

# St Christopher School

## **Parents' Circle**

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**8 May 2010**

#### Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Approval of the Minutes of the last AGM
3. Chair's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Committee Members and Officers
6. AOB
7. Head's Talk

#### **1. Welcome**

The meeting was opened by the Chair of the Parents' Circle, Rouane Mendel, who welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

#### **2. Approval of the Minutes of the last AGM**

The minutes of the AGM held on 9 May 2009 were approved. There were no matters arising.

#### **3. Chair's Report**

Rouane reported that the Parents' Circle had been progressing well during the last year. Committee meeting dates were now included in the School Calendar and meetings were open to all. Year Group Reps had continued to organise events for Senior School as well as Junior School parents. The Parents' Circle section of the School's website had continued to be developed and included an e mail address allowing parents to contact members of the Committee directly.

As far as new events were concerned, the Cheese and Wine Evening to welcome parents of children new to the School and parents of children moving from Monte to Junior School or Junior to Senior School was very well attended and very successful. The Haiti charity fair,

arranged on very short notice, was well supported and the amount raised had greatly exceeded everyone's expectations. Unfortunately, it had not proved possible to organise a World Cafe event this year. It is hoped that this will take place next term as this type of event, which provides an opportunity for parents to engage in debate, has been valued in the past. Richard's initiative to introduce Parent Discussion Forums, which may provide a similar opportunity, should be warmly welcomed.

The Junior and Monte Parents' Circle had had a particularly busy and successful year, organising fund raising events and events for children. Heidi Earle and Sean McGovern, Joint Chairs of the JMPC, were warmly thanked for their hard work.

Rouane also thanked all the parents who had helped with or attended Parents' Circle events during the year, as well as the staff representatives on the Committee, particularly Emma-Kate Henry and Sue Rix. She also thanked James Smyth, the Treasurer and Alison Baigent, the Secretary and hard working Committee member Allison Phelps, all of whom were standing down from the Committee.

Rouane pointed out that, at a time when the School was doing so well, there was a danger that active parental involvement in the School would decline. In its present form, the Parents' Circle was vulnerable. Three members of the Committee were stepping down and, to extend and strengthen the community, greater involvement by parents was needed. Year group events, though enjoyed by those who attended, were not generally well attended. More Committee members were needed, especially from among Senior School parents. The Junior School parents have been very active this year, but the Parents' Circle has always been representative of the whole parent body and it was important to sustain this, to strengthen a sense of community. It might be necessary to reconsider the constitution of the Parents' Circle, something that has been under review more than once in the last few years. The issue of subscriptions to the Parents' Circle also needed to be revisited. The School had had to underwrite Parents' Circle events as no new funds were coming in except through fundraising.

With greater involvement from parents, however, there was every reason to hope that the Parents' Circle would move forward in strength.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

James Smyth spoke to the meeting on the accounts for the year ending 31 July 2009. James explained that the Parents' Circle currently held approximately £10,000 in the Bank. Of this, about £6,000 was ring-fenced: £3,000 representing the Colin and Betsy fund and another £3,000 being monies owed to School for items which the Parents' Circle had agreed to pay for. As subscriptions had been stopped, no income was coming in to the Parents' Circle except through fundraising. This meant that the Parents' Circle was

constrained in what it could do. It had in the past made grants to students, to allow them to travel, for example. Nothing had been given away at all in the last year. It would be good to be able to return to a position where some small grants could be made.

The Parents' Circle also had to be wary of organising events which might take it into a deficit, given that it is a charity. The Fireworks event and the Summer Ball have in practice had to be School led and financially underwritten by the School. The calendars which had been produced in the Junior School have had to be discontinued as they were making a loss. Events organised for London parents which in the past the Parents' Circle had subsidised had had to be self-funding.

It would be important for the incoming Committee to look at the issue of funding. Discussions needed to be held with Richard on the subject of re-introducing subscriptions, on the basis that it would be clear what the purposes of the Parents' Circle should be and how subscription monies should be spent.

The Junior School parents had been very active, raising funds through coffee mornings, quiz nights etc. It had to be borne in mind, though, that any monies raised for the Parents' Circle within the Junior School were funds for which the Chair of the Parents' Circle was ultimately responsible and which would have to be included in the accounts.

## **5. Election of Committee Members and Officers**

Rouane reported that three members of the Committee were stepping down, two of whom were officers. To date two parents had come forward to serve on the Committee, Kate Burlison and Ahi Wheeler. Ahi had also offered to serve as Treasurer. Both were duly nominated and elected to the Committee. Ahi was duly nominated and elected as Treasurer. Rouane was willing to continue as Chair and no one else had expressed an interest in that role. Alison proposed that Rouane should be elected for a further year and she was duly nominated and elected.

## **6. AOB**

There was no other business.

## **7. Head's talk**

Richard then spoke to the meeting. His talk will be published on the Parents' Circle pages of the School website.

Rouane again thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed.