



Berwickshire High School Parent Council Minutes of Meeting: 5th October 2016

Present

Parents:

Rosemary Bain, Jacqui Bennett, Jane Boyce, Audrey Gaston (Treasurer), Avril Hamilton (Chair), Kath Lothian, Katy Master (Secretary), Morag Mazzoni, Joanne Moore, Fiona Morris, Diane Murray, Agnes Owtram-Temper, Val Redpath, Jane Taylor, Ali Thomson, Jason Waghorn,

Staff:

Scott Steele (Acting Headteacher), Peter Macklin (Depute Headteacher)

Apologies

Douglas Archibald, Livvy Cawthorn, Diane Sinclair, Anna White

1. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Subject to the insertion of further text about the monies raised from windfarm applications, the minutes of the AGM on 7th September were approved as a correct record.

The election of vice-chair was postponed to the next meeting.

2. Chairperson's Report

There was no news from the Chair. There have been no communications from Scottish Borders Council nor any Parent Council Chairs' meeting since the AGM on 7th September.

4. Treasurer's Report and Fundraising

The current balance is £548.40. This includes £21.36 taken in donations at the Senior Awards ceremony and expenditure of £25 on the senior awards ceremony. There is still a sum of £317 to come off (agreed expenditure for S3 presentation folders).

The next fundraising event planned is the Christmas Fayre. Details to follow. Ali Thomson suggested approaching Duns Golf Club to enquire whether a charity golf tournament could be held there to raise funds for the school. It was agreed that this was a good suggestion. **Ali Thomson to make enquiries with the golf club.**

Jane Taylor said that she would be willing to join the fundraising sub-group.

5. Parental Involvement sub-group

Ali Thomson reported that she and Tracey McCann had still to meet with Mr Harvey to discuss parental involvement issues with regard to extra-curricular sports.

Katy Master reported that she did not meet with Mrs Douglas before she retired to discuss parental involvement with Duke of Edinburgh awards, and it was agreed that it would now be more useful for her to meet with Ms Moghadam and Ms Stirling who are now supporting DoE in school.

Joanne Moore reported that she had met with Mrs Scott to discuss parental involvement in the Developing the Young Workforce programme. It has been suggested that parents could lend support in the following ways:

- Helping to identify and encouraging local employers to engage with Employer Partnerships.
- Carrying out mock interviews with students.
- Leading workshops on CV and application form skills.
- Giving “A Day in the Life of a . . .” presentations in which they share their experiences of being in the job they are in.

It was confirmed that mock interviews are taking place with S6 students this year and that these will take place before Christmas. It was agreed that if the school wishes parents to support this process, that letters about this need to go out after the October break. **Mr Steele to discuss this with Mrs Scott.**

These interviews will be the priority for now, with other measures to follow in time.

6. Headteacher’s Report

The acting headteacher, Mr Steele presented his report.

Staffing

The school is still in the process of recruiting two Learning Support staff, as well as a maths teacher and a computing teacher.

Berwickshire News

Mr Steele had a useful meeting with a representative from the Berwickshire News, which focussed on establishing a more positive relationship between the school and the newspaper. It was agreed that the school will have a double-page spread periodically which it can fill with articles. Students will lead this process.

School Review

The senior management team had been due to meet with representatives from SBC to give their presentation on future developments for the school as part of the school review. This meeting has been postponed. However, Mr Steele gave parents a summarised version of the presentation, which focussed on the four performance measures against which the school is assessed:

1. Literacy/Numeracy
2. Positive Destinations
3. Attainment versus Deprivation

4. Attainment for All

He started by saying that in terms of school improvement planning, these four areas are looked at from two angles: faculty actions and whole school strategies. He then went on to highlight examples of how the school is performing against these measures as well as giving some examples of what the school is doing to improve.

Literacy/Numeracy

There is a decreasing trend in numbers of school leavers leaving at S4/S5 having achieved SQA Nat Level 4 in literacy and numeracy. To improve this situation much work is going on to rewrite the 'Broad and General education' curriculum for S1-S3 in order to create a more robust platform for the senior phase with pupils entering S4 with a firmer foundation and hopefully all at Level 4.

Positive destinations

Figures are good for Berwickshire High School with 93% of school leavers going onto a 'positive destination' (further/higher education, training or employment) against a SBC average of 95% and a national average of 93%. There are no particular concerns here, but the school will continue to work to maintain these numbers.

Attainment v. Deprivation

Here BHS is underperforming in the higher end of the index of deprivation, i.e. in the 'wealthier' group of students. A number of measures are being taken to address this: supporting children to stay with courses they have selected rather than 'dropping' them when they find them challenging; improved monitoring and tracking; making sure that students understand that changing courses requires reporting to UCAS with possible consequences for offers they may receive from universities; and encouraging students to take more Highers rather than Advanced Highers because (with some exceptions) Scottish universities are saying that they find this preferable.

Attainment for All

In the lower performing 20% of the student body there is a negative trend emerging and measures are being taken to address this. In the middle performing 60%, boys are underperforming in S4/5. The measure referred to above to improve the broad and general education in S1-S3 is one example of what the school is doing to address this. In the top performing 20%, BHS is performing very well.

The school is also trying to improve SQA examination performance. Targets are to have 40% of pupils attain three or more National Level 5s; 40% of pupils attain three or more Highers and 20% of pupils attain five or more Highers.

Mr Steele explained that measures and actions to tackle these issues and targets are outlined in the School Improvement Plan, under the following headings:

- Effective leadership
- Excellent learning and teaching

- Increasing ambition
- Family/Community
- Using information
- Literacy/Numeracy

There are many actions sitting under these headings and the school is using a standard 'traffic light' system to monitor and track progress. Most actions are underway. The Senior Management Team meets regularly with faculty leaders (Principal Teachers) to review progress using the 'How Good is Our School' self-assessment tool.

On a separate note, Mr Steele also reported that he has discovered that the school is not bound by any contract with regard to its website, and made a plea to parents to start thinking about what the content of a new website should be. **Jason Waghorn to draft a communication to all parents consulting on this matter.**

7. Issues Raised by Parents

It was commented that anecdotal feedback is that the new 'Heads Up' weekly bulletin for parents is being warmly received.

10. DONM

Wednesday 2nd November, 7pm

Items for future agendas:

Appointment of Vice-Chair

School Website

Feedback from Parental Involvement Sub-group

GLOW2 presentation

Minutes Approved by Parent Council on Wednesday 2nd November 2016

Avril Hamilton

Avril Hamilton, Chair, BHS Parent Council