

## Minutes of parent association meeting

Date Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011

Time of meeting: 6 pm

Location of meeting: S1

### Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Agree Purpose of the group
3. Consultation Evening
4. Learning Centre Grand Opening
5. Parent Briefing Feedback
6. Feedback/issues
7. Generating more members
8. A.O.B

### Present:

Claire Parry            CMP

Donna Gowland        DTG

Cheryl Hindley        CH

Jill Rothwell          JR

Ron Bolzem            RB

Kim Kennedy          KK

Diane Beirne          DB

### Apologies:

Gill Mason

Jo Rutherford

Deborah Moss

## **1. Welcome**

CMP welcomes the group and starts the meeting at 6.05 pm, explaining the role of the group and asking all members to introduce themselves and their reasons for joining the group. CH was a parent governor at Stanley and is keen to learn more about college, DB wants to get involved because she feels her daughter doesn't tell her anything about college, RB felt disappointed with the level of communication from college last year and is keen to get involved, KK comes from a family of teachers and wants to learn more about college, JR wants to learn how a sixth form college operates. CMP outlines that the group is start of a more interactive process between the college and parents aiming towards creating greater transparency and exchange of information and ideas. CMP wants the group to encourage more of a sense of a college community and to bring KGV into the local community.

## **2. Agree purpose of group**

All agreed that the e mail system was good and that e mailing the parents is a good way of getting information even if you can't get to the meeting. CH and RB asked for the minutes of the meeting to be e mailed to all parents.

## **5. Parent Briefing feedback**

CMP explained the role of the parent briefing newsletter and explained that it was another way of generating communication with parents. CMP said the concept of the parent briefing came from the idea that parents didn't know what was happening in college. CH said that she thought the parent contact group was a good way of getting e mail information from parents. CMP explained that the typeface was small on the first briefing to save costs and that the next parent briefing will be posted on the college website and e mailed out to parents rather than posted.

## **4. Learning Centre Grand Opening**

CMP invited members to attend the event and explained that it was both the launch of the learning centre and the college's Christmas concert. She said that this was the opportunity to meet with other parents and get them involved, CH and RB suggested having a sign up sheet on the evening.

## **3. Consultation Evening on 13<sup>th</sup> December**

CMP says that this would also offer the parents' association an opportunity to promote the group to parents who are currently not involved and give the members the chance to talk to people at KGV.

CMP asked for ideas on how to get more members, RB asked if minutes of meeting could be e mailed to all parents and those who had expressed an interest in attending but who couldn't make this meeting.

## **6. Feedback/Issues**

CMP talked about proposed changes to website and introduced parents to the idea that the website will house three zones: the parent zone, the student zone and the prospective parent zone. RB

made an enquiry about the minutes for the latest governors meeting and asked when these will be available on the website. RB also questioned the time of the meeting and said that more people would be likely to attend if it was on later of at the weekend.

CMP also asked if it would be worth linking the parents' association in with feeder schools PTAs?

RB said that as KGV is only a 2 year option so you're thinking past the college, parents need to be more aware of the differences between school and corporation. KGV has different segments and different trenches of kids, difficult to get sizeable enough interest group. The group suggested that the time of the meeting be moved from 6 -7.30 – 8.30. This new time was agreed by the group.

CMP asked the group how frequently we should have meetings and proposed an initial schedule of one meeting per half term, a total of six per year. The group asked that the next meeting be quite early on in the next term so that they get to know what's going on in that term. RB asked whether six meetings would be enough to get things done and asked for the schedule to be kept flexible and open ended, so that if the group needed to meet to discuss other issues and events they could do so. This was agreed by all present.

CMP confirmed the time and date of the next meeting: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at 7.30 in S1 and repeated that all are welcome and asked the members to encourage other parents to attend.

**The group then returned to point number 2 (Agree Purpose) and considered point 7 Generating More Members:**

CH said that the school PTA's didn't have much of a say so it would be nice for parents to know that this group will be listened to and that it should be used as a sharing of information on both sides. She suggested creating a diagram outlining the communication process and showing, to parents, where the information will go. CMP agreed that this was a good idea and CMP and DTG are to work on this as a display for Consultation Evening. CH also asked who the minutes would be shared with and CMP said that they would be shared with SLT (Senior Leadership Team), DLA and DDLAs (Directors of Learning and Achievement and their Deputies) and College Governors. CMP explained that she meets with SLT on a Tuesday and feedback would be disseminated there.

The name of the group was discussed and RB suggested Parent Association as it is both familiar and different. CH asked if teachers were to be involved with the group and CMP said no, not that this stage. The group needs to focus on the parents needs. KK said that it's a good idea to share information as the two years goes really quickly and the transition from school to college was a bit of a shock as the college is very different to a small school where you know everything that is happening. KK also outlined her disappointment with the Meet the Progress Coach evening as she would have welcomed the chance to talk more on an individual basis to staff instead of walking into a room full of people, listening to a presentation and leaving at 7.05 pm. The group discussed the variable quality of the Meet the Progress Coach evenings and the fact that some had felt able to stay behind to talk in more depth whereas others hadn't. KK said that it wasn't what she had expected and that it was pretty scary as she wasn't sure what was going on.

CMP asked if we need to have other meetings for parents, earlier on in the year?

KK loved the 1:1 aspect of interaction at school and felt that she wasn't sure where to get information from the progress coaches, she was also worried that if a student wanted to change direction then it's another year. She also outlined that the progress review meetings in March came too late to turn it around.

CH asked for clarification on consultation evening and progress review evening, CMP explained that the consultation evening is for prospective students and progress review for existing students.

RB said that because it's a two year college and a change of pace and scene that A levels don't become important and most students are looking to the next step, university, so they don't see college as being as important. If they don't get the right direction in the first year then they can't get direction or a second chance until a year has gone. He also made the point that at the start of the year you don't know what the differences are or the questions to ask and made the suggestion of some open surgeries, perhaps to run once a month, with the progress coaches but agreed that this might put too much pressure on them. JR asked if an online portal could be used more to communicate information between the college and the parents, particularly regarding assignments and progress?

CMP said that the learning zone and parent zone would be good channels for this and that frequently asked questions is something that is being worked on for the parent zone.

RB said that there aren't enough progress meetings early on in the year. He also said that from his experience teachers had always been flexible and willing and available for individual consultations. CMP agreed with RB and said that we need to make it clearer to parents that it is acceptable to phone a teacher to arrange a meeting. KK said that unless it is a terrible situation you wouldn't want to make contact but that it would be more useful to get information earlier on in the year. JR said that her son was told that he had to go to learning support but that she hadn't been made aware of any problem with his handwriting speed. She said that it would have been nice to have been told that he was being referred to LS and asked for clarification on how this is communicated to parents and whose job it is to do so. RB said that by the time he found out his daughters wasn't making sufficient progress in her course it was too late to do anything about it. He said that some teachers must have had an idea of what was going on earlier but didn't tell them although on the whole he had found teachers to be very helpful and had been given everything he asked for.

CH asked if data review letters only started this year?

CMP answered that data review letters started two years ago and outlined that the data report goes out 3 times a year and that year 12 reports are being completed at the moment with a parent review to follow in March.

CH asked if it might be a good idea to invite parents of prospective students to these meetings? CMP thought this was a good idea and said it would be great to get them involved and to carry through that contact all the way through a student's time at KGV. CH also made the point of communicating with feeder schools to introduce their parents to our parents association and get them involved.

**8 A.O.B**

CMP said that she would put all of their suggestions together and asked the group to e mail her with ideas for publicity for consultation evening. CMP reminded the group that they needed to be clear about their function and the items that the group wish to prioritise.

KK and CH asked for an elongated freshers' fair at the start of term as her daughter wanted to know more about what events and societies she could join at college but had felt rushed by the fair at the start of the year and unable to take things in. All members asked if there could be a version of the freshers' fair for the parents at the Meet the Progress Coach evenings so that parents are also aware of the extra curricular options available to students. RB suggested a virtual freshers' fair on the internet so the students, and prospective students, can see what they can get involved with. He said that it was something the students could help design.

JR asked if the college was a 'Get Set' College? JR is going to send the information to Caroline Muir. CMP checked to see who was available and willing to help at the Consultation Evening and reminded the group of the Learning Centre Grand Opening.

The meeting concluded at 7.15 pm.