

Merchant Taylors' Boys' School Parents' Association

MINUTES

Tuesday 19th September, 2017

Staff Present

Deiniol Williams	-	Headmaster (Chair)	DWI
Sarah Maitland	-	Parent Liaison Co-ordinator	SM
Giuseppe Bonfante	-	Head of Sixth Form	GB

Parents: Helen McLoughlin, Jo Hodgkinson, Claire Porteous, David Finnegan, Sarah Burns, Simon Fowler, Jill O'Halloran

1. Apologies

Diane Evans, Dawn Craig, Rachael Randles, Sui Chan, Leanne Bovill, Anne Smith, Caroline Gladwin, Nicola Wiles, Leanne Bovill, Amanda Griffiths, John Tisdall, Lesley Russell, Louise Newton

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting having been circulated and agreed, were signed off by the Chair.

3. Focus Group with Mr Giuseppe Bonfante, Head of Sixth Form

- GB introduced himself to the meeting in his capacity as Head of Sixth Form.
- He explained the pupils' journey through MTBS:
 - Year 7-9 (Lower School) the boys are finding their feet and establishing themselves.
 - Years 10-11 (Middle School) the boys are working for GCSEs and finding their strengths and 'who they are'
 - Years 12-13 (Sixth Form) the boys can start to be themselves, pursue their interests and are seen as role models to pupil lower down the school
- GB talked about the strengths of our Sixth Form and in particular drew attention to the very strong and friendly relationships the boys have with staff. The boys are part of a caring environment. This can be achieved due to having a smaller number in these 2 years. He also talked about the benefits of supervised study, combined with being based away from the main school in the Sixth Form Centre and the privilege of being able to leave the site during the school day.
- GB discussed the Extra-Curricular and Enhancement programme at MTBS – CCF, Voluntary Service, Duke of Edinburgh as well as the Sixth Form students taking on Leadership roles.

An open debate then followed on:

- **Destination of Leavers and University Courses:** it was felt there was good selection of universities achieved by our Leavers (62% being Russell Group Universities in 2017.)
- **Oxbridge:** the Oxbridge process was questioned. DWI and GB explained how it works at MTBS. It was pointed out that Oxbridge is an important option, and the right destination, for some of our pupils. However, the majority of our Leavers secure coveted places at Russell Group Universities.
- **Competition from Sixth Form Colleges:** it was noted that Winstanley Sixth Form College has an Open Event on 16th November. MTBS has Open Events on 5th October (pm) and 7th October (am) as well as an 'A' Level Information Evening for our Year 11 and prospective Sixth Form Students on 17th October (pm).
- It was suggested that MTBS should be more 'punchy' in its marketing of our Sixth Form – our academic results, good collaboration with MTGS (see next point), our

unique selling points of single sex academic learning and academic excellence, class sizes. These valid points will be incorporated into our Sixth Form Prospectus which is in the process of being prepared.

- **Collaboration:** the opportunities of collaboration with pupils from MTGS was explained to the meeting and it was felt that some parents are not clear about how extensive the collaboration is with the Girls' School. This will be explained more clearly in future.
- **Sixth Form Centre:** it was agreed that the Sixth Form Centre needs to be renovated or rebuilt and DWI explained that there is an extensive buildings and maintenance programme currently in circulation, with the Sixth Form Centre on that list. DWI also explained that a Junior Boys' School building programme is to take priority.
- **Year 11 Retention:** it was suggested to start to encourage retention of our pupils lower down the school and involve parents at the start of Year 11 to ensure they are part of this important decision making process.

4. Chairman's Report

DW told the meeting about his first weeks in office and his aims:

- Continue to tighten up day-to-day discipline
- Encourage the boys to consider what it means to be at MTBS and wear the school badge. What are the expectations of 'Merchants Men'?
- Sixth Form recruitment and retention as discussed at the meeting.

DW gave an update of the details of the recruitment of the 2 Heads and explained the process and timeline.

DW explained the Governors strategy moving forward:

- Retain single sex education as surveys have indicated that this is what parents want.
- Fill Merchant Taylors' Primary School and Merchant Taylors' Junior Boys' School.
- Estate planning – the proposed rebuild of the Junior Boys' School.

DW informed the meeting about the recruitment of our new Director of Finance and Operations (Mrs Lynn Hill) and Fundraising Manager (Mrs Lisa Connor) and their vital roles.

5. Parents' Association Accounts

These were prepared by the Treasurer and signed off at the meeting.

6. Events for the Autumn Term 2017

- Volunteers were sought to help out at the forthcoming Open Events (Thursday 5th October between 4.30pm and 7pm/Saturday 7th October between 9am and 12.30pm) to discuss the important role of the Parents' Association and answer questions from prospective parents. SM to be in touch nearer the time and please do contact Sarah on s.maitland@merchanttaylors.com if you are able to help out. Thank you.

7. Lost Property

Claire Porteous has kindly organised the lost property room and been available on Tuesdays between 12.30pm and 2pm. Claire will be stopping at the end of this term so parental support was requested – as well as any thoughts and ideas on how to enhance the current system. SM and DW to meet to discuss.

8. Date and time of next meeting – Wednesday 17th January 2018 in the IRSC @ 7pm.