



**Minutes of Salesian PTA Meeting, Zoom  
Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Attendees:**

Betina McEvoy (Chair)  
Sue Evans (Deputy Treasurer)  
Alex Kent (School Liaison)  
Sam Cracknell (Secretary - Minutes)  
Nikki Coffey

**1. Welcome**

Betina acknowledged that this last minute meeting had been called with some urgency to discuss and vote on a donation request from the Music Department. The details of the request were emailed to the PTA email list along with the invite to this meeting and everyone was invited to attend the meeting and comment on the proposal even if they were unable to attend. It was noted that the meeting time and date had been arranged to ensure that at least 4 members of the elected committee could attend as the constitution states that a certain amount of elected member votes was required to approve a donation.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were noted from Rebecca Ready, Jinger Stevens, Claire Payne, Paula Sewart, Sonya Lambourne and Giulia Cambiano.

**3. Music Department Proposal**

Dear PTA,

June 2021

Firstly, could I thank you once again for supporting our request for electric guitars earlier in the year. They have been used by students in Years 7 to 9 in the classroom along with our existing guitars and as a result, we have had students taking up the guitar and starting private lessons. In addition, they have often been used by GCSE students for composition – it is not always convenient for the boys to bring their instruments in multiple times in a week and having instruments at hand to use during the lesson has made a big difference to their learning experience.

I have spoken with John Morgan recently about the Music Department computers. He suggested that I approach you via Alex to make a request for support in this far more significant project. As you may know, the Music Theory room in the McGuinness room was redesigned a few years ago to allow the permanent set up of the Music Department computers to allow the integration of Music technology into the lower school curriculum. At that time, the equipment itself was not updated and both the hardware and software are now due for a routine upgrade. The college is committed to this upgrade process, but I would like to put forward a case for equipping the Music Department with iMacs instead of PCs and for the use of Apple's Logic software instead of the current Cubase which would be an incredible enhancement over the current



(normal)provision. This change would significantly increase the cost and I would like to ask the PTA to consider providing that extra funding.

**They key question is what difference would the extra provision make?**

- Logic software is an industry standard software around the globe. It is described as a 'complete professional recording studio on the Mac' and is regularly recommended above Cubase on comparison websites, both for its great value, extra features, project possibilities and highly regarded industry status.
- As an iMac user myself, I am aware of the incredible reliability of the computers and software. PC's are prone to errors and the use of iMacs would mean that there was significantly more teaching time allowing much greater student progression.
- Students working on Garageband on their iPads can transfer the files to the computer for the added functionality (they could do some work on iPad) and then work on Garageband or Logic.
- Students can recognise the user interface and many of the basic functions of the 'big brother' Logic software. Using it would take them much further towards a professional music creation and production experience.
- Cubase software is currently used in weekly lessons for Year 8 and 9 students. It is not featured enough to be used as an alternative to notation software by GCSE and A-Level students. The iMac/Logic combination would make this feasible. Current Year 8 and 9 projects could be extended and improved with access to the software.
- The Logic software is much cheaper than the PC equivalent and available with a substantial education discount. It is purchased as a one-off with updates carrying no cost.
- Students would be far more engaged in the experience of the software, and we could offer an extra-curricular (lunchtime activity) option for Years 7-9.

**Additional Whole School Advantages:**

- Stuart Bannister has said that a Mac suite could be used as part of the GCSE design course, enhancing student designs and proficiency on different platforms, allowing for more creativity and a wider choice of software. The ability to transfer work between the work completed with apple pencil on the iPad to the mac for final editing will allow for high quality submissions.
- iMacs could potentially be used by students for general video editing, photography & art, with lots of additional software available for specialist applications, for example when completing independent projects. This is particularly relevant for Sixth Form Students, who often create end of year videos, memory videos, or promotional videos for independent businesses (eg through Young Enterprise) or curriculum based projects.
- Apple Distinguished School Status could be enhanced through use of additional Apple hardware/software
- Current 'Sibelius' software is bought by the seat and can be converted to MAC version.
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Before detailing what would be needed to update the equipment, here are a few additional points of relevance:

I have been asked by Steven Rowe and Andy Moore if iPads could replace the computers. The answer to this is no because they have a comparatively limited functionality and the work that you can achieve on Garageband can only reach a certain point before the screen size and available features are a limiting factor. In addition to this, each iPad used in the classroom would need a special (music) keyboard, apple connection kit and audio interface to make the software fully functional. Our current keyboards and interfaces are not compatible. In addition, Sibelius, the notation software that is central to both GCSE and A-Level, is NOT compatible with iPads. Garageband software on iPad has also proved to be quite unstable and students often lose work or need to spend a whole lesson reinstalling it to make it function.

Incidentally, the current audio interfaces and keyboards are in good order and do not need replacing.

Here then, is what would be required to replace the current computers and software. I have first included an ideal solution based on a quote from Albion (our iPad supplier) Below that, is an estimate of the equivalent PC upgrade.

#### What would it cost?

Quote: The attached quote comes from ALBION who are the company who lease the college iPads. They have included a security device for attaching the computers to the desks which is worth the

**Not included on the attached quote = the Logic Music Software which must be purchased with education discount from Apple themselves for c. £135-150 per machine.**

#### What of the equivalent PC solution that the college would provide?

15 x PC computer (with at least 16GB Ram and 256GB SDD) = 15 x c. £700 = £10,500

15 x Cubase (DAW) software upgrades (basic version) 15 x £25 = £375

#### The thoughts of a Year 11 GCSE Music Student (Dhruv Chadda):

(I simply asked him for thoughts on upgrading the department computers – all thoughts are his and we did not discuss it.)

Currently, the computers in the music school aren't suited to the requirements of the software that runs on them. For example, frequent crashes of the computer, unoptimisability for system sounds and general slowness has plagued the systems for years now. Add to this the unsupported Windows 7 operating system and the requirement for important work, like GCSE Composition that the computers couldn't handle as they kept resetting and ran two different versions of the software that I needed,



made me switch to a personal device iPad + iMac combo for such an important piece of work which the school system should be able to handle.

In my opinion, the Mac would be the perfect vehicle to bring the music department into the new age of music production, for three good reasons.

One - iPad and Mac work great together. I have personal experience of this. Using Logic remote and Logic Pro, the power I had allowed me to really push the boundary of what was possible compared to what I could've done on the computers in the music school. Add to this the fact that we already have the Mac servers and iPads to MDM control both Mac's and iPad and the fact that we can deploy Logic Remote to iPad for free means this is a very convenient offering.

Two - Software. All industry standard composers and studios use a Mac somewhere in their production process. From Hans Zimmer to Skrillex. One thing unites all of them: the Mac. This is because its industry leading software and sound management allows for this. You can set up custom audio devices to allow for greater versatility and multi route channels which bypass the need for an external sound card, saving money. Using Logic Pro, and Logic Remote allows for unparalleled power and intuitiveness. Add to this that all studios use this and this adheres to the schools mission statement of "educating for life". As well as this, MacOS allows for MDM management which is far superior to Windows.

Three - Long term benefits. As well as this, 10 years down the line, the Macs will still be running. This is because Apple education offers OS updates, Hardware and software support and training for the long term. As well as this, during the long term it is cheaper as it is only £199.99 for The Apple Education bundle, which includes Logic Pro, Final Cut Pro, Motion, MainStage and Compressor. I have attached a link for it below. It will help not just in the music department, but also in live performances (MainStage), document sharing and exportation (Compressor), Film club, promotional videos and video editing (Final Cut Pro) and of course Music composition (Logic Pro).

As well as this, Apple distinguished school status will be better achieved with the Mac and iPad combo and the combination becomes a selling point for the school.

If you have any more questions, I would be happy to help.

Dhruv

Alex Kent confirmed the below details;



The school have committed to paying the cost to upgrade the windows computers/laptops already in there, which would cost £10,500.

The quote for macs is £16763.94.

The request for the PTA is therefore the difference between the basic provision and the enhanced provision, of £6263.94.

This doesn't include any software, which has been agreed is definitely a school cost.

All present at the meeting agreed that the proposal was well presented and thorough, in addition everyone who commented on the proposal sent out via email agreed unanimously that this was something that the PTA should contribute too. It was felt that even though it is a very large amount for seemingly one department, the impact on and benefit to so many of our students is clear. Betina confirmed that this would leave approximately £10,000 in the PTA account and it was generally a good idea to keep £5000 as back up for expenses for events so there are still funds available for further requests. The following elected officers present at the meeting voted yes to this donation;

Betina McEvoy (Chair)  
Sue Evans (Deputy Treasurer)  
Alex Kent (School Liaison)  
Sam Cracknell (Secretary - Minutes)

In addition, Nikki Coffey who was also present at the meeting voted yes, as did the following members of the committee who could not attend the meeting but wanted their positive comments noted; Rebecca Ready, Jinger Stevens, Claire Payne, Paula Sewart, Sonya Lambourne and Giulia Cambiano.

There was then some discussion about when payment was needed and how quickly this would be implemented. Betina commented that it would be preferable to pay this donation before the end of this financial year but if that was not suitable for the school, we can earmark the funds until they are needed.

Alex advised that she was meeting with Mr Cassidy and Mr Moore to get the ball rolling but that it would be best for the school to request the funds once the installation has happened in case there are any issues.

#### **4. Prize Night Donation**

The PTA have queried if Mr Moore is now requesting prize night sponsorship/donations from parents, particularly year 11 and 13 parents. Alex confirmed that a line has been added to the invites as of this year inviting parents to sponsor prize night. It is felt that this request could not be made any sooner as it really needs to go in the invites sent out to attend prize night and this has been the first opportunity to do that. The PTA members present felt strongly that all parents should be encouraged to contribute if they wanted to in order to ease



**Registered Charity number:**

**1141714**

the pressure on the PTA to contribute such a large amount for something that benefited such a small number of students. It was noted that all of the parents present at this meeting would happily sponsor prize night even though our children still have many years left in the school.

Alex confirmed that she had advised Mr Moore of the PTA's concerns about the size of donation requested and that Mr Moore intended to ask for the same amount (£750) and the PTA could then donate whatever they felt was right.

It was felt important to clarify that the PTA are not against donating to prize night, we are fully supportive of prize night and happy to contribute. However, it is the responsibility of the PTA to ensure that where possible, donations benefit the most students for as long as possible.

### **Next Meeting Date**

TBC (Zoom)

### **Items for Future Agendas:**

TBC

Sam Cracknell

**10/07/21**