

## **Felsted Parents' Group Minutes**

**Monday 5th February 2018**

**1. Apologies** – a number of apologies were given prior to the meeting, but the following people were in attendance: SA, JJ, CS, CW, DS, SS, AH, CG, RJ, NC, SK, NR, VM, TH, SC, HG, LC, MS, JW, SZA, KP, BS, MSt, SAJ, JM, AHL, SHL Staff: CJT, GWSM, PGB, RES, NIJL

### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

- a. House meetings have now been diarised and were happening more consistently.
- b. Stebbing Road crossing is moving ahead with the council, and the school has funding in place to make this happen. **Action: update when progress (CJT)**
- c. Mobile phone policy. Year 11 will not be included next year, but possibly the year after.
- d. Drugs policy. The school has reviewed the policy, and encouraged more visible Police Dog training on site.
- e. Charity report – see point 5 on agenda.
- f. Use of iPads and Tablets – HMs have been made aware of the concern, and been asked to monitor use in houses where possible.
- g. House booklets – all houses are producing booklets for September 2018 intake.
- h. Smiley faces – these have gone live for parents (and pupils), and were welcomed as a helpful addition.
- i. Felsted Diploma – see point 3 on agenda.
- j. Revision courses – see point 7 on agenda.
- k. Sports and newsletter – CJT updated on use of newsletter for highlights, with Twitter being used for the best source of immediate information. Not all fixtures and results are being reported, but this is to allow the newsletter to focus on news.

### **3. Felsted Diploma**

Some statistics were shared about awards given last year for the Diploma at all three levels. Year 9 – 34% of pupils received an award, 13% of year 11, and 11% of Upper 6th .

Engagement has generally been going up this year, with years 9 and 10 nearly all putting in entries last year, and an increase in year 11 this year. The take up in the 6th form is still not brilliant, and needs further work.

Some innovations this year have seen the Reading award, which is popular, use of tutorial time to develop use of diploma. Year 9 entries will no longer be fixed, timed entries, as the pupils are more confident in making their own entries, and reflections. INSET will be used to encourage greater staff engagement with this, and more publicity is being sought through the newsletter (diploma entry of the week).

The general response was that the Diploma was a very good thing in principle, but needs to get more support from staff (Tutors) and parents need to have a greater understanding and

awareness. **Action: a further report on Diploma to be brought to the group in Autumn 2018, to reflect developments.**

#### **4. Music Update (PGB)**

Mr Bennett spoke to the group about Music. He outlined the variety of opportunities in the school, including informal Thursday break recitals, midweek concerts, and major concerts.

It was recognised that no system would work for everyone, but that there was an attempt to be broadly inclusive, while still giving opportunities for elite musicians to develop their skills at the highest level.

The pupils will be invited to complete a Performing Arts Questionnaire (this has been postponed to the beginning of next term from March). **Action: Performing Arts Questionnaire to be completed, and results shared.**

#### **5. Charity Update (NIJL)**

A limping Chaplain arrived just in time to talk about charities. He outlined the work that the school does with its main charities, and with house charities as well.

Parents were positive about the school's commitment to charity, but raised some points for further consideration – Bollywood event did not seem to get much publicity; pupils need to be encouraged to do the work to raise funds; could each pupil be attached to a key charity, recorded on the Diploma, to show their commitment; were pupils really aware of the work done by the charities.

#### **6. Development Update (RES)**

Mr Salmon presented to the group on the work being done by the Development Office. This looked at the current projects, including the viewing platform at the sports pitches, the Leavers' Walkway, the recently completed Bathurst Garden, and also the impact of funds raised for bursaries.

#### **7. GCSE mock follow up**

With the new GCSE format (grading 9-1) there is a degree of uncertainty around the likely summer outcomes. GCSEs have now got greater content, and are harder in some respects.

As a result, some of the mock results were lower than pupils would have wanted. This has led to some pupils being put on specific action plans, revision sessions put in place through the week for pupils to attend, and the establishing of a requirement for Year 11 to work in these revision sessions, or in other areas, during the late afternoons, when some year groups have free time. The aim is to create a culture and ethos of hard work.

Discussion over running revision courses at Easter had taken place previously, and the response is that the school does not currently have a formal revision course running at school.

However, there is a possibility of the school being used for some revision, and some subjects are offering specific revision days as well. The more formal revision course during the break is something that the school will continue to consider.

Exam timetables will be confirmed and sent out after 21st February. **Action: exam timetables to be made available to parents.**

## **8. EPQ and HPQ**

The disappointing results of the first batch of the EPQ were discussed. The school is continuing to go through the process of challenge and appeal after what appears to be an unfair process.

However, the EPQ remains a positive experience, a good learning experience, and the exhibition put on of the projects was of a very impressive standard. The results have been a knock to the confidence, and work is being done with staff delivering the EPQ, as well, as we reflect on the results in a number of ways.

The HPQ has started with the Year 10 students this year, and again this requires independent research work, which is very valuable. It will mean, hopefully, that this group will be well versed in the skills required to be successful in the EPQ when they reach the sixth form. **Action: update will be given on the appeal process for the EPQ. Further update to parents group at a future meeting on progress with the qualifications.**

## **9. Issues from Houses**

The school has recently been working with some challenging behaviour between pupils, in particular in Year 10. The school's aim in all of this is to ensure the best outcomes for all the pupils. Working with relationships between people is not easy, and there is often not a straightforward solution, and mistakes will be made, but it is important to remember that the goal remains the best outcome.

As a school, the view is to reward positive behaviour, rather than just punishing negative behaviour. Those who display active good behaviour will help to resolve problems, while those who stand by doing nothing, will enable problems to remain.

The school will always try to work with parents (and pupils) in order to achieve this. Parents were supportive of this approach, and echoed the view that good dialogue was essential, as it enabled parents to contribute positively. Also, early news was welcomed, so that problems could be resolved before they became too serious. **Action: discussion to be relayed to HMs, to help a positive way forward. You tube clip of Will Smith forwarded to parents (Fault vs Responsibility - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USsqkd-E9ag>)**

## **10. AOB**

As it was already after 9.30pm, no AOB was raised.

**11. Date of Next meeting**

Agreed as Monday 21st May, 7pm (CRDR)

CJT, 27th February 2018

## **Felsted Parents' Group Minutes**

**Monday 21st May 2018**

**1. Apologies** – a number of apologies were given prior to the meeting, but the following people were in attendance: JW, MS, LK, AB, MT, NR, TH, VM, SA, SK, AH, LC, BR, CG, SS, BS, CS, KP, JM, CW Staff: CJT, GWSM, AGC

### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

a. Stebbing Road crossing – unfortunately things have not moved forward as hoped with this. The school has made funds available to do this, but the local authority have now decided that they will have to consult more widely before this is done. **Action: the school will continue to press (Bursar)**

b. Felsted Diploma – a further update will be given at next term's meeting on further changes and developments to the diploma. **Action: update at next term's meeting (CJT)**

c. Performing Arts questionnaire is still to be done. **Action: this will take place in the second half of this term (with pupils), and will help to inform developments for next year (GWSM)**

d. Exam timetables were confirmed as having been sent out to parents.

e. EPQ appeal – parents were updated on the ongoing appeal, which will see an official hearing on 12th June. **Action: parents to be kept updated on progress (CJT)**

f. Pupil behaviour – a new procedure for pupil intervention (both academic and behavioural) was outlined to parents. This is currently being shared with staff, with a view to introducing formally in September. **Action: parents to feedback next term on first impressions of this approach**

### **3. Change to charitable objects**

The Bursar explained why the school had written out to some parents about a change in the charitable objects. A question was asked as to whether it was a good thing to retain the line favouring children born to Essex parents or resident in the county of Essex. The reasons were given for needing to change this (to reflect practice and admissions policy).

### **4. Parent Dinner and Meeting Timings**

The Group was asked to consider the best times for evening events when parents are asked to come into school. General consensus favoured 7.30pm for dinner events, although some shorter information evenings would be better earlier. **Action: Calendar Committee to continue to consider appropriate times for parents.**

### **5. Proposed changes to reporting system (GWSM)**

Mr Masters outlined the proposal to change reporting for next year, to shorten reports, and focus on progress, rather than effort. A question was raised as to how houses would use this, when the 'effort' tables were used well to reward pupils, and these rewards were popular. The same question had been raised at the Housemasters and Housemistresses meeting, but it was felt that the progress score could be used in the same way, and that the new reporting would help to focus on progress and getting pupils to work towards targets. **Action: further**

**consultation on reports internally, and then communication to pupils and parents.**

Parents to feedback on first impressions at one of next year's meetings.

## **6. Tattoos**

A question was asked as to what the school policy was on tattoos. Currently, there is nothing in the rules specifically about tattoos, and this could open the door for pupils to get tattoos that would be visible. **Action: Mr Masters to adjust rules, along the lines that tattoos are not permitted for pupils while at school, but if anyone does have a tattoo, they must cover them up at all times at school.**

## **7. Annual Trip List**

Some frustration was expressed that a lot of information about trips is coming out quite late, and making it hard for parents to plan ahead. Mr Masters reported that work is currently being done on this, and a 12 month rolling list will be published on the website from July this year. **Action: List to be published on website (GWSM)**

## **8. Major Incident Policy**

In relation to a recent incident in the village, a question was asked as to whether the school has a major incident policy. It was confirmed that there is one in place, and that senior staff will be undergoing training in the second half of term in managing a major incident.

## **9. Opportunities for parents to come into school**

The general feeling was that there are the right number of opportunities for parents to come into school currently. Some improvements for parents unable to get to parents' meetings, and an early chance to meet Tutors would be appreciated. **Action: school to look again at parents' meetings and communications to parents not able to be present. Also, to look at an early opportunity for parents to meet with Tutors.**

## **10. Cost of Exams**

Several parents commented that the cost of exams had been an unwelcome addition to this term's bills. This was particularly the case, with the timing (with the letter about fee increase followed by this bill). **Action: CJT to investigate further on current costs, previous costs, and what normal practice is at other schools**

## **11. House Feasts**

A question was asked as to whether Mont's and Manor could have separate Feasts in 2018-19. This was generally felt to be a good idea, given the numbers likely to be in the Day Houses next year. **Action: separate dates to be calendared for the two houses to have Feasts.**

## **12. Half Term Letter**

CJT outlined the plan to write to parents about parties, drugs and alcohol before half term. A couple of parents agreed to read over the letter and feedback before it went out.

### **13. Space available for Day Houses**

A question was asked about whether the day houses had sufficient space for the number of pupils likely to be in them in September. CJT reassured parents that plans were being finalised to make sure that this was the case.

### **14. AOB**

Parents who had at one point had children in FPS would get the opportunity to contribute towards a leaving gift for TJS (in support of the Parents' Association in the Prep School) Those parents who will be leaving the group at the end of this term (and for whom this was therefore their last meeting) were thanked for their contribution and support to the school.

### **15. Date of Next meeting**

Monday 8th October, 7pm (CRDR)

CJT, 2nd June 2018

## **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.