

Minutes of HSPA Open Meeting Wednesday September 14th 2011

Attending: Karen Stephens (in the Chair), Caroline Woollard, Cathy Hutson, Richard Lloyd-Owen, Helen Rose, Sarah Niblock, Catherine Monaghan*, Ann Berger*, Valerie Maddison, Anita Holdsworth, Chris Holdsworth, Rachel Allison, Claire Sive*, Susan Sether, Shari Wildisen, Stewart Setyer, Patti Cabrera*, Cheryl Jukes, Shelley Morgan, Barbara Salmon, Antoinette Alyan*, Janet Hurford*, Lucy Bracken, Helen Kovacs*, Ruth Hillary*, Clare Durward*, Judy Knox*, Josie Thomas, Nicola Kelly, Mireya Friedrch, Nina Constantinou

* Parent volunteers to be class reps.

Apologies: Judith Bennett (Communications Officer), Rowan Waddell, Kathy Tansey, Marlena Hellebo

1. Meeting called to order at 8pm with Welcome from Karen Stephens (Chair).

2. Parents Information Evenings:

The Year 7 evening had been held on Monday 12 September, and Y12 on 8th September, Todd Lindsay (TL) and Karen Stephens (KS) reported that they seemed to have been a success. These evenings have been restructured to give some information about the school, the academic programme etc before moving on to a more social event. The Year 9 evening is due to be held on September 20th.

We already have reps for most year groups but if anyone else wants to rep for their year group they should be encouraged to do so. The current Reps will be sending out an email to their own year group to ask if anyone else would like to volunteer as a rep.

3. Events:

- a. **Secondhand Uniform/ski wear sale:** to be held on 2nd November from 3.30pm in the Mills Centre. KS encouraged people to donate any old uniform or ski wear. Linda Allinson (LA) will be sending out a reminder email nearer the time with details of when and where to drop off donated uniform and ski-wear. If there is any ski wear left after the sale, it will be donated to charity.
- b. **Social Evenings:** KS encouraged reps to arrange social evenings for parents in their year groups. Y11 have already arranged an event for Friday 16th Sept and a bowling evening too. Y13 have also organised their social evening.

KS to organise a social evening for reps to get together to meet and discuss ideas.

We also need ideas for a school wide event – possibly this term – to replace the wine tasting evening. A Y7 parent put forward the idea – at the Y7 information evening – of a poker evening, which he had helped with previously at another school and raised a considerable sum. Another idea raised by Caroline Woollard (CW) was a “Learn to Salsa” (or similar) evening. Parents were reminded that fundraising was not a specific purpose of HSPA events, which are more about giving people an opportunity to meet and socialise together. Fundraising can be arranged where the organising groups feel that it would add an element of enjoyment for parents.

- c. **Pastoral Evenings/ Parental Discussions.** These are evenings which deal with issues our children might face and how we as parents can help our children deal with them. The aim is to have two a term - and last year they were very successful. The first evening this year is to be held on Wednesday 21st September in Dyne House and deals with changing social circles – it is primarily aimed at parents in Y7 – 9 and we have David Moore to speak, who is an expert in this area. Other issues dealt with last year were drugs, eating disorders and computer game addiction. A further discussion on e-safety is planned for later in the term. If anyone has any ideas or knows any high calibre speakers who may be of interest

to the parent body, please contact CW. There is a booking email address for people who want to attend the talks - but if people find that they can/ want to come at the last minute and haven't booked, they can still turn up.

In addition, last year some teachers came to the HSPA open meetings to talk about various topics such as the GCSE and A Level syllabuses. TL suggested more teachers to come to talk about such things as learning support, university study abroad, the school community and charity work. Claire Durward (CD) suggested contacting other local schools to see if they have had any good speakers and who they were.

d. **Junior School Christmas Fair.** A reminder that this is to be held on Friday 2nd December from 7.30am in the school dining hall.

4. Richard Lloyd-Owen (RL-O) gave the Treasurer's Report detailing surpluses generated from second hand uniform sales, wine tasting, the Quiz night and June BBQ which were partly used to offset cost overrun on the Leavers' Ball. It is hoped that the HSPA will in due course raise enough funds to finance the Leavers' Ball without support from the School. The HSPA was also pleased to be able to donate money donated to the student production of Much Ado which was taken to and performed at the Edinburgh Festival this summer. Cheryl Juckes (CJ) thanked the PA for this support. A discussion followed as to how to continue to fund the Ball, and also have some cash in reserve for unexpected events such as the Edinburgh Festival. RL-O to make a proposal as to how to deal with these issues.

5. **Leavers Ball Report.**

Nina Constantinou (NC) reported excellent feedback from the Leavers Ball. A discussion followed as to how to keep this going at such a high standard whilst still being affordable. KF thanked Nina and her team.

CJ mentioned that she wanted to discuss with other Y11 parents the possibility of holding a Y11 prom in Summer 2012. It would be run along the same lines as an American prom – informal and for pupils only.

6. **Work Experience Directory.**

Cathy Hutson (CH) now leading and updating this in time for February publication. If any parents are willing to offer work experience – and their place of work offers a proper work experience programme – please contact CH. NC mentioned that if a pupil applies for work experience, if they cannot be accommodated by that particular company, the company be requested to please let the pupil know, as it can be disheartening to receive no response. Ann Berger (AB) mentioned her links with the Weizmann Institute who are encouraging pupils to join their summer programme. AB to contact TL/CH/CW

7. **Mentoring Network.**

This was launched last term. The proposal is that parents/ Chalmers act as mentors/ give careers advice to pupils. Following feedback from the launch, CW reported that it was proposed to have open forums based on a specific sector and have mentors from that sector come and talk to pupils. A suggestion was made by Kimberley Gilmour to take things a step further in due course and for a member of a certain profession to come and give a lesson – eg an architect give a maths lesson showing how maths is used in architecture. If anyone is interested in mentoring at any level, they should please let CH know. CD suggested using the school database to pull up parents in any given profession and target them specifically for an open forum.

KS mentioned that last year on International Women's Day some mothers came to talk to some of the girls in the school about their respective professions. This was organised at quite short notice, but she suggested that it could be organised on a larger scale and possibly during the school day for this academic year. TL said that it should be followed up and that this, or similar events would be welcomed by the School.

It was also apparent from parent feedback that there was little knowledge about what the School does already on career guidance, so a newsletter has been drafted and should be available shortly.

8. Babysitting Introduction Service.

Thanks to Ina Voloshin and Mariachiara Butt for their hard work on this. The information was sent out to sixth formers at the beginning of the summer - only about 9 sixth formers have enrolled so far. SNB is therefore mentioning the scheme in assembly on Thursday in the hope that more will sign up and new joiners to Y12 will also be invited to sign up. Also word of mouth once it has started will help to encourage more sixth formers to join. The babysitting service is only for Highgate School parents and those who apply to use the service will be checked against the year group lists that they are parents at the School. The information pack is included with these minutes. CW to speak to IV about launching the service to all Highgate parents.

9. The Great Big Swim.

Lucy Bracken came to speak about this. 24 hour swim to be held in the Mallinson Centre on 12/13 November in aid of Childline. The aim is for children to see how far they can swim – a length or a mile (or more or less!) – for charity. The aim is to swim 240 miles in total. Information to go out with the bulletin this week.

10. Any Other Business.

Please contact the PA committee at any time with any suggestions. AB suggested hiring a cinema as a fund raising idea.

11. The meeting was then adjourned. Next meeting was set for November 9th at 8:00pm in the Entrance Lodge.

Helen Rose
Secretary
15 September 2011

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