



Berwickshire High School Parent Council Minutes of Meeting: AGM 7th Sept 2016

Avril started by welcoming new parents to the meeting and explaining the format of Parent Council meetings.

Present

Parents:

Rosemary Bain, Jacqui Bennett, Jane Boyce, Audrey Gaston (Treasurer), Avril Hamilton (Chair), Kath Lothian, Katy Master (Secretary), Morag Mazzoni, Fiona Morris, Diane Murray, Diane Sinclair, Ali Thomson, Jason Waghorn, Anna White

Staff:

Scott Steele (Acting Headteacher)

Apologies

Douglas Archibald, Claire Beattie, Livvy Cawthorn, Agnes Owtram-Temper, Joanne Moore, Jane Taylor, Val Redpath

1. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Subject to minor typographical corrections and the insertion of an additional point raised by parents, the minutes of the meeting on 1st June were approved as a correct record.

The School Improvement Plan will be discussed at the October meeting.

A weekly bulletin, "Heads Up!" is now being distributed to parents each Friday.

2. Chair's Annual Report

Avril presented her report summarising the Parent Council past year's activities:

Chair's report - Berwickshire High School Parent Council - Session 2015-16

The Parent Council's job is to represent the parents of the school, as well as to support the school in its aims. With this in mind, the Parent Council has had a busy year, meeting once a month throughout the school session, as well as supporting the school at a number of events.

Our meetings at the beginning of the year were dominated by parental concerns over staffing issues, in particular for the Maths department. This led to the Parent Council writing to SBC, to both our local MSP and MP, and to the Scottish Government to express our concerns as to teacher recruitment and retention, in particular in rural areas such as ours. Happily, the school was able to resolve the issues in due course and later in the year we had a very informative and enjoyable presentation by Mr Robertson, the new Faculty Head of Maths.

As always, Parental Involvement and Communication remain key foci of the Parent Council, as we recognise the need to ensure parents feel both involved and informed. This year we established a Parental Involvement sub-group with the aim of working with the school to identify specific areas that parents could help. The sub-group has identified three areas to take forward this year in this respect: extra-curricular sport, the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and the Developing the Young Workforce scheme. There is still room for improvement in terms of communication between the school and parents, and we are constantly in discussions over how this can be achieved.

In terms of fundraising for the school, we have two different groups who have both been successful in raising substantial sums for the school. Our fundraising sub-group organised the annual Christmas Fayre, and held another Swishing Event, with monies raised going towards helping the school with new equipment, books, upgrading apparatus, training, trips and prizes for pupils. The second group has been working hard on grant applications to fund bigger projects within the school, with two applications for funding being submitted at the end of the year to local windfarm projects to help fund the replacement and enhancement of PE equipment including the fitness suite. As I write, we have just heard that the first of these applications has been successful, so we are keeping our fingers crossed for the second one.

Finally, we again had a number of informative presentations throughout the year including a talk from the local Health Improvement Practitioner and another on the Developing the Young Workforce scheme.

We are already making plans for the new session, with stallholders already booked for the Christmas Fayre on Friday 9th December. Parental Involvement and Communication will continue to be monitored and discussed, along with attainment, homework and any new issues that may arise, and we look forward to supporting the school as it continues to move forward.

*Avril Hamilton, Chair, Parent Council.
September 2016*

Avril handed over to Kath Lothian representing the Funding Group for large projects. She reported on the successful awards for the Health and Wellbeing Department of £5,000 from Black Hill windfarm on 11 August 2016 and £3,000 from Lammermuir Community Fund on 6 September 2016. She explained how the process of securing these awards has unfolded over the last year with much time spent on researching windfarm criteria in order to decide which projects to apply for funding for as well as many meetings and time spent on filling in application forms. A lot of work has been put in by the Funding Group to help secure these monies from the windfarms.

On behalf of the Parent Council, Avril gave special thanks to Douglas Archibald and Kath Lothian from the Parent Council's Funding Group whose hard work, along with support from Mr Harvey PT (Health and Wellbeing) and pupils Amy Clark, Barnaby Bevan, Susanne McEwen and Fergus Murray, secured the funds. Thanks were also extended to the windfarm funding bodies.

4. Treasurer's Annual Report and approval of accounts

Audrey presented her report summarising the Parent Council financial activity over the last year:

The Berwickshire High School Parent Council Treasurer's Report For Year Ended 30th June 2016

Fundraising

We had a fairly successful year in terms of fundraising, with total funds raised amounting to £1344.96. We raised £1849.19 in the previous year.

We had only 2 fundraising events during the year as two planned events didn't take place. The first was the Christmas Craft Fayre which was held in November and raised a worthwhile revenue of £1186.91, an increase of £156.93 on last year. The next was a Swishing evening held in January raising £158.05 which was £45.38 less than the previous year.

Other Income

In addition to the fundraising income, we received a Parent Council grant from Scottish Borders Council for £425.00 and £52.80 in donations at the Senior Awards Ceremony.

Total Income for the Year amounted to £1822.76.

School Expenditure

Our main spending on the School this year included £400.00 for the Library to finance professional story-tellers as part of 'National Story-telling Week', £450.00 for the Science Department to purchase new practical learning equipment, £520.00 to buy barriers for the Canteen, as requested by the Pupil Council, £337.25 for a PA System and stand for outdoor events and £348.73 towards a new IPAD, cover and cable for the Learning Support Department.

Total expenditure on the School amounted to £2142.24 compared to £2434.28 last year.

Other Expenses

Additional expenditure included £13.59 on refreshment supplies and a donation of £151.00 to the Syrian Refugee Crisis (proceeds from the Christmas Fayre Tombola).

Total Expenditure for the Year amounted to £2306.83.

Funds Balance

Income over expenditure resulted in a deficit of £484.07.

Funds held at the year end amount to £552.04.

The accounts were approved.

Avril mentioned that there is a separate sub-group of the Parent Council engaged in fundraising activities and invited anyone interested in joining that group to let her or Audrey know.

5. Election of office bearers

The following posts were elected:

Chair: Avril Hamilton (proposed Diane Sinclair, seconded Diane Murray)

Treasurer: Audrey Gaston (proposed Rosemary Bain, seconded Fiona Morris)

Secretary: Katy Master (proposed Fiona Morris, seconded Audrey Gaston)

The election of the post of Vice-Chair was not carried out. Douglas Archibald, who was unable to attend the meeting, had indicated his willingness to be vice-chair. But due to the fact that the current postholder, Agnes Owtram-Temper was not present at the meeting and that it was unclear whether she wished to stand again, it was agreed that a decision about this would have to wait until October.

6. Headteacher's Report

The acting headteacher, Mr Steele presented his report.

Staffing

Headteacher John Clarke has been asked by SBC to support Hawick High School until October, due to some senior staffing problems at that school. Scott Steele is undertaking the acting Headteacher's role at BHS until then.

The school is two Support for Learning (SFL) teachers short at present. However, one SFL teacher is due to start on 12th September, with the second to follow in due course.

The school is one member of staff down in the maths department. The recruitment process is underway and action has been taken to address the gap in the meantime as follows:

Senior classes

- All senior classes have a Maths Teacher for all five periods except one National 5/4 class, which is receiving four out of five periods of maths teacher input. Each member of the Maths Department is supporting this initiative. This is also supported by Mrs Paulin.
- N5 classes have their scholar passwords; they have access to materials on glow, on relevant web addresses and they have their textbooks at home.

S1-3 Classes

- Mr Robertson is starting most lessons of the S1-3 classes on the vacancy's timetable. Pupils are directed to appropriate examples to read before beginning class work. This is also supported by information on powerpoint presentations.
- The new S1 have been following common lessons which the cover teachers have delivered. In addition, there are powerpoints available for the cover teachers to help pupils understand the required work.
- There will be an S1-3 study class (again specifically for the vacancy classes) taken by Mr Robertson every Thursday lunchtime.

SQA Performance & SQA Targets

Mr Steele presented some headline data on SQA results. He reminded parents that the following data omits information from Insight, which is not yet available. Therefore, data on positive destinations, literacy, numeracy and wider achievement are absent at this stage.

Table one: Current

	5+ SCQF Level 5	3+ SCQF Level 6	5+ SCQF Level 6	1+ SCQFF Level 7
2016	32.56%	33.33%	14.63%	17.76%
2015	33.33%	26.17%	9.35%	20.00%
2014	25.23%	32.00%	14.40%	20.42%
2013	44.00%	28.87%	8.45%	13.42%

Table two: Accumulative

	5+ SCQF Level 5	3+ SCQF Level 6	5+ SCQF Level 6	1+ SCQFF Level 7
2016	34.88%	26.17%	10.28%	18.69%
2015	33.33%	32.00%	16.00%	22.40%
2014	25.23%	30.28%	9.15%	21.83%
2013	44.80%	26.85%	10.07%	17.45%

Mr Steele outlined the school's aspirations in light of these results:

1. To increase SQA performance in key measures as follows:
 - a. 5+ National 5s – 2017 target of 40%
 - b. 3+ Highers – 2017 target of 40%
 - c. 5+ Highers – 2017 target of 20%
2. To raise ambition for all by continuing to allow young people access to National 5 and Higher courses.
3. Continue to promote 5+ National 4 courses as a minimum competence across the Senior Phase curriculum.
4. Continue to explore opportunities to provide high quality vocational courses.
5. Continue to increase certification for those attending LC1.
6. Continue to improve literacy and numeracy in the lower school.

School Improvement Plan

Mr Steele reported that the areas on which the School Improvement Plan will focus are:

1. Personalised Support and Universal Support
2. Developing Our Young Workforce
3. Complete 'Broad and General Education' curriculum development and accompanying monitoring and tracking system
4. Continue to improve learning and teaching
5. Design and implement new Pupil Profiles
6. Design and implement a Wider Achievement Framework based on the school's new Vision, Values and Aims

A number of working groups of staff have been established to work on the School Improvement Plan:

1. Literacy
2. Numeracy
3. Health & Well-being
4. Wider Achievement
5. Pupil Profiles
6. Tutor Time
7. Learning & Teaching
8. Developing Our Young Workforce
9. Raising Ambition

A question was asked about how BHS compares to other Borders' schools. Mr Steele reported that the school ranks fifth out of nine for its National 5 results and fourth out of nine for its Highers results. He does not have data yet to make national comparisons.

A question was asked about the continued availability of Open University courses. These continue to be available.

A question was raised about Learning Support staff and the ongoing changes to ANA posts across the Borders. Mr Steele reported that the school has a satisfactory allocation of ANA hours, but could always use more and that there is a recruitment process underway for four ANA posts.

Finally, Mr Steele added that he has made enquiries about the school's contractual arrangements regarding the school website. He will report back on this at a later meeting.

7. Issues Raised By Parents

a) Kelso High School has recently changed its uniform and a query was raised as to whether there are plans to do the same at BHS. Mr Steele confirmed that there were no plans to do so at present.

b) A query was raised about PE provision in S5. Mr Steele confirmed that there is a requirement to provide two hours of PE but that many schools, including BHS, struggle to fit this in to the S5 timetable, mostly for staffing reasons. He went on to say that the two hour provision is really just for S1-4, so that whilst two hours would be preferable in S5 and S6, one hour of core PE is acceptable and that is what is timetabled at BHS. Pupils may opt out altogether, but only with the permission of Mr Macklin.

c) A final query was raised about whether it is possible for parents to access remotely data about their child's progress and attainment. At Kelso HS, parents have access to the Edmodo system that the school uses to track progress and attainment. Mr Steele reported that BHS is encouraging the use of the GLOW2 system instead with the ambition that, via this system, parents will be able to indirectly access information about their children's progress. The system is not fully populated yet, but there is enough for parents to get some sense of how their children are getting along. It also includes links to resources. Presentations on GLOW2 will be rolled out across year-group assemblies soon.

d) It was noted that the Assessment Calendar had not been communicated to parents yet. Mr Steele resolved to remedy this. There was a brief discussion about how rigidly teachers stick to the assessment calendar, and the frequency with which test dates get changed, especially in the lower school.

10. DONM

Wednesday 5th October, 7pm

Items for future agendas:

Appointment of Vice-Chair

School Improvement Plan

School Website

Feedback from Parental Involvement Sub-group

SQA Performance Analysis

GLOW2 presentation

Minutes Approved by Parent Council on Wednesday 5th October 2016

Avril Hamilton

Avril Hamilton, Chair, BHS Parent Council