



Berwickshire High School Parent Council Minutes of Meeting: 29th March 2016

Present

Parent Council members:

Audrey Gaston (Treasurer), Avril Hamilton (Chair), Kath Lothian, Katy Master (Secretary), Joanne Moore, Val Redpath, Ali Thomson, Jason Waghorn, Andrea Walker

Staff:

John Clarke (Headteacher), Peter Macklin (Depute Headteacher), David Robertson (PT Mathematics)

Apologies

Douglas Archibald, Rosemary Bain, Fiona Morris, Agnes Owtram-Temper, Andy Tharme

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 2nd March were approved as a correct record.

The first meeting of the 'Parental Involvement' sub-group will take place on Thursday 28th April at 3pm.

Work continues in school to nurture a more positive relationship with the local press.

Peter Macklin reported that he had discussed the election process for the Student Leadership Team with the 'Pupil Voice'. Reactions had been mixed in the first instance, but it was agreed after some discussion that representatives from each year group should take part in the election and discussions are underway to determine how to do this. It was also agreed that the role and activities of the Student Leadership Team might usefully be reviewed.

2. Maths Department Update from PT (Mathematics)

Mr Robertson gave a presentation on the maths department. He began by explaining a little of his background and career to date before joining Berwickshire High where he said has been made very welcome and feels well supported. He explained how useful it had been to play an active part in the recruitment of two members of the department before taking up the post and that he is pleased to have a strong team of staff to work with. He talked a little about his approach to maths teaching and then outlined areas of priority for the maths department and himself as principal teacher. These are:

- examination courses;
- the transition from primary to secondary school;

- reviewing the S3/4/5 curriculum to allow more time for consolidation of learning before examinations;
- inter-disciplinary working across all school departments;
- working with colleagues across the curriculum areas to develop a consistent approach to numeracy.

He thanked the Parent Council (Jason Waghorn in particular) for the chess sets recently collected for the new chess club at school, which is now up and running. He finished by showing those present examples of the maths games that he sometimes uses in lessons, which he believes help to make maths fun.

He was asked about the consistency of maths methodology taught across the department and he confirmed that he holds regular discussions with his team on such matters to ensure that students are clear about methodologies and techniques, whilst also understanding that there may be different ways of doing things.

Avril Hamilton thanked him for his time and also mentioned that feedback received from parents about the maths department since his arrival has been very positive.

3. Chair's Report

Avril Hamilton reminded parents that the school estate consultation ends on 11th April and that the in-service day consultation ends on 15th April.

4. Treasurer's Report and fundraising

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

Barriers for the canteen have been ordered, but not yet paid for.

Following recent requests by other departments within school John Clarke reported that the Support for Learning department has asked if it may have £350 to purchase an i-pad and cover to be used to capture evidence of learning and achievement. It was agreed to grant this request.

Audrey reported that it may be possible to hold a coffee morning in Duns Parish Church on 14th May, but is awaiting confirmation of this.

5. Headteacher's Report

John Clarke reported the following staffing news:

- A new teacher of English has been appointed and will start in August. Mrs Thomson will cover the post until then. This puts the English department back at full complement.
- A Business Management teacher has also been appointed, also to start in August, Miss Whelan remains in post until the end of the school year.
- A new member of staff, Gail Clarke, starts in the school office on 18th April.
- Ms Hanry will be leaving at the end of the school year and the school will have another probationary teacher to replace her.

- The structural changes in Learning Support are still not fully known, but should be by the time of the Parent Council's next meeting.
- Mr Kerr continues to cover Ms Farrell's post whilst she is on sick leave.

He also reported on events and other matters of interest:

- The careers fair took place on March 17th from 2-6pm and all S2, S3 and S6 pupils were able to attend in school time, as well as some S4 and S5 pupils. There were about 20 stands covering a range of careers. Feedback from the pupils was positive. There is much to learn from, take forward and improve upon from the day, with one possible change being to move it to October next year.
- The school estates consultation run by SBC was not well attended, but it is possible that school estate may not be a pressing concern locally as BHS is a new building and the Duns Primary School project is well underway.
- The Vine Trust is running a trip to Tanzania next year. Around 22 students have signed up to go.
- Two senior students, Ross Ferguson and Rebecca Blaikie, are going forward for the Rotary Youth Leadership Award.
- Around 125 students are eligible to vote in the Scottish Parliamentary Elections and as headteacher he has been asked to raise this with the students concerned to make sure that they have registered.
- ParentPay letters will be going out to all parents before the end of term.
- The school is still seeking clarification from SBC on any policy regarding school trips abroad, especially with regard to the battlefields trip taking place in June.
- A new IT contract between CGI and SBC includes plans to allow schools to improve their wireless connectivity. The school welcomes this, although it does raise some issues about IT equipment within school.
- The BHS Pipe Band took part in a competition in Edinburgh recently, in which they competed well. BHS was the only school in the Borders to have representation at the competition. Thanks to the Coldstream Pipe Band and in particular Duncan Bell for their support.
- A School Improvement Plan meeting is taking place on 21st April at 2:15pm. Parents are welcome to attend.

6. Issues raised by parents

No issues were raised.

7. DONM

Wednesday 4th May 2016

Minutes Approved by Parent Council on Wednesday 4th May 2016

Avril Hamilton

Avril Hamilton, Chair, BHS Parent Council