



**Minutes of GETNS PA Committee Meeting  
11<sup>th</sup> October 2012, 8.00pm, GETNS**

**Attended by:**

Fiona Nic Choiligh (PAC Chair)	Peter Bishton (PAC Secretary)	Sonya Callan (Fundraising)
Jackie Durbin (Fundraising)	Fiona McCarthy (Acting PRO)	John Callaghan (BOM Parent Rep)
Karen Flynn (BOM Parent Rep)	John Baugh	Barbara Campbell
Evan Furlong	Charlotte Hanrahan	Donna Marshall
Aran McMahon		

**Apologies**

Mona McCrea (PAC Treas.)	Niamh Mac Cárthaigh	Nicky Scudds
Magdalena Szpilka		

**Welcome and Introductions**

Fiona Nic Choiligh, as Acting Chair welcomed the attendees to the Parent Association Committee 2012-2013. Roundtable introductions were made.

**Minutes**

The Minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> September PAC Meeting were approved and signed.

**Matters Arising**

Sports Day – Feedback given re. organisation and car parking

School Website Calendar of Events – Thanks to Fiona McCarthy and Michelle Thunder

Treasure Hunt – Planning progressing, although date pushed back to April/May 2013

Coffee Mornings – Previous change from weekly to *ad hoc* themed basis to continue

School Yard Parent Roster – Principal to get back to Chair. There were a number of different considerations to take into account, but Principal was willing to discuss.

Breakdown of “School Sundries” Charges – Chair waiting to hear back from other schools

BOM – New Community Rep approached on Tuesday, and BOM waiting for response

Secondary School – Disappointment, but aim still to make links to new secondary school

Annual General Meeting Debrief – Noted that there was a lower turnout than 2011. In this context the possibility of holding social evenings for parents, and the importance of creating a “community spirit” amongst parents was discussed.

**Election of Officers**

Thanks given to the members of the PAC 2011-2012. **ACTION:** The Chair to pass these on.

The following were elected unanimously for 2012-2013:

- **Fiona Nic Choiligh – Chair**
- **Peter Bishton - Secretary**
- **Mona McCrea - Treasurer**

It was agreed that the Chair and the Treasurer would be the two assigned signatories for PAC cheques. **ACTION:** Chair and Treasurer to meet with John Callaghan (BOM Treasurer) to discuss on-line banking for the PAC bank account.

The position of Fundraising Liaison was discussed, and based on the amount of work associated with this role, it was agreed that it may be a position better shared between two PAC Members. Accordingly **Sonya Callan** and **Jackie Durbin** were elected joint **Fundraising Liaison Officers**.

In the context of the Public Relations Officer position, Niamh Mac Cárthaigh had indicated that her first priority was to preparations for the Craft Fair. Fiona McCarthy's work on the School website was noted. Discussion followed on the Public Relations role and ideas and clarifications were offered. It was agreed that Fiona McCarthy, with support from Donna Marshall, would undertake these duties for the time being.

### **PAC - Spread of Members through Classes**

It was noted that 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes were not represented on the PAC. **ACTION:** It was agreed that further volunteers would be sought from parents of students in these classes.

### **Communications**

The PAC's methods of communication and facilities available were discussed. It was agreed that Fiona McCarthy would handle the PA Website, with Evan Furlong taking on the class directories, mailing lists and Facebook. Fiona would especially work on making the communication aspects of the website more visible, especially class directories, and would approach Nancy Falkow to help her. It was agreed that when looking for other PAC members, or even general volunteers, any skills or experience in communications/IT would be especially sought. The idea of pledging skills, rather than money when fundraising was also noted. The use of bag notes as opposed to e-mails was raised and discussed, with practical considerations based on experience being noted. While some ideas were forthcoming the Chair noted that the PAC did need to review and implement an overall Communications Strategy, and that further work, through a smaller "Communications Sub-Committee" feeding back to the whole PAC, was required. **ACTION:** This topic to be further discussed by PAC.

### **Matters Arising from AGM**

Lunch Times – The problems associated with the students not having adequate time to eat their lunch and the responses given by the Principal at the AGM were discussed by the PAC. **ACTION:** It was agreed that the situations in other schools, including the GaelScoil next door, would be sought, before formally raising the issue with the Principal for her ideas as to how the school and PAC might work together on this topic. It was agreed that one outcome arising out of these discussions might be for the PAC to write to the Department of Education seeking clarification and/or changes to the Department's Guidelines.

Road Safety – It was noted that issues of road safety, on public roadways and within school grounds, had been raised by parents both before and at the AGM. The Secretary suggested that this was a topic which the PAC could work with the school on, as well as with external agencies including the Road Safety Authority and the Garda Síochána, to raise awareness and education. It was noted that the PAC had previously raised the issue of there being no lollipop warden for the school, nor adequate crossing facilities on the public roads leading to the school. The PAC had previously written to the Town Council as well as Simon Harris TD, but there had been no improvement in this regard. It was agreed that the PAC would again lobby for such facilities. As a first step, a list of relevant Councillors and TDs would be drawn up and a template letter would be drafted, with a view to getting parents to assist in lobbying for these facilities. **ACTION:** Fiona McCarthy and the Secretary to work on this.

### **National Parents Council**

The Chair briefed the PAC on this national organisation, reference to which was already made on the PA Website. There was an annual €90 fee, which would cover the PAC's membership until December 2013, with associated benefits, including guides, template documents and reduced insurances. **ACTION:** The PAC agreed for the Chair and Treasurer to apply for membership of the National Parents Council on behalf of the Greystones Educate Together Parents' Association.

### **Health & Fitness - Active School Flag**

Niamh Mac Cárthaigh had raised this as an Agenda item. A parent had brought this idea back from the National Parents Council in June 2012. The project encourages quality PE programmes and general fitness in schools. The Secretary had undertaken further research, noting that it was an inclusive project for school, students and parents to all participate in, rather than just the PA, but that there were information meetings being held in October and November. A few of the PAC members expressed interest in attending the Dublin based sessions, and reporting back. It was agreed that this would be a project that the PAC would be interested in working with the school on, if not now then at some stage in the future.

## **Fundraising**

The Chair gave a brief explanation on fundraising, both in the context of that on behalf of the School, and on behalf of Educate Together nationally.

Halloween Disco – The Chair noted that this event would raise for funds for the school. Dates and locations were discussed, as were lessons learnt from last year's event, including access, parental responsibility for children, decorations and refreshments. Jackie Durbin noted she had recent experience of most, if not all, of the venues in Greystones. **ACTIONS:** It was agreed that Jackie would work on this with Sonya Callan. Karen Flynn will meet with Principal Catherine Sadlier at the theatre on 12<sup>th</sup> October, to examine its suitability.

Craft Fair – Fiona McCarthy reported on preparations for the forthcoming Craft Fair. Vendors were confirmed and there was even a waiting list in case of any cancellations. Fiona requested that all PAC Members assist over the weekend of the event, both in preparation for and at the Craft Fair, but especially so in the cleaning up afterwards – the school needed to be quickly returned to working order for school the next day. It was agreed that all PAC members would be on hand to help. The Secretary gave his apologies in advance, as he would be overseas. It was agreed that PAC members helping and attending would park in Lidl. Fiona noted that entrance into the event would be free, although collection buckets would be organised. Social Media for the event had already begun, and signs and posters were being prepared. A coffee morning for volunteers was to be held two weeks in advance of the event.

The Secretary noted a request from Niamh Mac Cárthaigh to have access to details of the PAC's bank account lodgements in order to ascertain payments made by Craft Fair vendors. **ACTION:** It was agreed that this would be arranged through the Chair and the Treasurer.

The thanks of the PAC to all those involved in the very impressive work in preparing for this event were passed back through Fiona.

Seasonal Cards Project – The Chair and Barbara Campbell explained the project to the PAC. It was agreed that Barbara would run the project this year, and that she would in due course be requesting volunteers to assist in card orders, sales and collection. Further ideas were discussed. **ACTION:** Barbara to follow up on a calendar idea suggested by the Chair.

Cake Sales - It was suggested that the revised Healthy Eating Policy be consulted in order to see how to better utilise cake sales for fundraising purposes, especially as they provided high levels of financial income compared to the low intensity of organisation required.

## **Ethos Self Evaluation**

Niamh Mac Cárthaigh's apologies were noted. She had passed the Secretary a written report, stating that due to the vast amount of information collected the deadline had to be moved and that the group was now presenting the Ethos Self Evaluation Report to the BOM in December and to the whole school sometime after that.

## **Board of Management Policies and Whole School Consultation**

Karen Flynn (BOM Parent Representative) briefed the PAC on the policy work being undertaken by the BOM, with new procedures being implemented to speed up the policy making process. The first policy was Health & Safety. **ACTION:** Secretary, Fiona McCarthy and Aran McMahan volunteered to assist the BOM in reviewing the draft of the H&S policy.

Karen noted the BOM was also to work on a Code of Discipline for the school, and a request would follow in due course for the Parents' Association to assist in conducting a whole school consultation process for this policy code. It was agreed that the PAC would welcome the approach from the BOM at the relevant time and would give some thought to this process in the meantime.

### **Festival of Lights Diwali Story Telling Proposal**

The Chair had consulted with the Principal over an offer from a parent to engage with students on the Indian festival of Diwali around 13<sup>th</sup> November. The Principal had suggested that due to other activities at that time, and space restrictions, the proposal was best left over until 2013. **ACTION:** It was agreed to contact the parent, and to work on preparing some interaction for next year.

### **Liaison with the PAs of Other ET Schools**

The Secretary proposed that the PAC explore some form of liaison with other Educate Together PA Committees, both locally (e.g. Bray, Wicklow) as well as further afield, in order to see what opportunities or problems they had encountered, to mutually learn from these experiences, and even to coordinate fundraising activities. It was noted some PAC members had contacts in other ET schools. **ACTION:** It was agreed for the Secretary to explore this further, and to raise it at a future PAC meeting.

### **PTA vs. PA**

This was a recurrent issue for discussion. The Chair noted she had raised this with the Staff BOM Representative, who was seeking opinions from colleagues. Discussion followed on a PTA being either an alternative, or in addition to the PA. The ethos of inclusivity and communication was discussed in this context. **ACTION:** It was agreed to undertake further research on other Educate Together PA or PTAs, while awaiting feedback from the Staff BOM Rep.

### **Constitutional Review**

**ACTION:** It was agreed that the Secretary would review the PAC Constitution over the next few months, comparing it with documentation from the National Parents Council and other ET schools, in order to ensure that the GETNS PAC Constitution was fit for purpose. Any suggested changes would be discussed by the PAC later in the year, and any agreed changes brought before the 2013 PA AGM for consideration.

### **Future Meeting Dates**

It was agreed that, where possible (e.g. clashes with BOM meetings), PAC Meetings would take place on the first Tuesday of each month.

Signed:  Date: 06/11/12  
(Chair)

## APPENDIX 1:

LIST OF AGREED ACTIONS – 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2012

1. Thanks: Chair to pass on thanks to former members of PAC 2011-2012.
2. PAC Finances: Chair and Treasurer to meet with John Callaghan (BOM Treasurer) to discuss on-line banking for the PAC bank account.
3. PAC Representation: Chair, with support of other PAC Members, to seek further PAC volunteers from parents of students in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes.
4. Communications Strategy: For further discussion – Secretary to place on Agenda.
5. School Lunchtimes: Chair to seek views of other schools, and to raise with Principal.
6. Road Safety: Secretary and Fiona McCarthy to work on template letter and list of Councillors and TDs, for lobbying campaign for Lollipop Warden and pedestrian crossings.
7. National Parents Council: Chair and Treasurer to apply for PAC membership.
8. Health & Fitness - Active School Flag: Where possible, individual PAC Members to attend meetings and report back.
9. Fundraising – Halloween Disco: Jackie Durbin and Sonya Callan to work on this. Karen Flynn and Principal Catherine Sadlier to visit the theatre on 12<sup>th</sup> October.
10. Craft Fair: Chair and Treasurer to arrange for Niamh Mac Cárthaigh to have details of lodgements made by Craft Fair vendors to PAC Bank Account.
11. Seasonal Card Project: Barbara Campbell to follow up with Chair on calendar idea.
12. Cake Sales: The Revised Healthy Eating Policy to be considered by Sonya Callan and Jackie Durbin (Fundraising Liaison Officers) in context of cake sales as part of future fundraising events.
13. BOM – Draft Health & Safety Policy: Karen Flynn to liaise with Secretary, Fiona McCarthy and Aran McMahon about looking over the Draft Policy.
14. Festival of Lights Diwali Story Telling Proposal: Secretary to write to the parent, and to work on preparing some interaction for next year.
15. Liaison with the PAs of Other ET Schools: Secretary to explore this further, and to raise it at a future PAC meeting.
16. PTA: Chair to undertake further research on other Educate Together PA or PTAs, while awaiting feedback from the Staff BOM Rep.
17. Constitutional Review: Secretary to begin process of review of the PAC Constitution.

## ACTION BY PERSON

Fiona Nic Choiligh (Chair)	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 16.	Peter Bishton(Secretary)	4, 6, 13, 14, 15, 17.
Mona McCrea (Treasurer)	2, 7, 10.	Fiona McCarthy	6, 13.
Jackie Durbin(Fundraising)	9, 12.	Karen Flynn	9, 13.
Sonya Callan (Fundraising)	9, 12.	John Callaghan	2.
Barbara Campbell	11.	Aran Mc Mahon	13.