

Online Parent Council Minutes 7th October 2020

Present:

Parent Council Members:

Douglas Archibald, Neil Bennett, Jane Boyce, Wand-Jane Field, Avril Hamilton, James Heron, Pauline Heron, Katy Master, Morag Mazzoni, Emma McDevitt, Helena Richards, Diane Sinclair, Jane Taylor, Anna Whyte

School:

Bruce Robertson

Apologies:

Claire Beattie

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising.

Minutes approved from the last meeting in September.

Matters arising:

1. Calendar of events not been sent out. Bruce Robertson will action
2. Saturday cascades been sent out.
3. Confirmation received from Connect re Insurance for Parent Council.

2. Chair's Report



Berwickshire High School Parent Council AGM 7th Oct 2020

Chairs Report School Year 2019/20

It's fair to describe the school year of 2019/20 as one of the most tumultuous in the life of Berwickshire High School, until 2020/21.

Following what can only be described as a hugely disappointing HMI visit in early 2019 the PC was ready to continue supporting the school in their quest for improvement & continue to assist with fund raising & other support activities.

Regular monthly meetings were held from Sep – Dec 2019 & also in late Jan 2020 & early Mar 2020 & HMI re-visit was to take place in mid-March by the time Covid 19 struck & caused visit to be cancelled,

both Kenny Manson the permanent Depute had moved on & Headteacher John Clarke had been signed off.

We welcome local councillors John Greenwell & Carol Hamilton to meetings following concerns raised re recruiting teachers & PC keen to see a more creative approach from SBC (given similar scenarios where BHS senior management had been sent on secondment to schools elsewhere in local authority). Kevin McCall & Michelle Strong from SBC also attended meetings.

Neil Bennett organised the setting up of separate domain to assist office bearers with PC communication & this has worked well despite the issues with BT Internet addresses & Chairs aversion to IT matters.

Neil also worked on a revamp/relaunch for 200 Club & following an initial boost following use of Katy Master's unique persuasiveness, Covid 19 killed the momentum.

The Xmas Fayre 2019 also had a revamp with impetus from Ann Lindsay/Jane Taylor & many others & was considered a great success.

Following March 2020 lockdown/exam cancellation/exam results etc the next involvement of PC was around new Rector appointment when it was announced John Clarke would not return. Anna White & Neil Bennett took part in interview process on behalf of PC & result was appointment of Bruce Robertson.

In Sep 2020, the first virtual meeting of BHS PC took place.

Douglas Archibald

Chair

5th Oct 2020

3. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report Berwickshire High School Parent Council - Session 2019-20

Income: Total income for the year amounted to £3,402, made up of £2,930 from fundraising, £415 grant from SBC and £57 from donations. Our total income was up from the previous year's total of £2,250, due largely to a very successful Christmas Fayre where we raised £1,675 compared to £936 last year, plus the grant from SBC which had not been received last year.

The 200 Club continues to be a successful way of raising funds for the school, although income from subscriptions has remained the same as new members have replaced those members who have left the club.

Expenditure: Total expenditure in the year amounted £975, compared to £3,646 last year. This included £330 for ice creams at the House Day held at the end of June 2019, £108 for swimming caps for pupils competing on behalf of the school at a National competition and we also continued to sponsor one prize of £25 at the Senior Awards Ceremony. A further £495 was paid out in prize money for the 200 Club, with the remaining expenditure of £17 on sundries such as stationery and postage.

Funds Balance: The closure of the school in March has meant we have been unable to meet to discuss how the funds raised could be spent, so at the year end, total funds held amounted to £4,338.

Avril Hamilton, Treasurer, Parent Council. September 2020

They will transfer £1,200 from the 200 club account to the Main account.

The accounts were approved by the Parent Council.

4. Election of Office Bearer's

Chair: Douglas Archibald

Vice Chair: Neil Bennett & Jane Taylor

Treasurer: Anna Whyte

Secretary: Pauline Heron

There was discussion around the duties involved for the Office Bearer's.

5. 200 Club Report

58 members

Draw

1st Prize - £23.20 Claire Jack

2nd Prize - £11.60 Ross Rylie

3rd Prize - £5.80 Morag Mazzoni

6. Rector's Report

ETHOS UPDATE Student behaviour throughout the school continues to be very good. Our Prefect Teams are doing an excellent job of helping to supervise the school at break and lunchtimes.

Our Student Head Team are playing an increasingly strategic role in the development of our school. This includes attending the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting for a 10- minute debrief, once a week.

We are in the process of developing a 'Praise Postcard' system, to recognise excellence in subject areas and across the school.

STAFFING UPDATE

We have appointed an English Teacher, Claire Farmery, to replace Alice Caldock. We are waiting for PVG checks to be completed. As soon as they are, Claire will start with us. We are hoping this will be immediately after the October break. In the meantime, Beth Thomson – who is a qualified English Teacher - is covering Alice's classes.

Moira Thomson (Languages faculty) is on personal leave. Her classes are currently being covered by Gail Scott. Mrs Thompson is setting work for students from home.

Sarah Hughes (Languages faculty) has been appointed Principal Teacher: Student Leadership, Participation & Achievement. This is a temporary appointment, to June 2021. It requires the equivalent of one day non-teaching. Derek Huffman (Languages faculty) has been appointed Principal Teacher: Pedagogy. This is also a temporary appointment to June 2021. It requires the equivalent of four days non-teaching. We are in the process of recruiting a full-time English Teacher to back-fill the vacancy created by these appointments.

Jen Addie has started as our new Principal Teacher of Science.

Three new support staff who have joined us this term:

- Laura Cleland has joined our school Office Team
- Tania Hibonne has joined our Student Support faculty as our new Link Worker
- Martyn Lawrenson has joined us as our new Community Learning & Development worker

TEACHING & LEARNING UPDATE

A significant piece of work has started to 'upskill' our staff in relation to research messages about teaching practices which have the biggest impact on student learning. This has included training on the science of how we learn. Key messages relating to this have been shared with S4-6 students in presentations from the Rector. These were linked to practical guidance on effective study habits, which were also shared with students. A summary of these was shared with parents via the weekly Heads Up.

Our new Principal Teacher: Pedagogy is tasked with developing teaching practice across our school. Working the equivalent of four days per week in this capacity, Mr Huffman's work will include:

- Overserving lessons, with follow-up feedback and coaching
- Sharing practice across the school
- Disseminating key messages from educational research
- Leading and co-ordinating a workshop training programme
- Chairing our Teaching & Learning Improvement Group
- Chairing our Professional Reading Group
- Planning the introduction of a Pedagogy Conference, which will be open to teachers across the country

We have introduced a mandatory Citizenship period for S6 students, which is receiving very positive feedback.

The SLT is in the process of reviewing our curriculum in its entirety. This includes the courses we offer in S1-6, the time we give to these courses, and at what stages students choose subjects. Our proposals will be shared with Principal Teachers soon after the October break, after which they will be brought to the Parent Council for consultation.

We are also in the process of reviewing our homework programme.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Our new school website will launch immediately after the October break. Following discussion at the last Parent Council meeting, we have taken the decision to take down our whole-school social media platforms. Moving forward, our whole-school communications strategy will focus on the use of our new school website.

A decision has been taken to remove teacher comments from the tracking reports which are sent to parents. Replacing these will be 'Learning Logs', designed to give parents more regular and more formative progress about their child's progress. These will include students' results in Monthly and End-of-topic Review, which are pedagogical initiatives we have been introducing to our school this term.

POLICIES UPDATE

The SLT are in the process of reviewing all our school policies. The first policy to be reviewed has been New Staff Induction. When reviewing policies, we do so through the lens: 'What would this look like in the best state secondary school in the country?'

2020-21 IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Our 2020-21 Improvement Plan is currently being drafted by our Senior Leadership Team. Our student Head Team have been consulted as its content. The Parent Council will also be consulted. The plan will focus on three key areas: ethos, curriculum, and pedagogy. Improvement Plans for faculties will focus on the same three areas.

BUDGET UPDATE

Projections suggest that we have a falling school role. Potentially, this will lead to staffing cuts. The new curriculum model we are considering may be able to mitigate against these. Avril Merryfield, our Business Manager, is happy to give a budget update to the Parent Council at a future meeting.

COVID-19 UPDATE

The systems and procedures we have put in place are working well. We continue to monitor these on a daily basis. Students and staff are conforming very well with the mandatory wearing of facemasks. We plan to introduce staggered morning breaks immediately after the October break.

Bruce Robertson, Rector 2.10.20

There was discussion about the Curriculum model that the senior Leadership team preferred and the financial position of the school. There is a carry forward of £88,000 minus £30,000 taken over by SBC.

The Rector advised the council of two funding streams that are provided by the Scottish Government for schools that are currently being held centrally by Scottish Borders Council. These are: Pupil Equity Funding and Professional Development Fund. In other areas these are devolved directly to the School.

The Parent Council agreed to write a letter to Scottish Border Council and to discuss the issue with other Parent Councils in the region.

7. Matters Raised

Praise/Recognition Postcards

Neil Bennett, Avril Hamilton, and the Rector have been developing these cards. The school would like 5-10,000 cards. The Parent Council would be willing to fund the cost. The prototype has been agreed and been put out to tender. Neil Bennett will progress this.

SBC Funding

The Parent Council will not be applying for a grant in this current year.

Career's Advice

There are plans in place to revamp Career's advice. S1-3 uses My World of Work. S4-6 it was felt needs real inspiration to see career's and opportunities that are out there. Berwickshire High School engages with Skills Development Scotland but was hoping to expand it Business Partners. The use of webinars to look for wider opportunities> Local employers are happy to help and have already met with Colin Gracey. It was felt guidance teachers should have more of an input not just SDS.

Smoking

There had been reports to a parent of pupils smoking. The Rector had already stopped any smoking on school premises. The boardwalk is not under his control. There was an issue regarding possible supply of drugs full details not known. The Rector was aware that Mr Macklin had spoken to one individual who had come into the school premises but has not come back. Douglas Archibald would discuss with the parent raising concern.

Learning Logs/Report Cards

Parents were asking about how much input teachers have to these as children are updating them.

There will be a continual assessment programme and evidence will be gathered on what students are learning with a weekly, monthly and end of topic review.

The Learning log is designed for pupils to review and track their own progress.

Report Cards

Bruce Robertson questions the value of these in their current format. He would like more detailed information on the learning logs every four to six weeks – the plan is to pilot it. In view of possible exam changes it was felt it would provide a better assessment.

The parents were asking how they would access these logs as the children are not always forthcoming regarding the completion of them. Satchel One (previously Show my Homework) will send notifications and tell parent how to access. It is intended that parents can reply to teachers directly but not by using the I pads.

Communication from School

Facebook and twitter have been taken down, New website is being developed and probably available after school holiday. Student Achievement will be set by Office.

2021/22 CURRICULIM

Vision is to be the best state school. The timetable for S4 is currently seven subjects for four periods a week change to eight subjects to three periods per week and bring senior phase to third year. Five Highers currently five periods per week to six Highers.

The school is reviewing when options should be made, possibly after first year. The review is being undertaken now and the senior leadership team is looking at the best state schools and their curriculums. Scottish Borders Council does not dictate Curriculum structure.

There is an issue with Extra- curricular activities at present.

They are trying to inspire teachers, build a sense of identity and create enthusiasm.

There is an ongoing review of school policies that should not be more than two pages long. They are trying to get the right systems and procedures in place.

The next term will be spent looking at classroom practice, using the knowledge of best practice and improving the quality of teaching.

8. Any other Business

Suggested reading – The Curriculum- developing a shared understanding.

Duke of Edinburgh and Tanzania trip will be looked into by the Rector.

There was discussion regarding the number of National five exams.

The certificates for Duke of Edinburgh awards already completed have not been given out.

When will there be prelims and who for? Prelims probably the beginning of January

Covid Regulations mean that the school will be moving to a double period model after the school holiday to decrease student movements.

9. Next Meeting 4th November 2020 at 7pm via Microsoft Teams