

LASSWADE HIGH SCHOOL  
CHAIR'S REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 2017

It's been another very busy year for the Parent Council with 8 meetings since our last AGM. Attendance peaked at 42 at our last meeting but has rarely been lower than 15. It's so encouraging to see many regulars and new faces contributing to our meetings which rarely last less than two hours – not for the faint hearted!

**LOOKING BACK**

Looking back over the last year the main focus has been parental engagement. At the beginning of the 2016 session I met with Mr Hornell and we planned a number of topics spread out over each of the meetings for the session. These topics reflected a particular area of policy or curriculum where parental views were sought in order to influence the direction of travel for the School. The topics included the Students we would like to develop, timetable models, behaviour management, parental engagement and the student support model. We broke out into small groups in order to discuss these topics and fed back in order that the parental view was recognised and used to shape School Policy and thinking. Many of these discussions were challenging and wide ranging and I am very grateful to all of you who participated so fully in these debates. We also discussed issues such as the implementation of the School Blazer across all year groups and this was introduced for this year's 1<sup>st</sup> Year and concerns about the reward system, Conabor.

Fundraising has been another huge feature of this year. Thanks to Marek Short and Marie Owen's sponsorship and the hard work of the Fundraising sub group under the direction of Fiona Robertson, our Christmas Fair broke previous records in stall numbers and income. This allowed us to pay for the new website which we hope will be launched soon. This cost £3000 and will hopefully revolutionise and improve communication. 20 parents volunteered to help that evening and it truly was a team effort. We gave School groups free tables to allow them to maximise their fundraising potential.

The launch of the 200 Club has been another major achievement this year. Fiona Harris kindly set this up and with the rest of the fund raising committee we have been trying hard to make it work. We now have almost 50 members but with a School roll of 1500 and over 120 staff there is clearly more scope for members. A gentle push therefore to those of you who have not yet signed up to consider supporting this project.

A bingo night and regular refreshment stalls have contributed an additional £1100 to our coffers. Thanks to those who support us in all these events either by pouring coffee or making a donation. This allows us to help various departments in many ways. Highlights this year have been the website, buying Manga High for the Maths department, £1000 to the Journey to Change project supporting 6 South African Children in travelling and attending Lasswade for 2 weeks in February 2017, prizes for Home economics and Art Department and paying for an inspirational speaker for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year programme.

Looking back at last year's report, I noticed that Mr Hornell challenged us to raise £5000. We almost made our target by raising £4333. Looking forward hopefully that will be achievable in the next year.

We can't do it without support and if anyone is looking for a new challenge then please do volunteer and help out on the fundraising side of the PC.

Communication has also been on the radar following the communication survey we undertook in September 2017. That was the motivation for the new website. In addition we have been using the School facebook page regularly to highlight topical issues such as changes to bus timetables, exam information and updates on PC events. There is certainly a lot more to do in this area and it remains a focus for 2017/2018. We will continue to contribute to the School newsletter.

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

At our meeting in August 2017 we broke into groups to discuss changes to the meetings. This was a really useful exercise. One of the main themes was to bring back presentations from pupils and we will build that into the meetings going forward. Communication on a variety of topics was another major theme. In the main they related to communication from the School in relation to school trips and extracurricular activities and those comments have been fed back. Concerns about the website were also mentioned although this is

being addressed. These ideas will be used to freshen up the Parent Council Meetings. There will still be opportunities though for parental engagement and as an example two parents attended a meeting this week to look at the new reward system VIVO. The new head team have also agreed that one of them will attend each meeting as a pupil representative and Mr Hornell and I have discussed the possibility of another member of staff attending.

Fundraising remains a big focus. We are finding it increasingly hard to find volunteers to staff refreshments for parents evenings so we are handing this over to 6<sup>th</sup> year who will use the donations for their projects. This will mean a drop in income for the PC. We are hopeful however that the 200 club will continue to grow and that our Christmas Fair and Bingo nights will be a success. In addition this year we are creating a folder for the School to use for transition and other events which will advertise local businesses. In the past this has raised £750 so hopefully there will be a success with this again.

Thanks again to all those who attend, support and participate in making the Parent Council a vibrant and challenging forum for debate.

Lindsey McGregor

Chair Person

27/09/17