



Berwickshire High School Parent Council Minutes of Meeting: 2nd March 2016

Present

Parent Council members:

Rosemary Bain, Audrey Gaston (Treasurer), Avril Hamilton (Chair), Katy Master (Secretary), Joanne Moore, Fiona Morris, Agnes Owtram-Temper (Vice Chair), Diane Sinclair, Jane Taylor, Ali Thomson, Jason Waghorn, Andrea Walker

Staff:

John Clarke (Headteacher), Peter Macklin (Depute Headteacher)

Apologies

Douglas Archibald, Livvy Cawthorn, Sally Fleming, Kath Lothian, Val Redpath, Andy Tharme

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Subject to minor rewording under issues raised by parents, the minutes of the meeting on 3rd February were approved as a correct record.

Communications between the school and parents with regards to running kit are in hand.

The homework policy sub-committee has revised the policy and emailed to John Clarke.

Kath Lothian has received some comments on the Parent Council leaflets, which will be revised and sent to John Clarke for final comment.

A date was suggested for a first meeting of the 'Parental Involvement' sub-group. **Katy Master** to email those concerned separately about this.

John Clarke has identified a student who is happy and willing to take a lead on PR and nurturing a more positive relationship with the local press.

The ideas from the Parent Council about changes to pupil progress reports and reporting regime generally have been communicated to the senior management team as well as PTs, and changes will be made in the future.

Peter Macklin is reviewing the Social Education programme within school, which is to be revamped and will take into account comments made at the last meeting.

Peter Macklin has also looked into the problems raised in connection with listening exams and invigilation and will take steps to ensure that they do not occur during exam time later this year.

2. Chair's Report/Involvement and Communication with parents

Avril Hamilton reported from a recent SBC Parent Council Chairs' meeting:

- Hawick High School has for two years been piloting a 'Mentally Flourishing School' programme, which looks at the mental and emotional well-being of students and staff. The pilot has been successful, and SBC is now looking at ways in which this programme can be rolled out across the region.
- Parents will receive communications about the school estate pre-consultation as well as proposed changes to in-service dates very soon.

3. Treasurer's Report and fundraising

Audrey Gaston reported that the PC bank balance stands at £1,758.02.

Recent expenditure has been £450 to the science department following last month's meeting. Staff in the department have sent their thanks and have bought a good range of new equipment with the money.

Various options for the barriers for the canteen area have been researched and the school's preferred option was presented. It was agreed to spend £520 on two sets of taped barriers.

There was some discussion about the proposed coffee afternoon, which has been suggested for 24th March, with some concerns about whether it was likely to attract sufficient numbers of people. It was agreed to look at the possibility of running a coffee morning at Duns Parish Church instead. **Avril** and **Audrey** to take this to the fundraising sub-group and make enquiries about booking a slot on the coffee morning schedule at the church.

4. Headteacher's Report

John Clarke reported the following news:

- Progress is being made with recruitment to the vacant English teaching post. A number of applications have been received. The PT (English) has returned to work full-time. A query was raised in connection with the process of marking English portfolio work for examination. John Clarke and Peter Macklin assured parents that the quality assurance process of in-house marking prior to submission is in hand but agreed that students would benefit from assurances about this process to help allay anxieties they may have about it.
- The business management teacher has indicated that she will be leaving at the end of the school year. The recruitment process to replace her is in hand. There are two applicants so far, with a Timeplan recruitment possibility also.

- A redistribution of learning support is happening across SBC, with the outcome for BHS still unknown.
- The school has recruited to the vacancy in the school office.
- The external inspection of SBC Children's Services has concluded, although the final report is still awaited.
- The Social Enterprise Academy will be paying a visit to Turnbull Court.
- The recent school Burns Supper was a great success.
- The school's badminton team came second in a recent national competition.
- The winners of the 'Young Philanthropists Initiative' were the 'Friends of Berwickshire High School'. Success was based on the quality of the pupils' presentation.

John Clarke also asked for initial thoughts on a particular aspect of the self-evaluation guide that all schools use (How Good is Our School?). Under the theme of 'Learning Provision', schools are asked to look at 'Family Learning', which focuses on increasing the positive impact of working with families to improve learning and achievement. Those present commented that the self-evaluation guide raised many questions about what family learning means. It was suggested that a first step would be to identify what the learning needs of families are, and which families would be the target for such activity. It was agreed that the newly formed 'Parental Involvement' sub-group might be a suitable vehicle for more discussion on this.

5. Careers Information

March 17th is Careers Information Day at the school. The Careers Fair will be open from 2-6pm with a variety of employers and education providers attending. It is planned that certain year groups will be able to attend during school time.

Senior pupils have benefitted from mock interviews this week, designed to improve their application and interview skills. Some mixed feedback has been received so far, but useful learning points made. It was suggested that the exercise is very worthwhile, but would benefit from being held earlier in the school year, perhaps in October, to avoid 'congestion' during the spring term.

6. Student Leadership Team

It was suggested and agreed that the current process for election of the student leadership team is not as democratic as it might be, given that the 'electorate' is just the S5 year group, whereas the 'constituency' that the leadership team represents is the entire school. It was suggested further that it might not be too difficult to find a way of including pupils from S1 to S4 in the election process in the future.

John Clarke and **Peter Macklin** to take this to the Pupil Council in the first instance for comment.

7. Issues raised by parents

- a) **Litter.** It was reported that the 'Community Working Group' had recently picked up a lot of litter from the boardwalk area. John Clarke reported that work is ongoing to address this issue.

8. DONM

Tuesday 29th March 2106

Future agenda items

- *Update on the Maths Department by the PT (Mathematics)*

Minutes Approved by Parent Council on Tuesday 29th March 2016

Avril Hamilton

Avril Hamilton, Chair, BHS Parent Council