

Minutes from Berwickshire High School Parent Council Meeting 12/01/2022

Welcome & apologies

Present:

Bruce Robertson, Neil Bennett, Jim Heron, Anna White, Clare Stewart, Devrim Turkay, Diane Sinclair, Helena Richards, Morag Lamond, Tracey Wiczorek, Katrina Reynolds

Apologies: Val Redpath, Morag Mazzoni, Jane Taylor

Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of last meeting were read and agreed.

Chair's report, including:

BHS SBC funding cuts - progress report

Further to the letter that was sent out to all the Parent Councils (PCs), there will be a meeting of all the PCs on Thursday 20th Jan, which Neil will be attending.

Update on school meals

The school meals situation was discussed, the removal of the Pasta King facility, the fact that if you're not early they have often run out of the veggie option, portion sizes, supposedly healthy options, is it cooked fresh on site or shipped in and heated up.

Bruce will speak with Nicky Lothian, the school catering lead and find out some more information.

A pupil survey about the catering was also discussed.

Objectives for the year

Fundraising - Covered in the fundraising section.

PC Constitution – possibly update

Parent recruitment – Clare Stewart suggested that we should all ask two friends if they would join the PC.

Putting a post out on Facebook, it was decided that it would be acceptable to do this on personal Facebook pages.

Treasurer's report

Main Account Balance: £2044.48

200 Club Balance: £1575.27

Still waiting on an invoice for equipment purchased by Laura Warburton.

Fundraising & 200 Club draw

Everyone was appreciative of Clare's poster design for the 200 Club, it got thumbs ups all round and will get published in the newsletter and on the school website.

The pop-up restaurant idea was discussed, the general consensus was that it should be after the summer holidays, possibly a Harvest Festival theme. Getting the pupil councils involved was also mentioned, and a backup venue if Covid restrictions mean the school can't be used, possibly the Volunteer Hall, or a Marquee.

It was pointed out that the school is 125 years old this year, and that there is a lot of feeling that this should be marked in some way, and maybe this should be tied into the pop-up restaurant?

Bruce mentioned that there is a lot of photos and memorabilia that would be good to have on display.

Tracey suggested selling 125-year merchandise, possibly hoodies, mugs etc. and maybe having a competition for the pupils to come up with a design.

A fund raising sub committee was formed, consisting of Clare Stewart, Val Redpath, Helena Richards, Katrina Reynolds and Tracy Wieczorek.

There were 47 members in the January 200 club draw.

Winners were:	First place	No.33	Anna White	£18.80
	Second place	No.44	Tina Robertson	£9.40
	Third place	No.01	Jason Waghorn	£4.70

Rector's report

Inspection

We have had sight of a draft of our inspection letter, which we have returned to the inspectorate with comments from the school and local authority. We hope to have a finalised version by the end of the month.

Covid-19

There have been no changes to restrictions.

Tracking Reports

Teachers are in the process of completing the latest set of Tracking Reports for S1-3 students.

S1 reports are due to be issued with accompanying Head of House comments w/b 31st January.

S2&3 reports are due to be issued w/b 17th January.

Developing Study Skills

We continue to do regular work with S1-6 students to develop their independent study skills. Shortly prior to the Christmas holiday, our Principal Teacher of Pedagogy, Mr Derek Huffman, led reminder sessions with S4-6 students.

As we start 2022, he will be doing the same with S1-3 students.

Course Choices

You will likely recall that the 2021-22 academic session is a 'transitions year' in terms of our move towards a new S4-6 curriculum made up of long (6 periods per week) and short (3 periods per week) courses.

A copy of a new draft 'S3 Course Choice Policy' and 'S4&5 Course Choice Policy' will be sent out with this report.

Members of the Parent Council are invited to share their thoughts on these. Course Choice information evenings will be taking place later this term.

Staffing

Mrs Avril Hamilton will be our acting Chief Invigilator for the forthcoming Prelim exams.

We have appointed a new permanent Chief Invigilator, Mr Ian Yule, who will take over in time for the planned SQA exam diet in May/June.

This week, Mrs Marjory Tharme joins our Integrated Student Support team as a new Support for Learning Teacher. Mrs Tharme replaces Mr Jack Tennant, who left us last term.

Ms Salma Mattani has been appointed as a permanent, part-time English Teacher in our Languages faculty.

Mrs Carol Kenneally has re-joined our Maths faculty on a phased return.

Matters raised & AOB

Helena raised the subject of the choice of reading matter for the English curriculum, her daughter's class are studying works by Iain Crichton Smith. Helena's daughter is concerned about the works they are having to read, and Helena herself after reading some of the stories/poems finds his work "misogynistic," "dreadful", "horrible" etc.

There is no option for the pupils to comment on how this makes them feel.

Bruce explained that work is ongoing with the syllabus, and the texts that are chosen to study, there is a meeting to discuss this scheduled for later in the the month.

Bruce will ask Ros Curry why these books were chosen, and also, that even though the exam question doesn't allow the pupil to say how the poem makes them feel, this should be a matter for discussion in the classroom.

The changes to the school bus pick up points and timings were discussed, some children now being on the bus for an hour, children having to walk down single-track roads in the dark, pupils being late for school because the buses aren't arriving on time.

Bruce will be raising the matter through his channels but encourages parents to contact the council as well if they are affected by this issue.

Neil will contact the Chairs of the other PCs to see if this is an issue they are also having.

Date of next meeting

The next PC meeting will be on Wednesday the 2nd of February at 1900hrs.