

**Culham European School Parents Association
Final Minutes CESPA 9th May 2007
Dining Hall Annexe, 8.00pm**

Present: AN-S, KR, SZ, JW, US-R, SE-G, CG, RM, CH, KvV, RA, ATP, PLM, PR, GR, JD
(See a printed copy of Europarent, or the Bike Shed Notice Board for a full list of names of committee members and contact details, or write to cespaculham@hotmail.com)

1. Apologies for absence: NH, MLS, BR, CD, GT

2. Approval of Agenda: Approved

3. Matters Arising from 27.03.07

3. Matters Arising:

- Playground murals research. PR will approach the Primary Head to discuss possibilities and arrange a visit from the artist. The committee agreed to grant money to the project, subject to more research, with these murals also featuring as a major fundraising goal at the fete (see below)

ACTION PR

- Fundraising – GT has booked climbing wall; KR has booked school jazz band for fete.

- Health and Safety – Question of whereabouts of Primaries in breaks; Secondary Alcohol and Drugs questions to be asked at Health and Safety meeting 10th May

ACTION GT/SZ

6. Treasury:

- US-R reported the Lark Sponsored walk will take place on the morning of the fete, 23rd June.

- Year 6 pupils have undertaken to raise some money for Polish students to visit England (Year 6 pupils will stay for 3 nights with Polish families on their school trip).

- CESPA blue t-shirts will be worn on a Muscular Dystrophy fundraising run by some parents.

9. ECA

- RA reported back to ECA organizer, who expressed her thanks to CESPA (see post). RA and PR to set up annual ECA review.

ACTION RA/PR

14. Futures

KvV reported that more information and names are now available on the Trust's website, as requested by parents, www.ete.org.uk. The Trust's newsletter, however, does not appear on the website as its information is not yet for public consumption. The April newsletter has been circulated by email to all parents, as will future newsletters, as CESPA is now a corporate member of the Trust.

4. Post and Publicity

Incoming:

17.04.07 Thank you letter from ETEE for corporate membership fee

17.04.07 Thank you letter from ECA organiser

Outgoing:

04.05.07: Letter from KvV, Interparents rep, to the BoG Sec-General and Deputy Sec-General requesting correction of inaccurate information on newpage of ES website regarding full decisions of BoG in Lisbon on Culham.

5. Dates – for much more detail of events and key dates in the school look up 'calendar' on www.cespa.org.uk

May 10th Health, Safety and Environment Committee

21st Primary Education Committee

June 7th Joint Education Committee

19th Secondary Education Committee

23rd School Fete

28th Committee for Admin and Finance

6. Treasury:

a) Playground Murals: PR suggested earlier in the year that an artist paints some new murals in the Playground, in order to freshen up both the Primary and Secondary back-of-school environment. He will speak with the Primary Head and then will invite the artist to visit. This is something in which both Primaries and Secondaries could be involved. **ACTION PR**

The committee felt that these murals could be an excellent goal for fund-raising at the fete, money which could be supplemented with existing CESPAs funds, and maybe also with a donation from the school, when more idea of cost is known. **ACTION US-R**

b) Canteen bill: £20 was paid to the canteen ('To dine for') for catering for the German Embassy visit in March.

c) Korky Paul visit: A 'posthumous' grant application came from EP4 teacher for the 'Korky Paul' visit for Primaries a few weeks ago. She apologised for applying after the event, and suggested the school pay half and CESPAs half, £280 each. The committee agreed that such events are worthwhile and that most children who could see him enjoyed the visit. US-R will check with the bursar one more time if the school cannot pay the full cost, otherwise CESPAs will help. **ACTION US-R**

7. Fete:

SE-G made the following points about the run-up to the fete:

a) Playground Murals: She is keen to have a tangible goal in this year's fundraising effort for the fete – some refreshing murals would cheer everyone up next year! Any surplus will go towards Playground equipment. PR to talk with her about mural requirements **ACTION SE-G/PR**

b) Lottery Tickets: SE-G has already received some good prizes for the Lottery. Any more contributions (however big or small) are gratefully received. Email with offers to silkeewaldgeppert@swanlands.com. There will be a small prize for the child who sells most tickets before the fete. Each family will receive a booklet of tickets worth £5.00 to sell, and more tickets will be available from reception.

c) Donations: SE-G will send a letter out before half-term asking parents to collect donations for hampers and Lottery at half-term, if they are travelling (or if they are not travelling!)

d) Sponsors? Any more? 3M has offered to match the earnings of one of the French Section's stands at the fete.

e) Sack Race. AN-S will try to find some coffee catering sacks. **ACTION AN-S**

f) Programme. KR to ask last year's programme printer to do this again. **ACTION KR**

g) Car Wash. CESPAs had asked year 5 and 6 pupils to do a car wash at the fete. However, after tonight's meeting the head of the pupils committee contacted CESPAs to say that sadly not enough volunteers are available. (This would have been to help raise money for common room furniture CESPAs has already contributed towards). So pupils head has offered to pay £200 towards furniture from their funds.

h) St John's Ambulance: Paperwork for this seems to have increased since last year.

i) Food and Drink Hygiene: Much discussion of ways to improve this, CG to check her hygiene licence **ACTION CG**

j) Small change!! The lack of this is always a problem at the fete, however much the Treasurer orders beforehand from the bank. Many messages will be sent out this year to send each and every family member to the fete **with loads of small change to spend!!**

k) Friday Set-up: The more that happens on Friday the less to do on Saturday! Request for many strong helpers on Friday at 12.00 and at 15.45 to help set up tables, move bric-a-brac and books. Yr 6 & 7 sports pupils to help too. SE-G to approach sports teacher. **ACTION SE-G**

8. Secondary Second-hand books:

KR explained that she will be running this again on Monday 2nd July, the last day of the Secondary Term. It will take place in the Dining Hall Annexe all day. Pupils will bring books they wish to sell early in the morning, already marked with name, class and price wanted. From 10.00 pupils (and parents) may come in, in breaks or in 'frees', and buy for the next school year. Between 14.30 and 16.00 they may come to collect money for books that have been sold and pick up unsold books.

9. School Grading System:

Primary Grading System:

JD asked the committee its opinion of the Primary Report. JD felt it is unsatisfactory and prefers a 1-10 grading system. JD has been in correspondence with the Primary Head about this independently. JD felt strongly that:

- i) There is no objective means of measuring a child's progress through the year
- ii) Children may be held down a year not due to academic performance but for other factors which may be arbitrary.
- iii) The current system makes it very hard to change schools or leave the UK.

The committee felt that they were unsure of the facts and the level of dissatisfaction amongst parents. Whilst most members felt the report could be improved they were also aware (thanks to papers supplied by KvV beforehand) that the current report is the result of a 10 year working group, belongs to the larger ES 'machine' and would be difficult to change.

JW felt that overall in all Primary Schools in Europe there is a trend to soften the marking system so that young children are not judged on academic performance alone. The committee felt that it was difficult to make generalisations as language sections may differ, teachers may differ, and even within a country like Germany school systems may differ regionally. AN-S said that due to this uncertainty of information JD should conduct more research about levels of content or discontent with the Report amongst parents, in order for the committee to decide if this issue should be raised at the Primary Education committee. JD agreed to put together a questionnaire for some parents by May 17th.

ACTION JD

Secondary Grading System:

GR mentioned she had heard from an FS parent who was dissatisfied because his child had received notice he might fail the year in the most recent report, and his parents felt this came as a complete surprise. The committee felt such a situation should not be a surprise, if other marks have been poor during the year. Secondary parents on the committee felt there was an understanding that if 2 subjects are '5' then the child might fail the year. GR will check with the school where such information is written down.

ACTION GR

10. Interparents:

Before the meeting KvV sent out 3 reports – on the March and April Interparents meetings, and on the Board of Governors meeting in Lisbon. Please contact KvV or KR for full versions of these reports. Also see KvV's speech at the school meeting of 23.04.07 for more description and background. KvV said we are now awaiting news from the Department of Education and Skills on the possible transformation of the school.

US-R wondered whether the Interparents body could help us in our transformation. KvV said we might be in an interesting position in the future with regard to our situation and that of other ES Type II and III schools' parent reps. Type III schools do not yet exist and the statutes of Interparents currently do not allow for non-ES Type I schools to be represented on IP. She said that fortunately the current Interparents President is very supportive of Culham. Here is a summarised version of KvV's report on the BoG at Lisbon:

Board of Governors Meeting Lisbon 17-18 April 2007

Approximately 60 delegates from 27 EU member states and Commission, European Patent Office, Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Directors' Reps, Teachers' Reps, Administrative and Ancillary Staff Rep, experts and eight cabins with interpreters for Finnish, Swedish, Czech, assembled in Lisbon.

The decisions regarding Culham were not taken until 5.00 pm on the second day of the meeting. The proposals arising from the Van Dijk Report – nine in total of which two were the Culham items- were dealt with altogether so that the interventions were interspersed with interventions on other subjects Culham's head, teachers' rep and I were allowed to give our prepared statements and the pupils rep also spoke strongly in favour of Culham continuing to offer European education and the EB and in particular of pupils being allowed to continue to partake in such specifically ES related activities as Eurosport, Science Symposium, MEC/MEP, Language Exchanges etc

The UK delegation stopped short of proposing Culham as a Type III pilot project whilst the final decision for such a pilot has not yet been taken by the Board, but it is clear that the Commission is very keen on Type III schools. The UK delegation voted in favour of the first and second decision.

The decisions below were taken one after another in sequence with the seven other Van Dijk proposals with no votes against, and one abstention in both cases- from Cyprus (parents, teachers and pupils have no voting rights where decisions with financial consequences are taken)

1. That the European School of Culham should, over a period of seven years commencing in September 2010, be phased out as a classic European School Type I.

2. That the UK delegation and the management of the school explore the possibility of transforming the European School of Culham into an associate, Type III school and report to the Board of Governors proposing deadlines for the identification of the partners/authorities willing to take political, administrative and financial responsibility for the school and indicating the steps which need to be taken to finalise the transformation

AN-S thanked KvV for writing these reports, adding that the volume of work KvV has been completing and following-up is remarkable, and for which we are deeply grateful.

11. Futures:

1. RA reported that there have been 2 well-attended meetings, on 19th April and 1st May. Minutes of these meetings are available from him or AN-S. One issue raised at the last meeting by a Dutch Primary parent was that a letter promising 14 years of schooling was sent to all Dutch/Italian parents at the start of the phasing-out period of these sections. This will be explored.

RA also asked that any parents with connections with embassies come forward in order to lobby for the school.

RA reported that due to the expansion and increased interest in the Futures group it has been decided to open the minutes to **all** parents, whilst defining the group itself more closely, as those who have the time, inclination and skills to assist in the work and discussions now required to secure the future. This in no way excludes attendance to any meetings, nor to access to information, but will hopefully allow a core of 'workers' to be identified and encouraged, whilst allowing those who simply wish to be informed to have full access to the debate and developments. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 6th June.

2. JW sought reassurance that a positive message is being sent to families seeking admission to the school. KvV said that the school secretary is sending information out as usual, and that despite receiving full information on the school no-one applying has withdrawn their application.

3. Alumni: NH reported before the meeting that a database of Alumni is progressing fairly well. She is working with the school's website manager on this. Anyone with information on school-leavers of the last 3 decades please send details to cespaculham@hotmail.com for the database.

12. Any other business:

1. There will be a Primary 5 transition party this year, organised by AT-P and P5 volunteer parents.
2. Primary ECA Saturday morning football: this will proceed as normal and should not clash with the sponsored walk or fete on Saturday 23rd June.
3. Drink and drugs awareness amongst parents (not just pupils) was raised. A website www.dare.co.uk was mentioned by AN-S as a website which could enlighten some parents.
4. KR said that a small group of parents will start the bronze level Duke of Edinburgh's Award (for 14 year olds) in the school in the autumn, with the support of the ECA.
5. KR said there has been a decision on the X15 bus. The service will continue hourly between Abingdon and Wallingford, but will be reduced between Witney and Abingdon. The new timetable will commence June 4th 2007.

13. Next Meetings:

Futures Meeting Wednesday 6th June, 8.00pm, Drama Studio

CESPA Committee meeting Wednesday 13th June, 8.00pm, Dining Hall Annexe

Meeting closed at 10.30pm

CESPA website www.cespa.org.uk; CESPA hotmail cespaculham@hotmail.com

School website www.esculham.net; ETEE website www.eteo.org.uk