# **Cumann na dTuismitheoirí / Parents’ Association**

# **Coláiste an Phiarsaigh**

**Miontuairisc: Tues 5th April 2022 8.30pm**

**Lucht Freastail:** **Micheál Ó Tuama**  **Julie Dennehy-O’Callaghan**

**Helen Mannion**  **Nicola Uí Mhaoileoin**

**A Ní Mhathúna Catriona Hogan Twomey**

**Breda Dennehy Mark Chu**

**Carmel Broderick Caroline Ní Mhurchú**

**Patricia Kelleher Des Connolly**

**Seán Ó Bróin Clíona Fergy**

**Josephine Sugrue Barry Murphy**

**Paula Kennedy Suzanne Moloney**

**Winnie Lynch Shelagh McCarthy**

**Leithscéalta Jerry Reen Elaine Hill Mary Haslam**

**Minutes Issued by: Nicola Uí Mhaoileoin**

**AGENDA:** **Fáilte (Julie)**

**Apologies (Julie)**

**Minutes from previous meeting (Nicola)**

**Imeachtaí Scoile ón Príomhoiode (Micheál)**

**Golf Classic Update (Julie)**

**Actions’ List Update (Nicola)**

**Roll Call (Nicola)**

**AOB**

**Date for next meeting**

**Imeachtaí Scoile:**

1. 10-03-2022 Unannounced visit from school inspectors. They reviewed the Child Safety policy as well as the Child Protection and Anti-bullying policy of the school and were very happy with both. They picked 10 classes at random. They had high praise for the teachers and students. We received the top grading available.
2. 11-03-2022 BL4 completed CAT4. There is also online meeting for parents of TY students in relation to subject choices etc. 5th & 6th year students, as well as teachers, spoke to the students in relation to the very important process of subject selection.
3. 14-03-2022 Bl1 Parent/Teacher meetings took place in the Halla using new software booking system. Seemed to work well – no queues. Mícheál would appreciate feedback from parents in relation to this parent/teacher meeting and if it should continue like this or over telephone.
4. 14-03-2022 Art workshop
5. 15-03-2022 Meeting with Design Team KOBW.
6. 15-03-2022 Board of Management meeting.
7. 24-03-2022 JCT Health Education Training.
8. 28-03-2022 Career Guidance workshop for BL4.
9. 28-03-2022 Talk to BL3 parents about Transition Year online.
10. 29-03-2022 Gaelscoil Uí Drisceoil won the inaugural Tomás Ó Riordáin (former principal of Scoil na nÓg) cup in the primary school blitz. This was organised by the Youth Leaders in TY. It was presented by the late Mr. Ó Riordáin’s wife, Máire.
11. 31-03-2022 Scala interviews took place for the Meitheal positions (youth leaders in 5th year). The team was chosen and announced on the day.
12. 04-04-2022 – 08-04-2022 A wellbeing and technology survey to be taken. This is to see how the surface pro devices are working. Students seem to be already very comfortable working with them. 1st Years are no longer using their mobile phones during the day as a result (except in the case of an emergency).
13. 05-04-2022 Orienteering Trip for Bl1 in John O’Callaghan Park.
14. A large number of Football/Ladies Football/Basketball and Camogie matches have taken place recently.
15. Cork Minors – Emma Nic Giolla Phádraig and Captain Aoife Ní Mhaoláin were winners of the All-Ireland in Thurles. Two other ladies are also in the Ladies Minor Football All-Ireland Final.

**WELCOME**

Julie Dennehy-O’Callaghan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Jerry Reen, Elaine Hill and Mary Haslam.

**MINUTES**

The minutes from 8th March 2022 were read by Nicola Malone.

They were proposed by Helen Mannion and seconded by Breda Dennehy.

**COVID**

There have been a high number of Covid cases amongst teachers recently. It is difficult to operate the school under these conditions. Mícheál has had to supervise several classes, employ external supervisors as well as utilise the halla for supervision to accommodate multiple classes once. The number of teachers available to supervise at lunchtimes has been decimated. It has had a huge impact on Mícheál and Liam’s ability to complete their own workload. The high number of staff and students out with Covid is a worry with the Oral exams looming. They will be taking place on Sat & Sun 08.30 – 16.30 along with the music practicals. The fear is students may miss out on these exams due to illness.

The pressure around exam classes is huge. Students and teachers are highly stressed. Junior Cycle students have not been adequately looked after. No information available yet as to the possibility of a 2nd sitting of the LC and JC. What happens if a supervisor comes down with Covid? The school is doing its best to carry the burden.

Julie offered Mícheál our appreciation for continuing to keep the school operating under these circumstances.

Breda asked if, on a local level, the decision could be taken for 6th Years to wear masks. There will have to be a review of same. Julie mentioned that parents would be very supportive considering the current spike in numbers.

Suzanne is worried with the high levels of absenteeism if the students are prepared for the exams as they are missing a huge number of classes. Mícheál explained the policy is in place to put the work up on Teams but it is a very difficult situation. Predictive Grades should have perhaps been contemplated again for this year. Clíona highlighted the fact that the school is doing its very best under the circumstances. Julie pointed out the fact the children are very happy and that staff, parents and children are all working well together. Mícheál agreed with Suzanne that it is an astronomical issue. The fear factor is huge amongst the students. Students are stressed about the Orals. The department doesn’t appear to be supporting the students or teachers and the entire situation is a huge worry for teachers and parents.

Julie asked was there anything we could do as parents. Mícheál suggested we contact local politicians and highlight our concerns. Suzanne suggested contacting local radio stations as there appears to be little or no talk about this serious problem in the media.

Breda queried was the pressure to sit the exams coming from 3rd level in order to avoid inflated grades. Mícheál explained we couldn’t have predicted what is happening now and the crippling impact it is having on schools. LC & JC students are at a huge disadvantage without the predictive grades – what if students are sick when they are supposed to sit exams? Should have perhaps taken baby steps to get back to normal.

We are lucky to have the HEPA filters in place in every room even though there was a EUR15k shortfall with their installation, as well as huge electricity cost involved in running them.

Disinfectant wipes and sanitising are still in use.

Paula asked were the 2mtr distancing and mask removal mandated or a guideline. They were mandated through legislation over the mid-term.

Clíona’s son is in JC and would be missing out on a big stepping stone by not doing the exams in preparation for LC. Mícheál agrees it is important as this year’s 5th Years (who missed out on the JC in 2020) are ill-prepared as a result. This is why the school ran Christmas and Summer exams.

Clíona suggested parents explain to the students how they appreciate how difficult the situation has been for them, not the sweat the small stuff but how sitting the exams is important for their preparedness for LC.

**NEW SCHOOL PROJECT**

Still awaiting funding for Halla. Mícheál asked for the Cumann to write a letter and send it to Mícheál Martin. Time is of the essence as he is about to move into the role of Tánaiste shortly. Breda asked should the letter be completed by the next meeting and should it be in Irish. Mícheál said this would be the preference. Julie asked that any suggestions for content be forwarded to Nicola. Helen suggested that maybe the letter should be bilingual as there may be others reading it before it arrives on Mícheál Martin’s desk and the key points my be missed in the process.

Full survey of the school was taken (APEX). There will be a 3D model of the site constructed from this survey. A conservation analyst is looking at the older buildings to decide if they need to be preserved or utilised in some way. Drone survey took over 700 pictures which will feed into Autocad. Mícheál hopes to be coming to the Cumann in Sept/Oct 2022 with several options which will help select the design for the new school.

**GOLF CLASSIC**

Suzanne has contacted Fota and there is no availability of a Friday in 2023. The fees have increase to EUR8000. She made the decision to ask for our EUR1000 deposit to be returned.

Cork Golf fees have increased to EUR6000 plus EUR25 per head for food etc. Fridays are no longer available there either as it is for members only. Barry Murphy is involved with the Gaelscoil’s Golf Classic. Des asked if there would be a possibility of a joint venture between the two schools. This does not appear to be a viable option. Suzanne suggested the Lee Valley Golf Club as their fees are lower. Barry will speak with Cork Golf Club and another. Suzanne will speak with Castle Martyr and Lee Valley golf clubs. The committee will continue to work in the background to see if this is a worthwhile fundraiser for 2023.

**FUNDRAISING**

Rugby Jersey Raffle – Breda has the option to sell the Jersey to a family member for EUR600 and wants to know if that would be approved by the group. All agreed. She will meet with Des give him the proceeds.

**FINANCES UPDATE**

Des gave a financial update – Current balance is EUR1380. This includes the EUR200 donation from Hovione. The EUR600 from Breda will also be added to total, once received, bringing it to EUR1980.

**ACTION LIST UPDATE**

1. Write a letter to Mícheál Martin outlining our concerns for a new hall – Cumann na dTuismitheoirí. This will be worked on over the coming weeks.
2. Date for Golf Classic 2023 – Suzanne and Barry will contact several clubs to see if this is still a viable option for 2023
3. Form a committee for Raffle – Des, Suzanne, Ken and any other interested parties – no discussion yet – will do so before next meeting.
4. Rugby Jersey Raffle – Breda & Heidi – Sale completed to family member and proceeds will be given to Des.
5. Check to see if swimming pool will be available – Nicola – It has not been made available to Scoil na nÓg for the remainder of the year so it is assumed the same applies to Coláiste. Helen mentioned it is also being painted at the moment.

**AOB**

Julie spoke of the treats that are normally given to teachers in the staff room at Christmas time. This did not take place in 2021 due to Covid. It has been agreed this will take place this Friday ahead of the Easter break.

Julie asked of the possibility of a second option for the tracksuit ends. Could there be a more suitable one for the girls? Mícheál will speak to Keen House in relation to this.

Helen asked if the drone survey model is of the current or future school. Presently it will be a model of the current school.

Helen suggested the Halla be highly spec’d and also wondered if the field at the top of the hill towards Scoil na nÓg will be incorporated into the plans. Mícheál is hoping to include an Astro turf pitch up there by using the rubble that will be disposed of during the works to level out the area. Helen asked if there might be the possibility of a multipurpose canteen. Mícheál says this is on the plans. The facilities available to boarders cannot be answered at this point as that responsibility lies with Gaelachas Teo. Also, the land there which contains the house of the Ó Riordáin family is the responsibility of Gaelachas Teo.

Helen wondered if the trip to Ballyhass was going ahead soon. It will be happening the second week after Easter.

Josephine is concerned about the possibility of upgrades to facilities for boarders. Gaelachas Teo will need to supply these details.

Carmel asked about the installation and use of the polytunnels. These were installed by Coláiste and are currently used by TY students.

Catríona is very supportive of the idea of sending the letter to the Taoiseach and suggested perhaps individuals and families meet with local politicians to exert extra pressure. She also wanted to say that the 1st Year parent/teacher meetings couldn’t have gone any better with the new software booking system. She wanted to express her gratitude to the teachers as it was lovely to be able to meet with them face-to-face.

Nicola asked if Mícheál could speak to the new changes to the LC outlined by Norma Foley earlier this week – he will certainly do so.

Julie asked if people would be interested in the option of a hybrid meeting next month where attendees could meet in the school at 8pm for a cupán tae prior to the meeting at 8.30pm while anyone who preferred, could join the meeting online via Teams, at 8.30pm.

**ACTIONS**

1. Write a bilingual letter to Mícheál Martin outlining our concerns for a new hall – Cumann na dTuismitheoirí
2. Any items parents wish to see included in the letter should be forwarded to Nicola – Parents
3. Barry Murphy to Speak to Cork Golf Club and another Golf Club. Suzanne will speak to Castle Martyr and Lee Valley Golf Clubs re: green fees, date for availability in May 2023
4. Contact local politicians to highlight the concerns over the Leaving Cert and Junior Cycle exam stresses -Parents
5. Breda to meet with Des to give him the proceeds from the sale of the Jersey.
6. Form a committee for Raffle – Des, Suzanne, Ken and any other interested parties
7. Contact Keen House in relation to alternative tracksuit end – Mícheál
8. Items to be added to next month’s Agenda 1) Feedback from 1st Year Parents and indeed all parents, in relation to the Parent/Teacher Meeting in person vs over the phone. 2) Discuss upcoming changes to the Leaving Cert.

**CLOSE**

In closing, Julie thanked everyone for attending the meeting and acknowledged there was a huge number of topics covered. The next meeting will take place (both in person and online via Teams) on 10th May 2022 at 8.30pm.

**Next Meeting Date:** **Tuesday 10th May 2022 at 8.30pm**