebook and U Tube during lessons as it has been found that students use these during lessons.

Action: MT to ask NW what the policy is for use of these during lesson time.

As there was no other business the meeting finished at 8.15pm.

Date of next meeting

**Tuesday 15th September 2009
7.00pm in the LRC
Longfield Academy**