



Minutes of Gatehouse School Council Meeting held on Monday 4th February 2008

Present: Mr H McLean, Mrs A Fairnie, Mrs S L Cain, Mrs H Innes, Mrs P Hamilton
Mrs C Clark

1. Mr McLean **welcomed** all to the meeting and **thanked** everyone for agreeing to participate in Gatehouse School Council.
2. Mr McLean gave a brief **introduction to the role of the school council** and touched lightly on the differences between the School Board (terminated in July 2007) and the new School Council. The School Council does not have so many constraints as the old school board and has a more informal structure which hopefully means it will be considered more welcoming and flexible.
3. Mr McLean spoke about the Draft **guidance notes and Constitution**. The Draft Constitution was drawn up at an open meeting of the School Board on 23rd January 2007. It was agreed at that time that the name should be 'School' Council as opposed to 'Parent' Council to reflect the inclusion of anyone who has any dealings with the school, be it a parent, member of staff, pupil or a member of the community. It is important to have a structure in place to take any decision where they need to be taken and to have an extra means of communication with parents.

Mr McLean intends the Guidance Documentation to be an ongoing project that can be added to when necessary resulting in the availability and provision of guidelines for any new School Council members.

It was noted that the Constitution will need finalised at an early date.

4. Copies of the **Education Authority Guidance for Parent Councils** were distributed. They were received by e-mail and explain how parents can be involved, what the structure could be and how the School Council could be engaged.

There was a short discussion on whether the PTA would continue in it's present form. Mr McLean assumes this is the case but suggested that this may be an Agenda point for the next meeting.

Mrs Hamilton raised the question of co-opting members. Mr McLean advised that it is not necessary but the opportunity is there should we wish to do so.

Mrs Clark asked if a councillor had been invited to attend the meetings. All local councillors are sent details and are welcome to attend all meetings should they wish to. The meetings are open to all parents and members of the local community

5. **Office Bearers** were appointed as follows:-

Chairperson	Mrs Allison Fairnie	Proposed:	H Innes
		Seconded:	S L Cain
Vice Chairperson	Mrs Paula Hamilton	Proposed:	H Innes
		Seconded:	S L Cain
Treasurer	Mrs Helen Innes	Proposed:	P Hamilton
		Seconded:	A Fairnie
Parent member	Mrs Sara Leigh Cain		
Teacher member	Mrs Carol Clark		

At this stage Mr McLean invited the new Chair to proceed with the remainder of the Meeting

6. **Dates of future meetings**

It was decided that ordinarily one meeting per term would be sufficient but in view of the fact that the School Council has only just been brought into existence there would be two meetings between now and the end of this session. The dates are as follows:-

Monday 28th April

Monday 30th June

Both at 7.00pm in the school

7. **Any other Business**

It was decided that the Chairperson of the PTA should be invited to the next meeting

Mr McLean gave a brief outline of the verbal feedback he had received after the recent Care Commission inspection of the nursery.

A short discussion took place regarding the production/possibility of the summer fair

Mrs Innes raised the issue of the state of the children due to the wet/muddy ground at this time of year. This was discussed at some length but unfortunately no ideal solution was reached.

In the past , bearing in mind the dangerous state of the old playground, the train of thought was that it was better for the children to be muddy than hurt but now that the new playground has been built this is no longer the case.

One point of view was to keep the children off the grass during the wet weather but it's a pity to have such wonderful outdoor facilities and not use them. If the older pupils use the new play area for football where do the younger pupils or those pupils not interested in football play?

One incentive to keep clean could be to deduct House Points for muddy clothes. This has worked well in the past. Mr McLean will flag this up with the children.

Mrs Hamilton asked what to do in the event of someone bringing a problem/query to a member of the school council. Mr McLean said all queries should be directed to him in the first instance in the hope that it can be easily resolved without the necessity for inclusion on the Agenda.

Mrs Cain voiced concerns re traffic/children crossing in Dromore road. This is an ongoing concern and Mr McLean has already written to Jennifer Gray with a view to making the area safer for the children.

Mrs Cain advised that 'Bunkeroo' dance, drama and singing workshops are available for schools.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm