



Berwickshire High School Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting - 2 November 2022

Present

Parents: Neil Bennett, Steph Leid, Katy Master, Kirstie McManus, Helena Richards, Sebastian Schulz, Claire Stewart, Jo Stewart, Marta Woldenski, Rachel Wood

Staff: Peter Macklin (Depute Rector), Bruce Robertson (Rector)

Apologies

Danielle Betts, Marianne Hodge, Colin Gracey, Mo Lamond, Vicky Tait

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the meeting in October were approved.

2. Chairperson's Report

Neil updated the Parent Council on the following matters:

- Mental Health service provision in schools – the meeting 24th October was cancelled by Lesley Munro and will be rescheduled.
- Food in Schools – Susan Jarvis, the Chair of Peebles Parent Council, is waiting for a response to her recent enquiry from Debbie Hosie, the Head of Catering.
- Music Tuition – an enquiry to Catherine Thomson and Neil Thomson who between them oversee music tuition across Borders schools has resulted in detailed data on what music lessons are provided in which schools. We will analyse to see if BHS wants to make further enquiries about provision.
- Parent Council recruitment – recent promotion at the S1 parents evening in particular has resulted in some new members attending tonight, which is good to see. Further in-person promotion and recruitment drives could be pursued.
- Dyslexia Support in Schools – following discussions it has been agreed to set up a group of parents and BHS staff to explore further the issues surrounding support for students with dyslexia in school. The purpose of an initial meeting will be to share experiences, identify good practice and identify possible areas for change/improvement. Interested parents should contact Neil at the chair@bhspc.co.uk email address. It was clear from discussion on this issue that parents have a mixed experience of how children with dyslexia are being supported in school and that there is considerable interest in this topic.

3. Treasurer's Report 2021-2022

The main account balance is £2829.80. The 200 Club account balance is £329.70

4. Fundraising and 200 Club draw

November 2022

1st – 56 Cameron Mabon

2nd – 61 Ross Ryrie

3rd – 14 Linda White

Claire reported that the refreshments stall at the Awards Ceremony had been disappointingly attended. There was some discussion about this, the outcome of which is minuted below.

Progress continues towards setting up a business 200 club.

Claire proposed, and it was agreed, that the Parent Council should establish a fundraising sub-committee which can meet as required, and to take forward the restaurant pop-up idea. Communications on this will go out via Heads Up in the New Year.

5. Rector's Report

Bruce presented his report

Comments and discussion were as follows:

- S1 parents at the meeting gave positive feedback about the recently held S1 Parents Evening.
- Awards Ceremony feedback was invited. Comments were as follows:
 - It was a shame that the timing of the event meant that a number of school leavers were not able to attend, in particular the recipient of the 'Dux' award. It has been suggested that next year's ceremony should be held during the last two weeks of August (first two weeks of term) in order to maximise the likelihood of school leavers being able to attend, as this would be before they leave for college/university.
 - The speaker was good.
 - The location of the refreshments stand was not ideal. It would have been better placed in the corridor outside the hall. It was also suggested that 'pre-ceremony' refreshments might have worked better.
 - Wherever possible it would be good if the nature of the prize sponsors' business resonated with the subject of the prize.
 - Including a little more narrative about why individuals were being awarded the prize might add interest and highlight students' achievements even more.
- There was some discussion about the transition from S3 to S4 with some parents expressing concern that the jump up is quite substantial in some cases. Bruce confirmed that the school is aware of this issue and that there are measures to make this transition work positively for students, in particular starting to focus on S4 curriculum topics in S3.
- There was some discussion about the issuing of predicted grades and the stress and anxiety these can cause students.

6. Matters raised/AOB

- a) **Vaping** – Neil reported that the Chair of Selkirk Parent Council had asked all fellow Parent Council chairs whether vaping by students in their respective school is an issue, and for this reason he was raising the matter at the meeting. Bruce confirmed that there are students who vape in various locations within the school and its grounds, but that staff are engaged in a number of ongoing reconnaissance activities to discourage it. He does not believe it is a hugely problematic issue.
- b) **Christmas Fayre** – it was reported that there have been some enquiries to the school office from potential stall holders as to whether the school was hosting a Christmas Fayre this year, which it is not, but the enquiries suggest that it might have been viable to do so. It was agreed that the planned fundraising sub-committee would consider this for next year.
- c) **Acrylic Nails** – a query was raised about the health and safety implications of long acrylic nails in school and in particular in relation to specific subjects and activities such as science laboratory work and sports. It was suggested that any review of school uniform policy could perhaps include consideration of whether guidance on nails should be included. Bruce responded by saying that this is something he will give some thought to.
- d) **New School Top** – a query was raised about the new school team recently promoted through Heads Up and whether it was just for sport or for general wear. It was confirmed that it may be worn generally in school and not just for sport.

7. DONM

Wednesday 7th December 2022