



Berwickshire High School Parent Council Minutes of Meeting: 1st June 2016

Present

Parent Council members:

Douglas Archibald, Livvy Cawthorn, Audrey Gaston (Treasurer), Avril Hamilton (Chair), Kath Lothian, Katy Master (Secretary), Joanne Moore, Fiona Morris, Agnes Owtram-Temper (Vice-Chair), Val Redpath, Jane Taylor, Ali Thomson

Staff:

John Clarke (Headteacher), Lisa Scott

Apologies

Rosemary Bain, Diane Sinclair, Andy Tharme, Jason Waghorn

1. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Subject to minor typographical corrections, the minutes of the meeting on 4th May were approved as a correct record.

There is a School Improvement Plan meeting planned for mid-June.

The selection process for the Student Leadership Team will begin soon (earlier than previous years following comments and feedback from various people) and in addition to the Sixth Year; the Fifth Year and the members of Pupil Voice will also be voting.

2. “Developing the Young Workforce” Presentation

The Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) officer from SBC was unable to attend but instead the committee heard the presentation from Lisa Scott who is leading this work within school. She explained how the DYW programme has come about and that its key aim is to reduce youth unemployment by 40%. The focus is on looking at the role of vocational education; the links between education and the workplace; and the partnership between employers and educators. In school, the focus is on looking at vocational pathways; broadening the curriculum accordingly; and equipping pupils for work. The DYW programme is especially targeted at those pupils most at risk of not securing positive destinations beyond school leaving age. She explained that we are in year one of a seven year programme and that there is much work to do. One of the key areas of activity for her just now is engaging with local employers and encouraging them to be active partners in the DYW work. Notes from the presentation are copied below:

Developing the Young Workforce

What is it?



Developing the Young Workforce is a [seven-year programme](#) that aims to better prepare children and young people from 3–18 for the world of work.

This programme builds on the foundations already in place as part of Curriculum for Excellence.

The programme's headline aim is to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021.

Background

The final report of the Wood Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce was published in June 2014. It found broad agreement that all of our young people are entitled to an educational experience that is relevant to the world of work.

This is not just about education and training nor is it just about getting youth unemployment levels back to 2008 levels. It is about Scotland's long term economic success and wellbeing ... This will need strong leadership and firm commitments across the education and business sectors and in national and local government to deliver the changes.

Sir Ian Wood (Education Working For All! Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Final Report - Tuesday, June 3, 2014)

The Government's response to this report was published in the form of a [Youth Employment Strategy](#), with a focus on improving work experience, careers information, advice and guidance and providing greater access to vocational learning.

The Youth Employment Strategy summarises the ambitions for local authorities, schools and their partners under the following key themes:

- Expanding the offer – increasing the route from schools into employment, or further education which is closely linked to employment;
- Promoting and shaping the offer – engaging with young people, parents, teachers and practitioners, partners and employers;
- Supporting teachers and practitioners to develop children's and young people's learning about the world of work;
- Providing earlier relevant, labour-market focussed career advice when young people need it, leading to better outcomes;
- Embedding meaningful employer involvement;
- Consolidating partnership working with colleges and other training providers.

The strategy also includes [milestones for the next seven years](#) across all sectors, challenging schools, colleges and employers to embrace the recommendations and implement the measures required to effect lasting change

The presentation generated much discussion and many questions about the likelihood of positive engagement with local employers; the implications for staffing in schools and for the balance between vocational and more academic learning within school; the role of SQA courses delivered by other educational establishments; the attitudes and experiences of young people entering the workplace; the opportunities for peer mentoring or parent mentoring; the benefits of students sharing more about their successes and experiences outside of school.

John Clarke and Lisa Scott reiterated the fact that the DYW programme is in its infancy, but welcomed the thoughts and ideas raised by parents.

Avril Hamilton thanked Lisa Scott for her time and for an informative and thought-provoking presentation.

Useful links about the DYW programme are:
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/09/8940>

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/09/8940>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/developingtheyoungworkforce/dywresources/guidanceforschoolemployerpartnershipscombined>

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/dyw/index.asp>

3. Chair's Report

There had been no meetings of Parent Council chairs to report from.

Avril highlighted some issues from previous meetings, which she felt were worth picking up on at this point in the year:

- The suggestion of a weekly bulletin for parents. John Clarke agreed that this was a good suggestion but that staffing and workload issues in the school office have made it difficult to implement this yet.
- The reporting system for senior pupils. It was confirmed that this will change next year. The early report, which parents felt was not worthwhile, will no longer be issued.
- The school website. John Clarke reported that SBC is looking to carry out a pilot study looking at school websites and that the school would be keen to volunteer for this.

4. Treasurer's Report and Fundraising

Audrey Gaston reported that the PC bank balance stands at £900.77.

Canteen barriers and the PA system and stand have been paid for. The PC is still to pay for the iPad and cover for the Learning Support Centre (£350)

Douglas Archibald reported that his and Kath Lothian's work to submit a bid for windfarm monies for gym equipment is ongoing and that he hopes to present it soon along with students from the school.

John Clarke asked whether the PC could pay for presentation folders for the S3 year group. Two years ago the PC paid for two years' worth of these folders, which are intended to be a smart storing place for certificates and paper-based measures of achievement and are presented to all students at the end of their S3 year. The folders would cost about £350. The Committee agreed to fund these.

Avril Hamilton reported that in previous years, the PC has paid for three prizes at the September Award Ceremony, which amount in total to £175. The three prizes are: the Hans Elleflaadt prize for best S5 student in Technical Subjects (£25) and two Parent Council Prizes for Attainment in S6 (£75 each). It was suggested that the Parent Council would be asked to make this contribution again this year.

This generated a great deal of discussion, with varied and opposing views about whether the Parent Council should pay these sums this year, and in particular

the size of the cash sums involved. Those present could not reach agreement and a vote was held as follows:

“Should the Parent Council fund the Parent Council Prizes for Attainment in S6 to the value of £75 this year?”

YES: 2 PC members

NO: 10 PC members

A second vote was then held on the following proposal:

“That the value of these prizes be reduced to £25 in line with the third prize that the Parent Council pays for”

FOR: 7 PC members

AGAINST: 5 PC members

It was therefore decided that the Parent Council will fund the three prizes at £25 each this year.

John Clarke reported that he wishes to review the Awards Ceremony during the coming school year. The Parent Council welcomed this.

5. Headteacher’s Report

John Clarke reported the following staffing news:

- Contrary to previously reported staffing news, Ms Hanry is staying on as a Modern Foreign Languages teacher. She successfully applied for the temporary post.
- Interviews take place next week for the post available in Home Economics.
- Margaret Douglas in Learning Support is retiring at the end of the school year. Due to the ongoing restructuring in Learning Support across SBC, it is not yet possible to advertise for a replacement.

He also reported on events and other matters of interest:

- There have been a number of successful school trips lately.
- The P7 transition activities that have taken place so far have been very positive.
- The S6 prom takes place on Friday.
- The new timetable is out and despite a few teething problems, the school is happy that the new approach this year has worked well.
- The new timetable introduces ‘Tutor Time’. All pupils in S1-S6 have been placed into house-based mixed-year tutor groups (excluding S4 whose timetabling demands made it impossible to fit them in. They will have tutor time separately). Tutor Time will be used for a variety of purposes including communications, careers guidance, issues-based discussion and so on.

6. Report from Parental Involvement Sub-group

Members of the group present at the meeting (John Clarke, Joanne Moore, Katy Master and Ali Thomson) reported that the group is focussing on three areas of activity:

1. Extra-curricular sport
2. Developing the Young Workforce
3. Duke of Edinburgh Award

In each instance, members of the group will meet with appropriate staff to discuss:

- The nature of the support from parents that the school would like.
- How best to communicate with and target parents about this.

7. School Trips

A number of queries were raised in relation to school trips as follows:

- How accessible are school trips financially?
- What do the students who do not go on school trips do, especially during the mid-May 'school trips' week?
- What steps are taken to ensure that appropriately skilled staff are present on school trips?
- How is the cost of teacher participation and supply staff cover in school met?

In response to these questions, John Clarke made the following points:

- There is a fund that the school can use to pay for school trips for those who cannot afford them. The school will also apply for grants as appropriate to meet these costs for individuals.
- Often non-participation in school trips is due to emotional issues rather than financial ones, in particular the S1 residential.
- The school strongly encourages students to go on school trips that they think will be of benefit, especially 'whole-year' trips such as the S1 residential.
- The school has mixed success in meeting the needs of students who do not go on school trips, particularly during the 'trips week' in May and this is an area that requires further attention.
- There is always an appropriate male/female balance amongst staff accompanying school trips. In terms of which staff members go, the school is of course constrained by staff availability. The grouping of children and how they are assigned to staff is always carried out with the needs of the children involved in mind.
- The cost of staff participation and supply cover is built in to the cost of the trip.

8. Prizes and Award Ceremony

It was agreed that this item had been adequately dealt with under item 4.

9. Issues Raised By Parents

A query was made about use of the sixth form common room. John Clarke reported that it is not customary for the new sixth form to gain access to the common room until the new school year starts in August.

Kath Lothian mentioned that she had received some complaints from parents about lack of communication in general from the school about various matters and asked that the school improve its communication with parents in response.

10. DONM

The AGM will take place on Wednesday 7th September 2016 at 7pm.

Minutes Approved by Parent Council on Wednesday 7th September 2016

Avril Hamilton, Chair, BHS Parent Council