

Parents Association: Annual General Meeting.

Minutes 11th Nov 2019.

Present: Tom Brennan (Chairperson), Eddie Kelleher (Fundraising Chair), Helen Hynes (Secretary), Rachel Casey (Treasurer), other PA committee members: Tracey Murphy, Hillary McCarthy, Samantha Bowen, Breda Harrington, Colleen Walsh, Principal Fergal McCarthy, Phil Cone (representative from Academy Crests), parents.

Apologies: Ger Hogan (Deputy Principal), Deirdre Lynch, Denise Wyse, Debbie McCarthy, Donna O’Conner.

At the beginning of the meeting Helen Hynes read an email from Mr Ger Hogan (Deputy Principal) regarding the new school tracksuits. Mr Hogan wanted to *“remind parents that the KCS tracksuit pants are the only acceptable pants to be worn for PE or activities. Many students present in grey pants and leggings. Up to now we have been patient due to the time delay in the tracksuit orders but as this is no longer the case we cannot accept these alternative pants. We will be texting all parents in the coming days to outline this.”*

Helen Hynes then introduced Mr Phil Core, who is a representative from Academy Crests, the company that are supplying the new school tracksuits. Mr Core explained that he had delivered the second batch of tracksuits to the school on the day of the AGM and that the full range of tracksuit sizes are now in stock. Mr Core dealt with feedback and queries from a small number of parents.

Chairperson Tom Brennan then formally opened the meeting with a welcome to all present and invited Principal Fergal McCarthy to speak.

Mr McCarthy spoke about:

- The Maths programme in the school. The school incorporates extra maths classes into the timetable. It also has been working with the 5th and 6th class teachers in local primary schools to ensure that there is a common approach in how Maths is taught in primary schools which then helps students to grasp concepts when they come to secondary school,. Last year the school’s Maths department ran a series of classes for the parents of 1st year students to help parents support their children. These have continued this year and will also be offered to the parents of children in 2nd year.
- Microsoft Digital Media Literacy Hub – the McCauley Suite is being equipped as a “Digital Media Hub” with the support of Microsoft. Kinsale Community is the first secondary school in Ireland to be designated a Microsoft Showcase School.
- Visit of President Michael D Higgins: President Michael D Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins will visit the school on Thursday 14th Nov to unveil the 1916 Proclamation sculpture. At this visit, the Hall will be designated ‘The Michael D Higgins Hall’ and the school will be launched as a Microsoft Showcase School. The MD of Microsoft Ireland will also attend the ceremonies.

- Mr McCarthy spoke about the excellent Leaving Cert and Junior Cert results this year which were above the national average.

A number of questions were raised from the floor and were answered by Mr McCarthy:

- How can we improve student access to lockers?

Each year group has lockers in different parts of the school. Up until mid-term break 1st year students were allowed to go to breaks earlier than the rest of the years, to help them to access the lockers and also to gain confidence getting to the canteen etc.

- How can we cut down on students having to carry heavy books ?

Students are encouraged to bring only the books they need for each time period during the day. There are 3 time periods per day so students should not need to bring more than 3 subjects worth of books with them at any given time. Parents also discussed strategies used by their own children to cut down on the need to carry books – these including screenshotting pages from books and also using the electronic version of books that can be used by students who have a new copy of most textbooks.

- Is there a designated place for year groups to eat?

Yes, year groups are assigned spaces to eat that are in the vicinity of their lockers. The exception here is TY – the TY year group has lockers in a number of places.

- Why don't students have base classes?

It was decided that having classrooms that are designated for specific subjects rather than for specific class groups, allows for a more stimulating classroom environment, with charts, artworks, books etc available in the classroom that relate to the subject in question. Moving between classes has also been shown to give a sensory break to the students.

- Is typing taught in the school?

While it is acknowledged that it is a useful skill, it is not on the second level school curriculum.

Minutes 2018/2019

The minutes of the PA AGM from 2018 were then circulated. See separate document. All those present read the minutes. There was a discussion from the floor about the subject PE. The minutes were agreed.

Chairperson's Address

Tom Brennan then circulated his Chairperson's Address – see separate document.

A number of issues were discussed relating to the Chairperson's Address:

- The line markings for the track are not yet in place, but it is expected that these will be put in place in the near future. The track is already begin used, and we have expressions of interest from multiple clubs to use the track when the line markings are in place.

- The reason for delays to finishing the track were discussed. It was acknowledged that the facilities are now of a very high standard, and we have been working closely with local athletics groups to ensure that all appropriate equipment is in place.

School Book Rental Scheme:

Helen Hynes explained the running of the School Book Rental Scheme for the Junior Cycle. In the past year this was organised by Natacha Farley with the support of Liz Timmons. Many other parents helped out on the days when books were collected and given out to students. 4 parents volunteered to take on the running of the scheme this year. These parents are: Tracey Murphy, Hillary McCarthy, Aurelia Fleck, Majella Burns

Election of new members to the PA Committee:

This year the following committee members have stepped down from the PA Committee: Rachel Casey, Breda Harrington, Donna O’Conner, Owen Wills and Helen Hynes

The following parents have agreed to join the committee for the 2019/2020 academic year. They are:

Raffaella Valenti – proposed by Helen Hynes, seconded by Liz Creed
 Daragh Keating- proposed by Colette Connelly, seconded by Rachel Casey
 Majella Burns – proposed by Hillary McCarthy, seconded by Tom Brennan,
 Martina Gallagher – proposed by Helen Hynes, seconded by Tracey Murphy
 Sinead O’Regan – proposed by Rachel Casey, seconded by Eddie Kelleher
 Chrissy Ewing – proposed by Hillary McCarthy, seconded by Helen Hynes

Members from the 2018/2019 committee who agreed to stay on were: Tom Brennan, Eddie Kelleher, Hillary McCarthy, Tracey Murphy, Debbie McCarthy, Samantha Bowen, Colleen Walsh

Multiple other parents put their names forward to help out at school activities and to help with the school book rental scheme.

Any Other Business

Tom Brennan thanked the outgoing committee. This was echoed from the floor by Liz Creed who thanked the committee for their work on behalf of the parents.

At the conclusion of the meeting the new committee met to elect officers.

The officers and committee members of the PA for 2019/2020 will be:

- Chair: Eddie Kelleher
- Secretary: Martina Gallagher
- Treasurer: Chrissy Ewing
- Fundraising Chair: Tom Brennan
- Committee Members: Hillary McCarthy, Tracey Murphy, Debbie McCarthy, Samantha Bowen, Colleen Walsh, Raffaella Valenti, Daragh Keating, Magella Burns, Sinead O'Regan.