

Felsted Parents Group

Monday 8th October 2018

1. Attendees MSt, JW, LI, TH, GK, RM, NC, ESW, ES, OS, AB, DS, RD, KB, AH, AHL, SHL, LG, KP, BS, CG, SS, HG, JD, SAJ, CW, BR, JM, SK, SA, SZA, GR, MT, DC, HW, JH, CS, Staff: CJT, GWSM, AGC, NIJL

2. Minutes from previous meeting

The following points were discussed from the minutes of last term's meeting:

- a) Stebbing Road Crossing Deadend currently - with Highways.
- b) Felsted Diploma Update for next term's meeting.
- c) EPQ Appeal/Update Unsuccessful in the appeal, but next results were significantly improved
- d) Pupil Behaviour New pupil intervention has been put in place - any feedback?
- e) Reports New reports are now in place and will report on progress, not just on effort
- f) Annual Trip List Not on website, but in the back of the calendar. **To be added to website (CRSEC – JAD)**
- g) Cost of exams Still being reviewed to try and control costs
- h) Mont's & Manor Feasts Will be separate events this year

3. Items from House meetings

House meeting - GCSE year - a prom at the end of the year. Arrange for this summer. (This item was carried forward to a group after the meeting, who will follow up with Mr Masters)
Deacon's day pupils' clothes are being laundered at no extra charge - **GWSM to check.**
Windsor's - procedure around allowing pupils to go out for University Open Days - seems convoluted at the moment to get to an Open Day - **GWSM to ask CHP/SB to evolve system**
Size of studies in Mont's Year 11 - raised with ALC. Similar in Year 10 study space - **CJT/GWSM to review with ALC to arrange work areas (classrooms, library or 6FC) for those who want more space and quiet**

4. Smiley and Red Faces

GWSM asked the question as to whether the system was useful. Comment was made that these are not used consistently. A question was asked as to whether this system has a place for the 6th form.

CJT outlined the purpose of the system, and as a conversation starter, and to see patterns, it was agreed that it was useful.

5. Wellbeing Action Plan (KAM)

Began last year working towards the national award. Need some feedback. Sheets on tables to be filled in during the course of the evening. A question was asked: Could there be a male counsellor? One is starting on Friday! Any feedback on the plan or any suggestions please write on the papers, or email afterwards. Collect in at the end. In answer to a question: The action plan - criteria that the school has to complete. Development plan is the school strategy to deliver this.

6. Sniffer Dogs

Felsted works with the local police to help them with their training. One aspect of this is to provide venues in which they can train their sniffer dogs. When this first took place, it was during the holidays, so that nobody saw them coming in. Over the last two years, we have made sure that it is very visible. It is good for public benefit, and it is a good warning to pupils as well. A question was asked as to whether the local community was aware that this was for training purposes. Information is shared, but only via the Newsletter, so the answer is probably not.

7. Alcohol Policy

A number of parents have raised the issue over alcohol at school events and the amount of alcohol available at school events when pupils are present. Discussed at SLT and HMs. Learning to drink responsibly - but limiting the amount of alcohol available to 2-3 drinks at events where pupils are present. Need to set the right example to pupils.

Supplying the right amount of alcohol at House Feasts. Good policy, no issue with that. Not necessary to have alcohol at many events - casual events in the evening - concerts, parents evening with a plated meal - teach the children. Alcohol supervised by HMs and teachers - fine, when monitored, but held responsible. Sitting with parents - OK. Talks at school, or parents afternoons - alcohol does not need to be there. Of course people can choose not to drink.

A comment was made that there can be too much alcohol at some prep school events.

Young adults, but in a controlled environment. If with their peers, just going out, they would be drinking a whole lot more. If you stop all drinking among 6th form, there could be a backlash, but a moderated amount works well.

Best for parents to have choices, and recognise that some events have a big price tag, so there is a reasonable expectation of a few glasses of wine (this would be events where no pupils are present). Choice and responsibility; have to learn to make responsible decisions. **GWSM/CJT to continue to work on school policy.**

8. Traffic in the village

We have had several issues this term to date, particularly with deliveries at drop off time. These have been addressed, and hopefully will not recur. However, we are still having problems with cars parking on the road sides at the top of Stebbing Road, outside the medical surgery, outside the Deli, outside Linsell's and on both sides of Chelmsford Road. We have very little jurisdiction over these, other than our involvement in the local planning. We are doing our best to avoid serious clashes at ends of terms/exeats/half terms.

Parents were asked for any ideas. Car turning right into the prep school - try someone out by the road, to get them to continue and drop off on the left, if they cannot turn in. Worst problem is the minibuses blocking the car park. Suggestion to drop off at Courtauld or the old Follyfield car park. Car share scheme? Control of the traffic at Courtauld - let cars wait for the pedestrians - can hold things up. Older children can be dropped off and walk to school. Walk in the last bit for Years 6-8. Lollipop person? **There were many ideas. The school will try a few things in the coming weeks and months to try to make a difference. Minibuses seem to be the best starting point.**

9. Successes and challenges

Challenges

- a) Brexit - there is a great deal of uncertainty around, and European families are beginning to ask more questions about what the future holds.
- b) Costs - we recognise that the cost of a Felsted education is high, and the latest news about pension contributions will be a large cost for the school to try to absorb, alongside the threat of business rates and/or VAT on fees.
- c) Politics - the threat of a Labour government has always been one to make Independent Schools shiver, but even the Conservative party is no longer willing to be a friend to the Independent Sector in public. (Damian Hinds)

d) Media - the IISCA enquiry into historic abuse allegations has hit some of the sector (Ampleforth and Downside), and will move on into other schools shortly. We have no identified concern at this point.

Successes

a) Academic results, especially value added, which sees us in the top 20% of all schools in the country in all three qualifications (A Level, GCSE and IB) and the top 15% of all schools in total. b) Popularity of the school - numbers remain at an all-time high, and interest remains very high, with the school's strength of boarding and community feel important factors in distinguishing us from other schools.

c) Sport - we are recognised as an outstanding school for sport, but are also building a broader offer, with more teams, more other opportunities as well - sport for all, and a very wide cocurricular experience as well.

d) Wellbeing and support with wellbeing issues, alongside quality pastoral care. International dimension - not just a tag on, but something that the school can be really proud of, and adds to the breadth of education on offer.

e) Character education - education of the whole person - recognised as the future of education on an increasingly wide scale, and it is something that we do very well.

This led to a wide-ranging discussion over pupil activities. **GWSM to follow up with RJP on how provision of activities is done.**

10. Development project

Consultation has taken place with our Architects and they are now drawing up indicative plans for a new education block, on the Stebbing Road (where the Fives Courts are). This will be a 'headline' building, with modern, flexible teaching spaces, to inspire teaching and learning. It will also enable us to develop some of our smaller older classrooms to be specialist sixth form teaching areas, and so have a knock on to our teaching offer around the site. The whole Campus from the Coffee Shop to the Science block will get a facelift here, with portacabins going from this area, and providing a link through to the library from this academic hub of the school, as well as providing a pleasant outdoor space.

11. AOB

A request was made for postcodes of schools for away matches to be given. These are on the website, but are hard to find. **Marketing to make them more obvious and accessible.** A request was made for year group dinners, but this was not popular with the group who like the house based events.

The May Ball was advertised on behalf of FPS - 4th May 2019 in the LRH £70/ticket.

The Sports Tours event was advertised - 26th January 2019 £65/ticket.