



# Berwickshire High School Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023

## Present

Parents: Neil Bennett, Danielle Betts, Colin Gracey, Katy Master, Amanda Stewart  
Staff: Bruce Robertson (Rector)

## Apologies

Mo Lamond, Helena Richards, Claire Stewart, Vicky Tait

## 1. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the meeting in March were approved.

## 2. Chairperson's Report

Neil updated the Parent Council on the following matters:

- Mental Health service provision in schools – various officers from SBC (Justin Sinclair, Lesley Munro, Educational Psychology and School Nursing representatives) met with Parent Council chairs to update on progress. A working group is to be established to focus on delivery of mental health provision in schools. One additional mental health practitioner is to be recruited at SBC. This is a stop-gap measure until 2024 when the Kooth and Quarrier contracts end and mental health service provision in schools can be re-examined.
- Dyslexia Support at BHS – work continues. There are a number of actions being taken forward: recruiting volunteers to act as readers/scribes, more detailed data analysis in terms of pupils with dyslexia, their performance, subjects taken and so on, and looking at a possible benchmarking exercise. Neil explained that there are various schemes for being recognised as a school that excels in providing support for dyslexia and proposed that engaging with such a scheme might be positive step forward for BHS. The British Dyslexia Association offers a scheme called the 'Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark' which sets a standard for dyslexia support in schools. It was agreed that such a scheme would be worth considering and that the Parent Council might be able to help with associated costs. Bruce suggested that a joint approach with cluster primaries would be particularly effective and will firstly discuss with the representatives from the cluster primary schools.

## 3. Treasurer's Report 2021-2022

The main account balance is £2,334.85

The 200 Club account balance is £751.30

£

## 4. Fundraising and 200 Club draw

A refreshment stall at a recent hockey festival was well received and raised a small sum for Parent Council. It was agreed that wherever possible it's good to provide refreshment stalls at sporting fixtures.

### 200 Club draw:

April 2023

1<sup>st</sup> – 25

2<sup>nd</sup> – 11

3<sup>rd</sup> – 54

## 5. Rector's Report

- Thanks to the Parent Council for the hockey festival refreshments.
- There has been a little flurry of positive news about the school in the local press lately, which has been good to see.
- Exit interviews have been conducted with all S6 school leavers. Feedback about their overall experience at BHS was positive, especially in regard to the last two years back in school after Covid disruption, with an average 8/10 'score'.

- S6 school leavers celebrated their graduation from BHS with a ceremony at Marchmont House. Former pupil Oliver Wright spoke at the ceremony as did Mr Huffman and Bruce himself. Feedback from S6 students was that they found it a really positive and meaningful event and that it was good to mark their leaving in such a way.
- New banners are up in school and look good.
- Recent changes to the SBC budget formula for schools means that the school budget is going to be tighter than envisaged next academic year. This is compounded by a falling school roll, which is the result of changing demographics in the BHS catchment area. The revised budget means that some changes need to be made to staffing arrangements for next year. All schools are struggling to recruit maths teachers, so rather than continue hitherto unrewarding efforts to fill the current 1.6 FTE maths vacancies, maths teaching will continue to be covered from existing staffing resources in school. This eases pressure on the budget as well as solving some overstaffing issues elsewhere in school. In modern foreign languages, one staff member is taking an unpaid sabbatical for a year and other posts are either not being replaced or reducing their hours. This will result in reducing modern foreign language teaching in S1-3 from three periods a week to two. The extra period of learning will be dedicated to literacy.
- An Open Morning for prospective BHS parents/students is being planned for Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May. It is part of ongoing efforts to promote the excellent progress that BHS is making in teaching and learning.
- School Librarian, Mr Bain, is leading on a potentially exciting project focussed on the Library. There is potential to repurpose the Library as a combined study and auditorium space, with the possibility of using it for performance, workshops and training as well as for study and literacy. Renovation and re-purposing works would be required to do this and research is underway to explore the costs and implications of such a project.
- A Charity Quiz Night is taking place on 28<sup>th</sup> April at the Rugby Club.
- Thanks to members of the Parent Council who are leaving this year, because their youngest children are now school leavers!

## **6. Matters raised/AOB**

- a) Letter – a letter had been circulated by a former Parent Council member who had received it from a parent who wished to remain anonymous. It contained a number of issues that the parent wished to express concern about. Due to the letter writer wishing to remain anonymous, it was decided that there was little the Parent Council or Senior Leadership Team could do to directly address those issues, some of which were in fact straightforwardly resolved. However, all the issues raised have been noted by the Rector. The Parent Council would urge all parents with individual or personal complaints about their child's school experience to contact either the Senior Leadership Team directly, or contact the Parent Council Chair ([chair@bhspc.co.uk](mailto:chair@bhspc.co.uk))
- b) Former pupils achievements – It was suggested that it would be very positive if the school celebrated the achievements of former students in Heads Up, as well as those of current pupils.
- c) Sex and Relationship Education – a query was raised about whether certain year groups have, due to Covid interruption, missed out on critical sex, contraceptive and relationship education. The current S6 year group, certainly has, and it's possible that the current S5 year group has too. In which case, there is chance to fit it in to the PSE timetable during their S6 year. Bruce said he would make enquiries about that.

## **7. DONM**

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023