

# St Mary's Boys National School PTA AGM

6<sup>th</sup> Oct 2010, 8pm

David Walsh opened the meeting by introducing himself, Edel Van Duyvenvoorde and Gillian O'Meara as officers of the PTA. He also welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance.

The minutes from last year's PTA AGM were proposed by Stephen Gray and seconded by Lucy Whyte. There were no matters arising from these minutes.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Everyone was invited to review the provided sheet which detailed the figures of the budget. The balance coming into the year was €13,189.05 and the outgoing balance is €314.81.

Question 1: Why did the 1<sup>st</sup> Communion DVD cost €80?

It was explained that the PTA paid for the videographer but parents were responsible for the cost of any copy ordered.

Question 2: There was a large incoming balance so how will it work in 2011 as the incoming balance will be so much smaller?

It was explained that the incoming balance was deceptive because approx €9100 of that figure was actually committed to items (defibrillator and shared readers).

Question 3: The interest accrued was only €1, can better interest rate be secured?

EVD stated that she always just used the same account and had never investigated changing accounts. All were informed, from the floor, that the girls' school had looked at this and there was no better account.

## **Chairman's Report**

DW explained that it was a relatively quieter year for the PTA which was partly due to the lack of PE Hall to host events and partly due to the building programme. DW would expect for activity to increase from now. DW ran through the events hosted and/or supported by the PTA during the year but highlighted the Tea & Coffee receptions for Open Days/Communion/Confirmation and Graduation. DW pointed out that PTA helps with smaller requests such as 'wet day' toys. Especially worth a mention is the 6<sup>th</sup> class Community Day which is co-ordinated by the PTA of this school and 3 other schools in the area. This enables 170 kids, supervised by 40 volunteers, to meet before starting post-primary school. They take part in a large range of activities including soccer, rounders,

drama and ceili. Although it is a logistical challenge it is a positive event which received great feedback from teachers and pupils alike.

DW explained that the school cook book was intended as a fundraiser but although the support wasn't as good as hoped it still got the kids involved in providing recipes and producing artwork.

Another achievement of the PTA was the launch of the bulletin board on the website which enables people to arrange the exchange of books or uniforms.

The key aim of last year was to promote the school, particularly as competition for funding from the Dept depends on the number of students. The Public Relations Officer was added as a specific position within the PTA. Annette Harrington agreed to take this role on. The school was featured in the Kildare Times several times eg Santa visit, Xmas Child appeal, cross-country success. This is essentially marketing to get new students.

DW outlined the planned events for the coming year.

6<sup>th</sup> Class students will receive an introductory course to food/culture and language of Spanish, German and French. This is to help the students with their subject choice in Post-primary school. This initiated and funded by the PTA

The PTA is teaming up with the Girls' school to host a programme of talks for parents – the first of which is on internet safety.

The school will be taking part in the St Patrick's Day parade which will require plenty of parental involvement.

The Parish Hall was knocked so once the Board of Management make their final decision on the allocation of this area the PTA will make suggestions for use.

DW informed all that there had been debate last year on the voluntary contribution. Historically this was €100/family but last year it was reduced to €50. It was decided that since no requests were refused this year that there is no to increase the value. If additional funding is required then a specific event can be organised.

DW pointed out that it is not only financial support that is needed. DW thanked all those that 'donated an hour' last year and circulated a list for contact details of those wishing to help out this year.

DW also appealed for new members for the PTA. He pointed out the advantages of getting involved – get to hear what's going on, can shape the activity of the school and meet other parents who share similar interests and frustrations. In fact you get more out of it then you are asked to put in. He made a special appeal to Fathers to get involved

DW thanked Peter Coakley for attending the PTA meeting on behalf of school board. Also thanked was Bridgeen McLoughlin as teachers' rep. The PTA offered congratulations to Bridgeen on her wedding.

A special word of thanks was given to Dominic for his Trojan work at all the events.

DW also thanked the rest of the committee for their work during the year.

### **Proposed Change to the Constitution**

Presently you can only serve in office in the PTA for 2 years. In addition one must have served on the committee for 1 year before taking office. It was proposed that in the case of the secretary that there is no need to be on the committee for 1 year before being voted into this position.

This was put to a vote and unanimously passed.

### **Principal's Report**

Peter Coakley (PC) said it had been a very busy year with major work on the extension. Another building project was the insulation of the school. He was also planning for the Summer works of installation of a new heating system. He was beginning to feel more like a developer than a School Principal!

PC felt that the school had been left in a terrible state after all these works. It was testament to Dominic and the cleaning staff that they cleaned the school prior to opening. PC said he did not feel the usual pride when they re-opened but that it was the priority of the Board of Management to restore the school to the usual standard.

PC mentioned there was some nostalgia involved when the Parish hall was knocked but commended the Board of Management in securing funding for this and the Summer works and extension.

PC highlighted that the school will be hit with big water charges but the Dept if thinking of providing water conservation methods.

The school is going for its 4<sup>th</sup> Green Flag which is concerned with eliminating traffic and promoting walking and cycling. Mr Davis is initiating a 'Walk on Wed' programme so he will require helpers to act as co-ordinators to walk kids to school. It is something that you may be asked to do once. PC hopes the PTA will encourage participation.

PC informed all that he had lost 2 members of staff this year – Ms Ring and Ms Carr??

The safe cycling programme took place again this year which was partly subsidised by the PTA. This is geared towards 5<sup>th</sup> class and is very popular.

PC highlighted all the events which took place – trips to Maynooth Castle, 10 classes visited the library, swimming and dancing classes started again. PC commended the Language programme initiative. The cake sale will be taking place in Dec which the boys enjoy. Also in December junior infants classes will be going to a show in the Helix and other classes will be performing the nativity play in the local nursing home.

PC was proud of the new multi-seat IT systems which have been installed so now every boy in the class have a seat in IT classes. A lot of support will be needed to complete this project. PC is also looking into interactive whiteboards. Thanks to the collection of old mobile phone handsets the school has two interactive boards already.

In the coming year there are plans to hold the Open Day again. Recorder classes will also be extended to 4<sup>th</sup> class. The newest project is the planned vegetable garden which is due to be planted behind the old parish hall.

PC pointed out that the school website was really growing and thanked Guy Parker for his great effort in development and maintenance of the website. PC also thanked David Walsh for the new school sign which he donated to the school.

PC said that the staff hugely appreciate the support of the PTA by providing resources, which he can request as projects arise. He also thanked members of the committee for their work and enthusiasm. He thanked parents for attending the meeting. He encouraged new participation and pointed out that the kids are delighted if parents take part. He informed us that there was data to support the fact that children whose parents get involved in the school perform better.

He particularly thanked Martina McBrearty of the PTA for sourcing training aids for epi-pens. A local doctor used these aids to train all members of staff in their use.

### **Questions from the floor:**

The girls' school had complaints about the condition of NUIM swimming school. It was requested that the school raise this with NUIM. PC pointed out that he had not received such complaints and that NUIM kindly allow the use of the pool for free.

It was requested that an official announcement be made banning the wearing of bands. PC said he would make an announcement and also put it in the next newsletter

It was asked what would be done with the space provided now the Parish Hall was knocked. PC said there were a few suggestions but drainage issues will need to be resolved before anything is decided.

It was asked why running is banned in the yard. PC explained that when there was no ban approx 20 boys a day suffered cuts and bangs but running is allowed in a controlled environment.

Do we still have the same number of portacabins? Presently 1 class is housed in a portacabin and another is used for Irish dancing. The Dept owns these, not the school, so no long-term plans can be made for their use.

Is the building work finished? The last snags are being carried out. The school and contractors are in discussion to resolve the issues with the surface of the staff carpark.

Is it possible to buy the school crest itself so that crested uniform items need not be bought? PC acknowledged there was a price difference but he'd rather have a proper uniform. Without this there is too much variation in the uniform. This prompted the question of contacting a uniform supplier directly. Further investigation is needed on this matter.

Is there a list of committee members on the website? Individual details not there but you can send a message through the website or contact the committee through the school office.

Thanks were given to all who attended. First meeting to be held on Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.