



Berwickshire High School Parent Council Minutes of Meeting: 4th May 2016

Present

Parent Council members:

Douglas Archibald, Rosemary Bain, Audrey Gaston (Treasurer), Avril Hamilton (Chair), Kath Lothian, Katy Master (Secretary), Joanne Moore, Fiona Morris, Agnes Owtram-Temper, Diane Sinclair, Jason Waghorn

Staff:

John Clarke (Headteacher)

Apologies

Livvy Cawthorn, Jane Taylor, Andy Tharme, Ali Thomson

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Subject to minor typographical corrections, the minutes of the meeting on 29th March were approved as a correct record.

The first meeting of the 'Parental Involvement' sub-group took place on Thursday 28th April. The group agreed to look at the specific tasks in which parents can be involved and the barriers to and methods of communication about those. The group is meeting again on 9th May.

The School Improvement Plan meeting will be held at a future date.

Work is ongoing to look at the relationship between the school and the local press and it may be that the new Media Studies classes can be involved in this work.

Work is ongoing to look at the role and election of the Student Leadership Team.

2. Health Improvement Practitioner

The Parent Council welcomed Julie Middlemiss-Brown to the meeting who talked to those present about her role as Health Improvement Practitioner for the area. She explained that her role is funded by the NHS but located within Youth Borders and its specific focus is sexual health and relationships. Her key role this year is to re-launch the 'C-Card' scheme; a scheme that provides free contraceptives and advice to young people aged 13-25 on sexual health and relationships. She explained how the scheme works and how it is to be re-launched. It is likely that there will be a blanket distribution of the cards to all young people within this age range, and that there will be a variety of locations from which young people can access free contraceptives and advice, including health centres, youth centres, pharmacies and possibly schools. Work is ongoing to finalise some of these issues.

She also explained how she works with a variety of professionals and individuals, to train them in this work in order that more people who are in contact with young people are able to offer advice and support.

Avril Hamilton thanked Julie for her time and for an informative and enlightening presentation.

3. Chair's Report

Avril Hamilton reported from a recent SMC Parent Council Chairs' meeting:

- The consultation on changes to INSET days has ended. There will be no changes to INSET days, but following comments on school holidays that were brought up during the consultation, a school holidays consultation will take place next year.
- The school estate pre-consultation has ended. There was a low response rate in the Berwickshire area, perhaps due to the fact that Berwickshire High School is new and that the new Duns Primary School project is underway. However, the pre-consultation has thrown up issues around capacity and catchment, which may affect our local schools. Results and comments from the pre-consultation are to be published before focussed, specific and formal consultations take place around these issues. There are no plans to reduce the number of secondary schools.
- Inclusion for All strategy. An officer has been appointed to look at what is required to support all groups of young people to achieve and attain.

4. Treasurer's Report and fundraising

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

Barriers for the canteen are now in use, but not yet paid for. John Clarke to sort this with the school office.

It is unlikely that there will be dates available for a coffee morning in the Parish Church before the end of term. This will be put on hold until the new school year. Avril Hamilton mentioned that it would be useful to have some new members on the fundraising sub-committee.

Douglas Archibald reported that he and Kath Lothian had met with Rob Harvey (PT Health and Wellbeing) to look at ways in which it might be possible to secure wind farm monies to help pay for new equipment for the fitness suite. They have produced a draft funding bid which shows monies secured to date for various items of equipment and activities in order to illustrate the variety of funding sources secured and sought in addition to the wind farm monies. Douglas requested that any clarifications or additions to this be communicated to him. The Parent Council agreed to fund a new PA system (one of the items on the list of equipment) at a cost of £388.00. Douglas and Kath will continue to work on the bid before presenting it to funders over the summer. It may be possible to include some students from the school in this.

5. Headteacher's Report

John Clarke reported the following staffing news:

- He will shortly find out who the new probationary modern foreign languages teacher is.
- Mrs Lawson, Home Economics teacher, is retiring this summer. The recruitment process to find a replacement is underway.
- The Learning Support review by SBC is now complete, but the school is yet to hear how it affects staffing here. One of the current Learning Support staff, Mrs Rennie, is retiring this summer.
- Mrs Kennedy will return from maternity leave in October. Mrs Huffman will go on maternity leave from August.

He also reported on events and other matters of interest:

- The Easter concert was a great success. It was especially good to see pupils who hitherto have not been involved in such concerts making such a wonderful impression on the audience.
- The Sixth Year had their Leavers Lunch last Thursday and a successful and fun last day in school.
- Three pupils have recently triumphed at the Scottish Karting Championships and now go forward to compete in the British Championships in Milton Keynes later this year.
- SQA examinations start on 5th May.
- Barriers are now in place in the canteen.
- The Skills Academy is now up and running for S4 pupils who are not sitting examinations. Participation has not been as high as expected.
- Two teams of five staff are taking part in a fitness improvement programme 'STEPS'. One of these teams is currently 25th out of 800 teams in Scotland taking part! Mr Harvey is looking to see how this programme might be rolled out to the students.
- ParentPay has launched with only a few teething problems. About 120 families within the school have registered.
- The battlefields trip is going ahead.

6. Issues raised by parents

A query was raised about the Sixth Year trip that has traditionally taken place in June. Mr Clarke confirmed that this was not taking place this year and that the purpose and format of this trip is something that is currently under discussion.

A query was raised about the recent Sixth Year Yearbook that has been published and the appropriateness and personal nature of some of the comments that have been made about individuals in it. This prompted some discussion about how the Yearbook is produced and edited. Some suggestions were made as to how the process might be improved to ensure that content is appropriate and not unkind or defamatory: that a female member of staff be involved in the editing process as well as a male member of staff; that conversations be had with individuals about whom possibly controversial remarks are made to ensure that they are familiar and happy with what has been

written about them; and that staff are involved in the final 'go to print' stages to ensure that unsuitable content is not put back in at the last minute.

Finally, a query was raised about communications with parents generally. It was confirmed that this is an area that the Parental Involvement Group would be looking at.

7. DONM

Wednesday 1st June 2016, 7pm

Items for future meetings

Presentation from the 'Developing the Young Workforce' officer, Kevin McCall
School trips

Minutes Approved by Parent Council on Wednesday 1st June 2016

Avril Hamilton

Avril Hamilton, Chair, BHS Parent Council