

# Baxter High Parent Council

Minutes of the meeting of Bell Baxter High School Parent Council held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at 7.00 p.m. in the Café Bar.

## Welcome and Apologies

The chair welcomed the group, Alan Currie, Lead Officer Local Bus Services Contract, and Michelle McCollum, Service Manager (School Estate)

Apologies from Phil Gray, Nancy Hainey, Mairi MacGregor, Martin Orr, Carron Pour.

## 1. Record of Actions

- 1.8 Should read 'Alan Berry agreed to look at the form the Howe of Fife club use for a similar initiative.

## 2. Review of Record

**2.3 Blue Light Disco** – First event taking place on 9<sup>th</sup> May at Elmwood. Event supervised by Police, Integrated Community Schools and other agencies. Publicity in school aimed at S1-3.

**2.4 Newsletters** – Bell Baxter newsletter going out end of May. Neil to write article to include section on 500+ club, fundraising and A.G.M.

**2.5 Fundraising** – Nothing back from request for recipes.

**2.8 P.T.A.** - Fiona Scanlon reported that a meeting has been up in school for 2<sup>nd</sup> May to move forward with the 500+ club. Handover from P.T.A. slower than anticipated.

Adoption of minutes proposed by Laura Swan and adopted by Alan Berry.

## 3. Information

**Artificial Weather Pitch** – Michelle McCollum informed the group that a report on the pitch was submitted to the meeting of the North East Fife Area Committee in March, this report was approved in principal. A public meeting was held in school last week and the planning application is expected to be lodged in the next few weeks.

## 4. Transport

Mr. Black introduced Alan Currie and Michelle McCollum to the group.

Alan Currie reported to the group on the current transport arrangements for Bell Baxter. Mr. Currie reported that the school has one of the highest numbers of bus travellers. The school is credited with being one of the better organised and all incidents are reported and followed through.

Mr. Currie further reported that Stagecoach is the main provider of buses throughout Fife. The five year transport contract goes out to tender on a rolling programme. It is the decision of the contractor how many buses are provided and on which routes. The Council work with the Police and Vehicle Inspectorate to ensure a quality service is provided. The Council are currently working towards an upper age limit for buses of ten years.

Discussion took place on pupil behaviour and the lack of supervision. Mr Currie reported that all bus drivers are trained before working on school buses. A pilot is currently in progress where CCTV is fitted to buses, a maximum of 6 buses across Fife at any time. Any behaviour related issues are dealt with by the school. The Safer Travel project run by Fife Constabulary is looking at possible solutions.

Discussion then took place on the benefits of single decker buses rather than double decker. Mr. Currie raised issue with the lack of space in the bus park at school. Single deckers hold approximately 50 persons with doubles taking 75-85 approximately. Questions of over-crowding raised. Michelle McCollum informed the group that no overcrowding had been reported by Bell Baxter.

The group discussed the benefits of seat belts fitted to school buses. Mr. Currie reported that seat belts are not always suitable for the buses in their other uses. Contractors are aware that the Council would prefer seat belts.

The Chair summarised the discussion. It was agreed that the discussion needed to be taken further. Michelle McCollum agreed to return for a further meeting, suggestion made that the Police Liaison Officer be present. A sub group of Neil Millar, Judith Finnie, Jennie Whittle, Laura Swan and Phil Black will meet prior to the next meeting to discuss next steps.

## 5. Budget

Mr. Black reported to the group on the current financial situation facing Fife Council. Mr. Black reported on three areas of savings that impact on Bell Baxter.

**Bus Supervision** – There will be no budget for this service. Previously teaching staff have been paid to supervise pupils at the bus park at the end of the school day. This is a saving of £3,500. Bell Baxter has two School Support Officers but it is felt that this is insufficient staff to monitor approximately 1200 pupils. The Senior Leadership Team have taken the decision to pay the costs from the school budget for this session.

**Review of Staffing** – planned cuts are projected for the next three years. No change has been made to the rationale for the staffing formula. The staff budget makes up almost 95% of the school's annual budget.

**Home School Link Officer** – This post is paid for centrally. The number of posts have been cut across Fife by 50%. This post provides a valued service and Bell Baxter currently has a vacancy in this post which will not be filled. The school is currently trying to reorganise this service with less resources.

Mr. Black reported that the Council have identified the following potential growth areas.

The group discussed the budget information. Questions were raised over schools that overspend. Mr. Black reported that Bell Baxter operates within its budget.

The group then discussed the school roll and the recent information about a projected drop in the school roll by 2025. Mr. Black updated the group on the projected roll of 1837 for August 2008. Discussion then took place on what information the Parent Council would like on this matter. The Chair agreed with the group that Ken Greer, Executive Director Education, should be invited to the next meeting. The Chair agreed to write to Mr. Greer asking for clarification on the projected roll.

## 6. Report by Rector

Mr. Black reported on the loss of Jane Baikie, Teacher of Drama, earlier this term.

Mr. Black further reported on the announcement made earlier today by the Education Minister on proposed changes to assessment. The school is currently working towards changes to reflect Curriculum for Excellence.

**7. A.G.M.**

The group agreed that the A.G.M. will take place on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June at 7.00 p.m. It was agreed that a few members of the group would make themselves available for the P7 evening on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June to help promote the Pupil Council.

**8. Date and Agenda for Next Meeting**

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00 p.m.

Sylvia McNaught  
Clerk to the Parent Council