

Berwickshire High School Parent Council AGM – 6th September 2023

Chair's Report – 2022-23

Once again, the 2022/23 school year has seen much progress at Berwickshire High School, not only academically with SQA attainment significantly improved, but with extended and reinstated extracurricular activities. Amongst others, the school senior and all-school shows are now back in place and proving very popular as usual. School trips, including faculty specific trips such as the Battlefields trip to Belgium and France have also commenced. Duke of Edinburgh expeditions continue and later this year the Christmas Fayre will be held for the first time since the Covid pandemic.

Fundraising

The Parent Council (PC) continues to support the school through fundraising and the 200 Club continues to bring in funds which this year have helped to fund: sports tops for the PE Department, end of term ice cream van, house prizes and various departmental books.

We are keen to increase 200 Club members and thanks go to Clare Stewart for her efforts in doing so.

Thanks also go to Clare too, for trialing a Parent Council refreshment stall at a school hockey match and to Clare and Mo Lamond for running the stall. This was considered a success, not only as a fundraising exercise, but also in welcoming parents from other schools to BHS and raising the BHS positive profile. We will look to explore this at coming events throughout the year.

Clare also created and sold school merchandise at various school events.

The addition of the Christmas Fayre, which is run by the Parent Council, should boost our fundraising efforts significantly. Thanks go to Victoria Tait for agreeing to lead on this.

Treasury

The PC coffers continue to be healthy enough to help fund school equipment, books and trips. Thanks to Mo Lamond for keeping across this, managing the 200 Club, and liaising with bank accounts and school to keep accounts in check.

Profile Raising

As well as fundraising the PC has been active in helping the school raise it's positive profile. Amongst other collateral: New Vision, Values and Aims banners were installed in the main atrium of the school. Posters were created for the very successful Pedagogy Conference. Work will commence on posters for the next conference shortly. Pop up banners have been created for in school as well as events out-with school. Awards and Graduation certificates were also created for use at both the Junior and Senior Awards Ceremonies and Graduation Ceremony.

New Parent Recruitment

Through the year, many current PC members have attended various in-school events to engage with parents and explain what we do. We are keen to continue to try to encourage a diverse and broad range of parents to the PC forum and monthly meetings.

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) wide High School Chairs Group

The High School Chairs Group, which has been running for a few years now, continues to be a powerful Borders-wide collective voice for our high schools. After the success of the campaign to reverse high school budget cuts, we continue to campaign and are currently in dialogue with the SBC Education Department for improved mental health service provision in our schools, better quality food in schools (including better provision for vegetarian and vegan diets) and a review of environmental packaging in schools.

Neurodiversity

This year the PC set up a new Parent Group which will run alongside the PC, but sit independently. The Group was created to look at provision for neurodiverse pupils in our school. Currently the focus is on dyslexia, and we are currently working towards becoming a British Dyslexia Association school of excellence for dyslexia provision. Thanks go to Kathy Huffman, Head of Support for Learning at BHS and her team for agreeing to pursue this initiative, as well as Victoria Tait in leading for the PC. Thanks also go to the parents who have given up their time to contribute to the Dyslexia Support Group meetings so far.

In my capacity as Chair thank you to all PC participants and Office Bearers; Mo Lamond, Katy Master (outgoing Secretary) and Clare Stewart for your support and continued contribution to the progress of our school. I'd also like to offer a fond farewell to all parents and staff who have left the school community this year, as well as a welcome to new parents and teachers joining the exciting BHS journey. We need to continue to support Bruce and his team to deliver the ambitious vision they have for Berwickshire High School. Here's to the coming year!

Best regards,

Neil Bennett

BHS Parent Council Chair