



OATLANDS COLLEGE – Parents Council

MINUTES OF THE OATLANDS COLLEGE PARENTS' COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER 2018.

CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS:

The Chairperson, Marie Kilmartin, welcomed everyone to the AGM and introduced the Parents' Council, outlining the composition and function of the Council and the activities undertaken during a typical school year. She explained that two parent representatives also sit on the Board of Management, having been elected by the parent body for a three-year term, providing a link between the Parents' Council and the Board of Management.

Typical activities undertaken by the Parents' Council include:

Hosting Information Evenings for parents of Transition Year and new First Year students;
Graduation nights, Pre-Debs Reception;

Providing refreshments at Parent Teacher meetings throughout the year;

Organising the annual book and uniform sale every June;

Organising the Bag2School Collections

Helping with make-up, costumes, props, tuck shop, raffle etc during the Transition Year musical;

Contributing to the 6th Year Leave Taking Day and BBQ;

Contributing to School Policy Making;

Organising the Battle of the Bands;

Organising the Christmas Fair, the school's biggest fund-raising event.

The Chairperson displayed a photo gallery of various school events during previous years and talked in more detail about the forthcoming Christmas Fair. Last year's Fair raised approximately €13,800 for the School Development Fund, aided by the recent introduction of banner sponsorship. The Battle of the Bands has also grown substantially over the last five years with all Leinster schools being invited to take part in the competition. This year's Battle of the Bands was judged by music industry professionals who provided feedback and guidance to the bands taking part.



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Oatlands Music Department is currently in the process of setting up a music club to aid in the development of school bands.

Bag 2 School, held twice-yearly, is another big fundraiser for the school with 10% of all proceeds going to the Laura Lynn foundation.

Other fundraising activities include non-uniform days, raffles (this year the school benefited from generous donations of concert tickets)

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Katherine Looby delivered the Treasurer's Report. A PowerPoint presentation provided a detailed breakdown of expenditure and income over the last three years. Total expenditure for the current year was €4,496. The Parents' Council raised over €20,000 in the year 2017-2018 and €19,000 was contributed by the Parents' Council to the School Development Fund.

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME:

The Principal, Caroline Garrett, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and reminded those present that she would be hosting a Q&A session after the meeting at which Dan, the Deputy Head Boy, would also be in attendance.

Oatlands College is now over 60 years old. Six years ago, the school had a sizeable debt after undertaking the development of a new multi-purpose PE hall. However, the final payment on this debt was made last year. The new signage on the sports hall was funded by school income, the voluntary contribution and the work of the Parents' Council. The PE hall opens at 7am and doesn't close until 10-11pm at night.

Recent school developments include the refurbishment of the Science Lab, new equipment for the Home Economics room and school landscaping. The canteen area is also scheduled to be repainted.

There has been a significant expansion in the number of school students and staff, and the curriculum has also expanded with the incorporation of the following subjects: Physical Education, Politics & Society, and Chinese.

The Principal emphasised that the students and parents are at the core of everything the school does and there is a very positive relationship with both.



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The school has a student cohort of approximately 550 pupils but there are waiting lists for every year group. There are currently 105 pupils on the list for first year.

The school is now looking at expanding the number of classrooms near the area of the shed and the old canteen and there are a preliminary set of development drawings in this regard. The school is considering the purchase of a site behind the old PE hall which runs down to the old monastery site at the back of the houses on Trees Road. It is proposed to develop two new changing rooms for people using the school pitches, and three extra multi-functional classrooms with an assembly area, utility area, storage area and caretakers' office.

The school has high standards of academic achievement so that each student achieves his maximum potential. This year, all school pupils got their first subject choice on the 1st and 2nd-round of CAO offers. Oatlands College is the only school to achieve 8H1s in both this year and last year's Leaving Certificate. 52% of pupils achieved 400+ points, while 21% of pupils achieved 500% points in the Leaving Certificate.

However, the school experience is not just purely an academic one; the school takes a holistic approach to student welfare. There is an emphasis on mental health and well-being, there is a school pastoral system, and there are regular meetings with parents.

This year's Junior Certificate results were very good, with a plethora of As. The school also achieved success in athletics, sports and other extra-curricular activities such as art and choir.

School staff engage in constant upskilling and will be continuing to train as the new Junior Certificate is introduced in a wider variety of subjects.

At present, it's estimated that schools in the voluntary sector need to raise one-third of their income as the Government grant of €31 per student is inadequate to cover costs. The Parents' Council play an important and essential role in helping the school with fundraising and financing initiatives, school policy development, and IT and other school developments. The Principal and the Parents' Council work collectively to support the school, and the opinion and advice of the Parents' Council is valued.

Becoming a member of the Parents' Council provides a valuable insight into the school itself and is a rewarding experience for the members.

The Principal encouraged both 'old' and new parents to become involved in the Parents' Council, and particularly encouraged male parents to consider membership of the Parent's Council for gender balance.

The Principal expressed her thanks to the officers of the Parents' Council, Marie Kilmartin, Sharon Gleeson and Katherine Looby, for their work over the past year and looked forward to working with them in the coming academic year.



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BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

The Chairperson thanked the Parent Representatives to the Board of Management, Dorina Clarke and Oliver Seery, for their contribution to the work of the Board over the year. Oliver Seery will continue to serve on the Board while Dorina Clarke will now step down. Una O’Brien was nominated and elected at the meeting as the new Parent Representative to the Board of Management. Profiles of the Board of Management members will be posted on the school website shortly.

In conclusion, Marie Kilmartin thanked all the parents present for their continued and essential support for the work of the Parents’ Council. The formal Annual General Meeting had now concluded and would be followed by an informal question-and-answer session after a short coffee break.

THE MEETING THEN CONCLUDED