

James Gillespie's High School
Parent Council Meeting and AGM
Wednesday 13th October 2021

Note of meeting

This meeting was held using Microsoft Teams due to ongoing limitations on group meetings related to Covid-19.

Nominations to join the Parent Council were invited to be submitted by email. The invitation to do this was made at the previous online meeting, by email to all parents and carers via the school admin and via the HT's Friday email update. Parent and carers were also invited to join during this meeting.

Questions from parents and carers were invited prior to the meeting and could also be added during the meeting using a moderated chat.

The following are notes of the presenter names and main points covered, as well as any relevant links, to accompany the video of the meeting held on Teams which is available to view at: <https://youtu.be/UUcqQMEJGao>

Presenters:

Donald Macdonald – DM (HT), Sarah Scott – SS (Chair) and Ros Ingle – RI (Treasurer)

Moderators:

Cath Downie – CD, Ailsa Macintosh – AM and Hilary Snaith – HS

1. Welcome and note of last meeting (0:00:00 – 00:03:11)

SS welcomed everyone and outlined the format of the meeting. Formal minutes were not recorded for the previous online meeting (7 September 2021) as a video record is available at: <https://youtu.be/DIXZ9cRECjs>

2. Update and Annual Chair Report (00:03:11 – 00:07:18)

SS gave feedback from a recent City of Edinburgh Council Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP) meeting with representatives of Parent Councils. She highlighted:

- a report by Robbie Crockatt, school estates planning officer, on the Council's new learning estate strategy
- the Education Reform consultation being carried by the Scottish Government
- concerns raised by parents on the roll-out changes to Active Schools in Edinburgh schools

SS introduced the Chair's Annual Report for 2022/21. SS thanked all JGHS Parent Council members and post holders, and parents for attending meetings, raising issues, putting forward ideas and helping with lobbying. She thanked all JGHS staff, including the senior team and admin staff for supporting the PC in its work, both by attending meetings and in work behind the scenes. She particularly thanked DM for his support. She acknowledged

how turbulent the year had been and hoped that the PC had been able to help keep parents in touch with the school and the rapidly changing environment.

A summary of the work of the PC and a breakdown of the presentations made over the year are available in the Annual Report for 2020-21 uploaded on the JGHS Parent Council website at: <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/annual-reports/>

3. Annual Treasurers' Report – Ros Ingle (00:07:18 – 00:15:04)

RI presented the Treasurer's Annual Report for 2020-21 and thanked Dougie Stirling for examining the accounts again this year and for his invaluable advice. Due to restrictions on holding events through the year, PC fundraising had all been through EasyFundraising and donations via ParentPay. She thanked all parents for donating in this way.

The Parent Council had distributed its funds through applications to the Small Sums Fund and had worked closely with the James Gillespie's High School Trust to ensure that as many applications were met as possible. She thanked the Trust for their support.

She noted that parents can help again with fundraising this year by:

- Donating via ParentPay
- EasyFundraising

Further information is available the JGHS Parent Council website <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/fundraising/>.

The full accounts and report have been uploaded on the JGHS Parent Council website at: <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/documents/financial-reports/>

4. Election of Parent Council Committee and Office Bearers (00:15:04 – 00:18:41)

Nominations for JGHS Parent Council positions had been asked for and received in advance of the meeting. Any additional nominations were also requested during the meeting.

The following posts were filled:

Anna Christal proposed Sarah Scott as Chair of JGHS Parent Council. This was seconded by Penny Tarsia. Sarah Scott accepted.

Graeme Davies proposed Ros Ingle as Treasurer of JGHS Parent Council. This was seconded by Vikki Plan. Ros Ingle accepted.

Nicolas Boyes proposed Kirstin Leighton as Secretary of JGHS Parent Council. This was seconded by Ailsa Macintosh. Kirstin Leighton accepted.

Katy Ruggeri proposed Hilary Snaith as joint Communications Officer with Laura Bird. This was seconded by Lisa Sutherland. Hilary Snaith accepted.

Cath Downie proposed Laura Bird as joint Communications Officer with Hilary Snaith. This was seconded by Karen Burke. Laura Bird accepted.

Nicolas Boyes, Chris Brickley, Karen Burke, Anna Christal, Graeme Davis, Cath Downie, Rob Dunbar, Vera Eory, Ruth Fowler, Sarah Jordan, Ailsa Macintosh, Lynne Mackintosh, Aileen Nimmo, Cressida Peake, Vikki Plant, Katy Ruggeri, Steffi Schultze, Lisa Sutherland, Penny Tarsia and Charles Warlow joined as general members of the Parent Council.

5. Head Teacher's Report – Donald Macdonald (00:18:41 – 00:45:49)

DM thanked the PC for their work over the year. He gave his Head Teacher's report and discussed staffing and staff absences due to Covid-19 control procedures. He noted that Covid cases in the school had been low, encouraged regular testing by Lateral Flow Devices, and noted recent efforts to have 12-15-year-olds vaccinated.

He discussed some of the activities taking place at school including Black History Month and COP 26-related activities and noted success in engineering science. He welcomed the return of extra-curricular activities, including Active Schools, and thanked parents for their donations to support activities. Duke of Edinburgh was also up and running again, but other residential events – including international trips – are not currently permitted under Council rules. He also confirmed that revision and other learning materials can be handed in to the school reception and discussed post-lockdown learning, the S1 residential, and Young Scot cards.

He confirmed that there would be changes to SQA courses and that the SQA timetable for 2022 had been published. The school planned for prelims in early 2022. Instability in the school Wi-Fi had been raised formally with the Council, and reassurance was received that work would take place over the holidays. iPads should be rolled out to remaining pupils early in 2022.

6. Questions and answers (00:45:49 – 01:03:00)

DM answered questions on the JGHS 2021 SQA assessment outcomes, arrangements for Advanced Higher classes and access to the Children First building, guidance for course choices, plans for a GME high school, capacity at JGHS, the SQA appeals process, JGHS homework policy, the James Gillespie's High School Trust, and instrumental music tuition.

See <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/documents/meeting-minutes/> for these and other questions.

7. Thanks (01:03:00 – 01:04:24)

SS thanked those who had volunteered to join the Parent Council, to the presenters for their updates and to Donald for answering parents' questions.

10. Date of next Parent Council meeting

Tuesday 30 November 2021