

MINUTES

St. Olave's P.A. Form Rep Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 09, 2018

Location: Main School Library

- **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Attendees from School:

Mr Rees Acting Headmaster

Mr Budds Assistant Headmaster

Mrs James (new Business Manager 4 weeks in role at the time of this meeting)

Parents Present:

Brid Nunn, Chair, Minutes and rep for 11H

Rachael Peek, Minutes and rep for 11M

Apologies

Colette Gebbett, Gauri Grover

Manju Hameed, Charmaine Joshua

Harbi Kaur, Winnie Leong, Paula

McCabe, Sheila Ruhomauly, Pauline

Skerrett, Sue Watts, Sunita Sahu

Bisi Akpomuje 7B, Sangeeta Mead,7C, Jade Bimpe 7H, Arunima Saha 7H, Elizabeth Garnham-Jong 8B, Baoching Liu 8H, Charlotte Rutter 9L, Sarah Cassidy 10K, Tiffany Barradell 10L, Narinder Gill, 10L, Martine Magnan 10N, Rinku Chibber 10N, Seema Singh, 11J, Olga Evans, 11K, Xiaohong Zhang 12Q, Sarah Eldridge 12S, Jane Bryan-Brown 12V, Justine Grant 12W, Julie Costard 12Y, Fiona Lane, 13W, Lin Limbrey 13Y

- **Questions for the school**

- 1) **Prize Giving Evening**

"I know it's a long way off but what are the arrangements for Prize Giving Evening? I had heard that only students who achieved A*'s are invited to attend but surely Prize Giving should be a celebration for all students who have achieved in their A Level results (and contributed to school life etc), not just for those who gained A*'s."

Answer: Mr Rees:

Yes, we do celebrate any pupils that achieve 3+ A* at A levels and also GCSE 10 or more at grade 9 or 8. There are also a number of other prizes celebrated at prize giving evening: special prizes for Prefects, lead roles in football, hockey, fives etc Athletics, drama, school contribution, Vex Robotics as this is a national level – so we celebrate as many aspects of school life and it's definitely not always academic. There are form prizes also awarded in years 10, 11 and 12 for a wide variety of non-academic reasons, and also in the lower school years 7 & 8. A parent asked if

this information regarding the prizes awarded at Prize Giving could go on the school website to drive motivation for pupils and Mr Rees said he saw no reason why not.

2) Exam weeks in the School Calendar

Could the school publish the exam weeks for each year group into the school calendar at the beginning of the school year? This information is currently not available on the website and there has been no official communication around end of year exams.

Answer: Mr Rees

Year 10 exams tend to be in Activity Week 1. Year 9 – before Activity Week 1. Years 7&8 after half term. The school felt this was a better spread over 2-3 weeks and a better balance about getting ready from Year 9 onwards. Years 7&8 could be more flexible.

3) Navigate around the VLE

Would it be possible to have a simple flow chart to help navigate and access the treasure trove of information on VLE? Or perhaps, who can we possibly ask to help us with this flow chart?

Answer: Mr Rees

Mr Rees has spoken with the Website Manager and wants to clarify what Parents are looking for. With Moodle, it is self-explanatory with many resources available, so to construct a map would be difficult and largely pointless. Students find it very accessible and easy to navigate. The VLE however is an old site with old data and Moodle has taken over much of its function. Clare Slyfield is happy to accommodate parent requests for guidance but this is very time consuming. It was therefore suggested that a simple flow chart would be added to the Curriculum Overview page of the website and this would be advised in the Headmaster's Newsletter

4) Amalgamation of Voluntary Fund and PA fund

There is a suggestion that the voluntary fund and the PA fund could be amalgamated under the same 'transparent' banner, which would be great. If it happened, hopefully this would also result in money donated to the fund attracting Gift Aid because the PA is a charity and the voluntary fund is not. If it were not possible to put the two funds together, is there any other way we can add gift Aid to Voluntary Fund contributions? This was discussed at a previous PA meeting and I want to know if it is being actively pursued.

Answer: Mr Rees and Mrs James (newly appointed Business Manager)

This was the longest point discussed on the evening, so for ease the answers are broken down into topics.

Gift Aid: Mrs James confirmed that the school does reclaim Gift Aid on voluntary donations for all parents who have filled in a Gift Aid form. Although the school is not a registered charity it is eligible for Gift Aid as a Voluntary Aided school.

The fund:

Mrs James fully appreciated parents' frustrations in the previous handling of the fund. Mrs James spoke committed to transparency regarding the fund's administration in future and how the fund would be spent. Mrs James committed to demonstrating in future how significant the fund is to the school's finances and that it will be used to further enhance the school life of all pupils. Mrs James wants the current fund and any future funding used to benefit the students, and handled in a more collaborative way with between parents and the school. The school feel at the moment that there is a good knowledge base of what parents want through the parental survey – some of the priorities are: a computing suite that drives excellence, quad classes painted and re-carpeted, an astro turf/all-weather pitch etc. Parents asked that the priorities for spending the fund are published so that parents are fully aware. Mr Rees and Mrs James both stressed how important the fund is and both fully appreciated how trust has been lost over the last year. Mrs James also said that she is happy to come to the form reps meeting and update parents on the fund and the spending. This was agreed as a future point at all class rep meetings. Mr Rees also clarified that the VF is fully audited and that this also needs to be more transparent in the future, and Mr Rees also stressed that the current spending of the VF is prudent and necessary and in the best interests of the pupils.

A question was asked by a parent about how the fund has been spent previously and how this has been shown? Mrs James answered that the fund has been previously spent on school trips, rugby trips, coaches for trips, the mini buses etc

Another question was asked by a parent about the fact that Drama and Spanish were cut and is there an opportunity to now fund these two subjects? Mr Rees said that the school can't commit to long term spending on teachers through the fund and that the fund should be spent on enriching students' school life.

A parent also mentioned that it is really important to engage with new Year 7 parents and new year 12 parents to engage them fully in the changes within the school and in supporting the VF. Mr Rees is fully committed in doing this.

A Year 13 parent commented that it has been disappointing for the majority of Year 13 parents who have probably committed to the VF and have not necessarily seen the benefits of the fund spent for the enrichment of their children. Mr Rees acknowledged that the people who can answer that are not now present in the school (Mr Onac and Mr Wooley), and that the VF will be handled differently now and in the future.

A parent asked about the previous 'Ensuring Excellence' telephone calling to parents and if there is any appetite to reintroduce this? Mr Rees said that this would not be reintroduced. Parents

need to be fully engaged in the benefits of the VF, and how the fund will be managed differently in the future.

A parent asked if there could be a 'benchmarking' exercise to understand what other schools do and how they fully engage with parents and maximising the amount given to a VF. Mrs James answered that the average is between £50 and £75 as a monthly donation and that the letter to new parents should stipulate this. It was acknowledged also that the VF is voluntary and that the school appreciates the donations from parents.

There was also an acknowledgement from Mr Rees that the managing of the Fund would be quite different in the future, and an acknowledgement to Mrs James that she is new into role and needs to be given a chance to demonstrate that the fund will be much more transparent in the future.

PA taking over the Fund:

Charlotte Rutter, Chair of the PA, stated that managing the voluntary fund would be a huge undertaking; the PA is run by volunteers and there would have to be a very large financial benefit to warrant the additional workload and bureaucracy that would come from such an increase in turnover of the charity. She said the PA struggles to get enough volunteers for its current level of activity, and after hearing Mrs James's plans for future transparency she sees no benefit in the PA assuming management of the monthly parental donations.

Other sources of Income:

There was a question raised about the scout hut usage. Mrs James was interested in talking to the Scouts and will be sent contact details.

A parent raised that the school could look at solar panels, and how this could be an initial investment but a longer term gain in cost savings. This will also be looked at

5) Year 10 form tutors carry on to Year 11.

Will the current Year 10 form tutors carry on to Year 11

Answer: Mr Rees

Yes. There will be 5 forms in year 9 to ease some of the pressure. And there will be a consistent form teacher from Year 9 through to Year 11 covering the entire GCSE years. Year 9 will be split into 5 forms to reduce the Tutor group size and benefit students in class lessons and pastoral care.

6) Updated Homework Schedule

Please could we have an up to date homework schedule as at the moment it is difficult to know when homework is set/due.

Answer: Mr Rees

The Planners do work. This is the preferred way for homework noting. A parent did ask about 'show my homework' which has been discussed at previous class reps meetings. Mr Rees mentioned that reps from 'show my homework' had presented to staff across the school. Staff did not feel it was as efficient and felt that telling the pupils was quicker than using an app. Staff felt very strongly that 'show my homework' did not meet the requirements and would not be pursued. Some parents in the room did not feel that they should be 'checking' apps to understand or 'police' homework. Mr Rees stressed that any parent concerned by either too much homework, or not enough should contact the relevant teacher.

7) Update on the investigation

It would be good to hear the outcome/findings from the investigation

Answer: Mr Rees

A draft of the report has been written and is going through local authority etc for checking. There will be a number of sign off stages and it is proposed to be available in June or July. A question was asked if it would be made public. Mr Rees believed it would be made public and probably released over the summer but was not sure how this will be shared as the school has no control over the report. However, as it is the School that is being investigated, the LA may have a different viewpoint on sharing all information.

8) Appointment of the new Head

Any developments regarding the appointment of the new Head

Answer: Mr Rees

The advert for the appointment will be in the 'Church Times' on 11th May, with interviews on the 11th and 12th June. Staff and students will meet the candidates, with a proposed start date of 2019 – this will depend on notice period. Some candidates/head teachers have a long 'lead time' if they wish to terminate their contract.

• Any other business

Rachael Peek raised an issue that parents had complained that the quality of the school blazers had declined. There is now only one shop supplying school blazers (Graduates in Orpington) and Rachael is meeting with Graduates to have a conversation with them. Mrs James (new BM) has

said she will support any costing conversations once Rachael has had an initial meeting. This offer of support was gratefully received.

Start time of meeting:

It was agreed that a 6.30 start was a better time for school reps and parent reps – this will be introduced from the next form reps meeting in September, running from 6.30 – 8.00. Following a full PA meeting on 16th May, it was agreed that Winnie would canvas Form Reps about this change.

- Agreed to hold the next meeting in the second or third week of September