

# St Christopher School

## The Parents' Circle Committee

### **Minutes of meeting held on 26 April 2009**

Present: Richard Palmer (President of the PC), Sue Rix (Head of the Junior School), Emma-Kate Henry (Deputy Head of School), Rouane Mendel (Chair), Alison Baigent (Secretary), Lucy Orsman and Julie Cole (Joint Chairs of the Junior School PC), Allison Phelps, Jenny Roe, Polly Tunnicliffe, Peter Wesley, Mike Collins (Senior School staff representative), Carly Smith (Junior School staff representative).

In attendance: Karen Anthony

Apologies: Peter McMeekin

### **Agenda**

1. Welcome from the Chair and approval of the last minutes
2. Introductory remarks from Richard
3. Criminal Record Bureau vetting of exchange partner families – a change in legislation
4. Signing off accounts and nomination of new Treasurer
5. Reports from Year Group Reps
6. Nearly New Shop
7. Summer Ball
8. School Development Plan
9. Role and funding of Junior School Parents' Circle
10. Parents' Circle AGM
11. AOB

**1.** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March were formally approved.

**2.** Richard reported that some parents had asked about the increase in school fees next year given the current economic climate. He explained that the school's costs continued to rise, despite the fall in inflation. Food costs, for example were up over 10%. The School

was budgeting to break even next year. Costs would be cut as much as possible without affecting children's experience in class. 75% of costs were attributable to staffing and it would be counter-productive to compromise here.

It was projected that there would be between 530 and 540 students next year, about the same as this year. If 10 students left, another £100,000 would have to be found. Although the School has capital reserves, it would be very reluctant to use them to fund running costs. The Governors had therefore decided to increase fees by 4% and to find remaining monies needed from savings.

The School is on a very sound financial footing. It has no borrowings and a cash reserve.

Richard reported that the Open Day had been a success with 66 families, around 300 people, attending.

School continued to provide a very positive experience for students. The work of Council was strengthening and some Senior School pupils were working on changes to its constitution. The trip to Ladakh had proved extremely successful and the full range of Late Summer Programme projects was being developed.

**3.** Richard explained that, from next November, the School would have to undertake Criminal Record Bureau checks on all family members over the age of 18, who are resident at the family home, who would be hosting exchange students. This would affect approximately 60 families a year. It would cost around £1000 per annum, although this cost would be borne by the School. It would inevitably be an intrusive process, as every resident family member over the age of 18 would have to be vetted. Richard would then have to decide, in the light of the results of the checks, whether a family could host an exchange student. A CRB check on a family would remain valid for three years. Richard confirmed that there was no similar scheme in place elsewhere in Europe.

**4.** In the absence of Peter McMeekin and James, Rouane reported that Peter had confirmed that financial transactions up to July 2008 had been formally signed off. It was hoped that James would be able to stand for Treasurer at the AGM.

**5.** The following reports were received from Senior School Year Group Reps:

Year 7 (I Group): Allison reported that a termly meal had been held just before the Easter break. It had been an enjoyable evening, although only 8 people were able to attend.

Year 8 (II Group): No report was made in James's absence.

Year 9 (III Group): Rouane reported that a meal had been held at L'Artista but a number of parents, who had hoped to attend, had not been able to. A Pot Luck would be organised this term at Rouane's home.

Year 10 (IV Group): Peter reported that no events had been held last term as Ralph had been out of the country for much of the term.

Year 11 (V Group): Jenny reported that she planned an informal drinks event.

**6.** Jenny explained that she now had 3 volunteers to help with the Nearly New Shop but so far no parcels had been delivered to Housekeeping. A notice would be put up in the Junior School to remind parents about the shop and a mailing would go out at the end of the year. Richard would also send out the mailing again.

**7.** Karen Anthony told the meeting that she had volunteered to organise the Ball this year. She reported that the marquee had been booked, discussions were underway regarding the food, and templates for tickets and posters had been prepared. The price of the tickets was then discussed, bearing in mind the costs of the ball. The hire of the marquee would amount to £4500 and it would be used both for the Summer Ball and for the Leavers' Ball. The meal would cost approximately £7 a head. A deal with a band was still being negotiated. There would also be staffing costs.

Richard said that the Summer Ball should be self-funding, incurring no costs for either the Parents' Circle or the School, although the School would meet the up-front cost of the marquee. Richard also reminded the meeting that, in past years, the PC had looked for ways to contribute to the Leavers' Ball; one way of doing this would be to subsidise the cost of Leavers' Ball tickets so that the whole cost of the marquee fell on the Summer Ball. It was agreed that the School would contribute £1500 towards the costs of the marquee hire.

After discussion it was agreed that the Summer Ball tickets would be priced at £45. Assuming 200 tickets were sold, the ball should be self-funding. A maximum of 240 tickets could be sold. Tickets for the Leavers' Ball would be £35. For this year only, Richard offered to underwrite both events. Any loss on the Summer Ball would not therefore come out of PC funds.

Lucy offered to co-ordinate the sale of tickets with Junior School Reps. Senior School parents would be able to buy tickets at Reception, but Year Group Reps would also encourage parents from their years to attend and would take the lead trying to sell tickets. The School would arrange for a mailing to advertise the ball and let parents know how they could get tickets.

Rouane thanked Karen and expressed the meeting's huge appreciation of her work.

**8.** Richard confirmed that the School Development Plan was nearly complete and would be published at the end of this academic year or the beginning of the next.

**9.** Lucy reported that she had drafted a set of aims for the Junior School and Monte Parents' Circle, for the information of its new Chair. These were:

1. To raise and distribute funds for the enrichment of St Christopher's current pupils, providing educational resources or opportunities that are additional to its core educational provision.
2. To organise social events for parents, so they can meet other parents and feel they belong to the community of the School.
3. To provide parents with an opportunity to discuss educational matters and share their views.
4. To encourage the charitable endeavours of current pupils at the discretion of the Committee.
5. To support the School's management and teaching staff in any other ways determined by them.

The meeting formally approved this draft.

**10.** Rouane reminded the meeting that the AGM was to be held on 9 May and that everyone should attend if at all possible. Richard reported that to date 8 people had notified him that they intended to attend. Rouane confirmed that officers would need to be formally elected for the year and anyone who wished to stand should notify her as soon as possible.

**11.** Richard reported that the Friends of St Christopher initiative was to be launched on 1 May and would encourage links between the School and the wider community.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on 7 June