

MINUTES FROM AGM 2021

Dundalk Grammar School

Parent Teacher Association

Minutes AGM 2021

Zoom Meeting 7th October 2021

Present Jonathan Graham, Enda Murphy, Lorna Kane, Catherine MacGinley, Aoife Lynch, Philomena Gilmore, Martin Betz, Trish McKeague, Mandy Good, Tom BATTERY, Melanie Drake, Niamh Larkin, Siobhan McConnell, Georgina Dunne, Alan Norton, Fiona Gleeson, Joanna Kelly, Karen Murray, Laurent Blanchet, Marchell Suartes, Pauline Umar, Roisin Foley, Rulan Zhang, Jennifer Ritchie, Emer Dawson, Diane Wright, Andrea Phillips, Carol and Cormac Hannigan, Maggie BATTERY, Obi Okosi

Apologies

Harriet

At the outset Lorna Kane as Chairperson expressed the condolences of the PTA and Committee members to the family of the late Shane Bennet RIP. Lorna explained for the benefit of parents who may not have known Shane, that he had been a long standing and valued member of our Committee for many years and a great friend to us in the years since. He had passed away suddenly during the summer and was a great loss to the school community.

Previous Minutes

Previous minutes were available to all on the website and were approved. Proposed by Lorna and seconded by Aoife

HM Report

Mr. Graham opened by referring again to the loss of Shane Bennet. He echoed what Lorna had said and acknowledged on behalf of the school the huge contribution Mr. Bennet had made to the school community.

Mr. Graham referred parents to the written report he had published on the website and spoke about the particular challenges faced by staff and students due to Covid 19, the measures taken to address those challenges and, in spite of them, the many activities which the school community managed to conduct nonetheless, over the past year.

He noted that Zoom and Teams classes had become the norm during the past year.

The Leaving Certificate Accredited grades system posed particular challenges.

Parent Teacher meetings were taking place online.

A new post was created in the school – School Medical Officer.

Due to national lockdowns, the school had to close between March and June 2020 and January and March 2021, followed by a gradual return.

School policies continued to be reviewed and adapted including, in particular the Admissions Policy and Child Protection Policy.

It was hoped that the new Astro Turf pitch would be completed by the end of October. This was a project which had required a huge financial commitment and Mr. Graham paid tribute to the Board of Governors for agreeing to fund it.

He concluded by thanking the PTA for the work they do behind the scenes.

Chairperson's Report

Lorna repeated her welcome to parents to the AGM. She said it had been more apparent than ever in the last 18 months how important the links between parents, students and the school are. She pointed out that one of the functions of the PTA is to work with the Headmaster and Management in relation to things like school policies. The PTA makes suggestions in relation to extra-curricular activities and arranges events including inviting speakers to address parents.

An effective PTA has a strong role in school life and she urged parents to consider joining the Committee or volunteering to help with specific events.

Lorna invited parents to keep in touch with the PTA Committee by e mailing us or contacting Committee members.

Secretary's Report

Catherine advised the meeting that the Committee had continued to meet regularly notwithstanding Covid restrictions. Meetings were conducted via Zoom. At the

beginning of the effects of the pandemic, we were able to discuss the measures being put in place for remote learning. As time progressed we were able to give some parental feedback about the return to school.

Our usual activities had of course been curtailed but we were able to conduct a raffle for a Christmas hamper in the school in 2020. We had been delighted with the response and were very grateful to parents who had so generously contributed prizes.

We had also been able to run an online talk for parents on Anti-Bullying. We had received very positive feedback about that and would hope to build on the success of that in future.

We had hoped to hold the annual PTA quiz online but were defeated by the limitations in place. In Shane Bennet we had lost our outstanding quizmaster and apart from his many other talents we would greatly miss his challenging quiz questions.

Treasurer's Report

Aoife confirmed that we hold a total of €7153.81 of which €5000.00 has been pledged as the PTA contribution to the outdoor shelter which is in the course of being sourced. Once that is dealt with, we will have a balance of €2153.81.

Committee membership

Lorna invited parents to volunteer to join the Committee. Louise Moss was proposed by Lorna and seconded by Aoife.

Interest was expressed by Carol Hannigan, Niamh Larkin and Jennifer Ritchie. Lorna will contact them after the meeting.

AOB

Lorna mentioned Compass and explained that it is the body which represents minority faith schools. It provides our representative on the National Parents Council and is an important link for us to maintain. One of the functions of the Committee is to liaise with Compass and she encouraged parents again to consider joining the Committee.

There being no other business the meeting concluded