



Berwickshire High School Parent Council Minutes of Meeting: 3rd May 2017

Present

Parents:

Cathy Anderson, Douglas Archibald, Rosemary Bain, Neil Bennett, Jane Boyce, Audrey Gaston, Avril Hamilton (Chair), Kath Lothian, Morag Mazzoni, Katy Master, Fiona Morris, Agnes Owtram-Temper, Ian Sinclair, Jane Taylor, Jason Waghorn,

Staff:

Scott Steele (Acting Headteacher), Mark Colston (Depute Headteacher)

Apologies

Diane Sinclair, Ali Thomson, Neil White

1. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting on 28th March were approved as a correct record. All matters arising had been actioned.

2. Headteacher's Report

The acting headteacher, Mr Steele, presented his report.

Staffing: Mr Steele confirmed that a number of staff are still off on sick leave, but due to return soon. The art teacher covering Mrs Bertram's maternity leave has started. Miss Morrison's maternity leave is being covered from within existing staff resources. The starting date of the new maths teacher has been postponed due to delays with her visa application; however she will be starting as soon as possible.

DoE: Due to an outdoor education budget freeze at Scottish Borders Council, bronze DoE expeditions have had to be postponed. Practice and 'real' expeditions will now go ahead in June: 2nd/3rd and 12th/13th June for girls; 5th/6th and 19th/20th June for boys. Some discussion followed about the extent to which the school required support from SBC to carry out DoE, with useful input from Ian Sinclair who is an assessor for DoE. Ian suggested that with support from himself and other parents, it could be possible to carry out DoE without SBC support. **It was agreed that Ian Sinclair and Katy Master should meet with Mrs Moghadam** to discuss this further to firstly ensure that the June expeditions go ahead and secondly with an eye to the future running of DoE.

Pupil Premium: Mr Steele confirmed that the school plans to use the Pupil Premium to target the literacy and numeracy attainment of the 20% lowest performing pupils. They will use data from feeder primary schools as well as CEM data to identify which pupils to target. A basic plan for how to spend Pupil

Premium monies has been submitted to SBC. It is likely that a Principal Teacher will be recruited to lead on this work, with the possibility of extra staff to support it.

S6 Graduation Event: Mr Steele reported that this had been an extremely successful event, organised by the sixth year themselves. It had a light hearted, informal, relaxed and inclusive tone which went down very well with students, parents and teachers. It provided good 'closure' to the year and was timed well, taking place the day before the S6 pupils had their official last day. The success of the evening has prompted the senior leadership team to think about how to celebrate 'end of school' in the future, and how to perhaps combine it with hitherto traditional awards ceremonies.

Parents commented that it would be nice in the future to include all school leavers (i.e. from S4 and S5 as well) in such celebrations.

School Uniform: Mr Steele reported that he has reminded all pupils of the current guidelines on school uniform, which rule out 'baseball style' trainers and jeans. He reassured parents that this should not prompt the immediate purchase of new school uniform and shoes, but that when purchasing in the future these guidelines should be borne in mind.

It was suggested that banning jeans for girls especially will be difficult, as traditional school trousers will not be worn by them and that it might be acceptable for both girls and boys to allow smart, black jeans with no embellishments, rips and so on as a compromise.

It was also suggested that a note go into 'Heads Up' about this and that uniform guidelines be communicated to new parents at the P7/S1 transition evening for parents in June.

Easter School: Mr Steele reported that the Easter School had been a success with over 500 pupil sessions having taken place. Feedback from pupils and teachers has been positive. Over 90% of the children targeted by the school for suggested attendance did attend.

Avril confirmed that feedback from parents has also been overwhelmingly positive, and passed on thanks to the school for putting on the Easter School.

Developing Young Workforce: Mr Colston gave a short presentation on the progress he has made with DYW, which is largely concerned with increasing the number of children securing a 'positive destination' post-school. The main focus has been on working with local employers to identify the skills they need from a young workforce, looking at the career pathways at local businesses open to young people at BHS, looking to see how best to incorporate 'work skills' into daily learning and also carrying out specific and targeted 'work skills' projects or activities. He has established a Berwickshire High School Industry Support Group made up of local and regional employers to support this work. There are three key areas of activity:

- a) “Five minutes with . . .” These are short lunchtime sessions in which students can listen to local employees from different companies talking about what they do for a living. The students can then ask questions and find out more about the jobs that interest them.
- b) Summer Academy of Skills. This is a four-week long project focussed on senior students sitting two or fewer Nat 5s. It gives them an opportunity to meet people involved in a whole range of careers, hear about what they do; visit their place of work, practice their CV-writing and interview skills and gain more understanding of the skills that employers are looking for.
- c) Careers Fair. This will take place on (probably) 12th June. It will be open to all year groups. There will be representatives from a wide range of potential employers as well as universities and colleges. It will run in two sessions: 3:30-5:00pm for students and teachers and 5:30-7:00pm for families.

3. School Improvement Plan 2016/17

Mr Steele circulated copies of the School Improvement Plan 2016/17 evaluation which shows how the school has progressed the various priorities for action set out within that plan. He drew attention to the fact that Tutor Time will be changing next year following consultation with staff and pupils.

Next year’s School Improvement Plan will come to the Parent Council before the summer break, or at its first meeting of the new school year.

4. Senior Awards Ceremony

Mr Steele reiterated his comments about learning from the success of the S6 Graduation evening when it comes to planning this year’s senior awards ceremony, which will take place in September as usual.

There was a brief discussion about possible changes to the senior awards ceremony, which included the suggestions that it be held in June, that it focus on all school leavers and that it be a celebration of wider achievement as well as academic success. It was agreed that further discussion is needed on this, and Mr Steele confirmed that he intends to discuss the matter with staff.

5. School Website

Jason Waghorn demonstrated the website he has developed following a meeting of the sub-group established to look at website content. He made the point that the new site is easier to use, is better protected and is cheaper than the current one. It was received very positively.

There was some discussion as to whether the domain name “bhs.scot” is right for a school, with some concerns that it does not immediately suggest that it is a school website. It may be possible to incorporate ‘sch’ into the domain name, but this might come at a cost. It was also confirmed that many schools use similarly non-academic or scholarly domain names, and suggested that as long as search engines picked the site up it perhaps does not matter.

It was agreed that the next step is ensure that the school is happy with the suggested new site, domain name and software as well as associated costs before

moving forward. **Jason to liaise with Mr Steele and also circulate the link to all PC members.**

6. Parental Involvement sub-group

Nothing further to report on DoE and DYW [see Item 2].

There was nothing to report on progress with extra-curricular sporting activity.

7. Issues Raised by Parents

No issues were raised.

8. Treasurer's Report and Fundraising

The current balance is £1,611.04.

It was reported that the '200 club' bank account has now been set up and a letter drafted to send out to all parents, which will go out before the end of May.

9. Chairperson's Report

There were no issues to report.

Avril brought to attention that this was Agnes Owtram-Temper's last meeting as a Parent Council member, and thanked her for her long-standing service and contributions over the twelve years that she has been a parent of the school.

10. DONM

Wednesday 31st May 2017, 7pm

Minutes Approved by Parent Council on Wednesday 31st May 2017

Avril Hamilton

Avril Hamilton, Chair, BHS Parent Council