



Minutes of Staff-Parent Forum 8th May 2007

Present:

Mr N Flower	Mrs J Moss
Mrs S Smart	Mrs G Sampson
Mrs S Radley	Mrs S Nevell
Mr N Humphrey	Mrs J Oliver
	Mrs B Ashfield

1.1 Ms V Bowers had been requested to attend the Forum and inform the parents about what her job entails. Ms Bowers' job title is Director of External Relations and Development, which is basically marketing and fund raising. External relations is concerned with internal relations as well, it is important that parents are involved. Ms Bowers spends a lot of time outside the school and has probably visited 31 feeder schools within 1/1½ hours travelling. Talking to Heads of other schools is good interaction. Press, publicity and the website is dealt with by her assistant.

With regard to Development, a Foundation was planned to help fund things such as a 6th Form Centre and extend Scholarships and Bursaries. Mr Clark, Mr Benson and Ms Bowers had been to USA to meet past Old Greshamians. Many OGs felt that Gresham's had played a very important part in their lives.

1.2 There is a small group of gifted children (6-10 years old) in Norfolk needing a venue. It was suggested that the Prep School would need to be involved.

1.3 Concern was expressed that 5th Form children are going elsewhere for the 6th Form. Mr Flower commented that the School were aware of the issue and that Mr Burnell, Head of 6th Form, is very proactive. We do have a 6th Form Prospectus written by Gresham's 6th Formers and evenings for the top year of Prep and 5th Form planned.

1.4 The issue of Saturday school was raised – this was needed as it is a boarding school, has a big impact on the sports and there are extra home weekends.

1.5 Another point was raised as to where we advertise. Ms Bowers defends her structure of where to advertise for the best results using her limited budget. Mr Flower felt that raising our awareness at other schools is more important; for example we have a new student coming from St Paul's, and parents networking with each other plays a vital role.

1.6 The question was raised as to why some parents at the Prep school were interviewed and the meeting was informed that this was initiated by the Fishmongers' Company for market research. In due course we will get feedback from this. Ms Bowers was thanked for her attendance and left the meeting at 6.30pm.

2. Feedback

The following feedback was given on the points raised at the previous meeting:

2.1 Mrs Smart and Mr Flower are working together to produce an A5 academic diary with exam and coursework outline details for the students which will also be put on the website. This needs to have space for pupils with learning difficulties to write notes, and a request was made that music practice and room for a signature were also included, although this could prove too difficult to monitor.

2.2 Games Details

Details are to be found in the calendar and on the website. Travel directions are also now available on the website to all of our main fixture schools.

2.3 School Meals

Two parents had come to a meal and any further visits would be welcome. Mr Flower requested that an email was sent to him prior to any visits.

2.4 Dave's Diner

A working party on Dave's Diner were having discussions with the School's catering company with consultation with 5th Formers about the plans for this. Possible move 6th Form centre from BOP to Scruff Shack's Drama. Improvements have been made to the tuck shop – a hot drinks coffee machine, smoothies, fruit and a water machine, all more appropriate for today's young people.

2.5 Mr Flower had had the opportunity to ask the Chairman of the Governors' for more information on his letter regarding the fee increases.

3. Issues Raised

3.1 Summary Document from the Forum

There had been no direct contact made to any parent representatives during the year. A summary sent to parents at the end of term could be used as a trigger to find out what issues they would like discussed. The following offered to write reports and forward to Mr Flower for consultation with

Mrs Sampson to collate:

Mrs Ashfield on food, Mrs Oliver on legal liability, Mr Flower on school matters.

3.2 Consideration should be given to a representative parent from the Prep School with a child in the Prep and Senior Schools.

3.3 The Cocktail Party had been well received.

3.4 Parties in Term Time

Mr Flower reported that, despite the Headmaster frequently requesting that there are no parties in term time, it is being ignored. Staff are increasingly hearing of impromptu parties being arranged without parents' permission, or with false information being given to parents. It is also clear that there is frequently a considerable amount of alcohol, some of it spirits, at these parties, even involving pupils as young as 14. There is grave concern for the knock on effect peer pressure, difficulty for boarders, health of the pupils whose work suffers on Monday mornings. The naivety of some parents is quite worrying; Housemasters and Housemistresses keep an 'ear to the ground' but of course we cannot control all of these parties at the weekend. We have a duty and responsibility to our pupils, especially boarders. It was felt that the letter to parents needs to be more explicit and suggest that they need to check out the parties that their child is going to.

3.5 The issue of a pupil who is still a prefect but has a serious driving conviction was raised. The teachers had thought long and hard, but feel justified in such circumstances where the

law has already exacted punishment, and as his approach was contrite. The parents felt that it was sending out the wrong message. The meeting closed at 7.40pm

Judy Oliver
(Parent)