

Kirkcudbright Academy Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday 6th February 2024

Present: Chair: Laura Moodie Treasurer: Gill Durham Clerk: Julia Archibald

Acting Rector: Ms Susan Brown Teacher Rep. Shameen Syed

Parent Members: Jacqueline White, Clair Baxter, Deborah Trotter Emma Harrington

Parent Forum: Angharad Storrie

Local Councillor: John Denerley and Sign language interpreter Alvin Wardwelch (Zoom)

Co-opted Members: Lesley Garbutt was represented by Debbie Craig Kirkcudbright Development Trust (Zoom).

1. Welcome & Apologies Claire Johnston Lesley Garbutt Andy McFarlane

2. Approval of last Minutes and any matters arising

The Minutes are approved. No matters arising.

3. Head's Report

Ms Brown gave a comprehensive report on recent training, primary transition, funding and fundraising.

November-Inclusion in Practice report – a school-based assessment to promote effective inclusive practice in schools and a learner centred approach to education. The study complemented the traditional curriculum combined with vocational subjects such as bricklaying and animal care, extra-curricular activities, the safe hub space within the SEN provision and the mutual respect and trust evident in the teacher /pupil relationship. Embedding of the Rights Respecting Schools activities is seen as part of this. Pupil cooperation over use of mobile phones, timekeeping and their understanding of the Merit/ De-merit system was also highlighted and pupils were praised for being polite and welcoming. The Staff were happy with the outcomes of the report.

Primary Transition-There was a meeting of Cluster Heads in November to discuss the 2023-24 primary transition. P7 have also had their ½ day experience for the coming year.

December- Ms Brown thanked the PC for their help and support in the Christmas Fair and for the Pantomime which was a great success. Thanks were also expressed for the marketing of the Panto. The Christmas assembly was attended by Fr. McFadden. It took the form of a reflection on the effects of poverty on young people globally.

LGBT Charter for Education bronze level. The school is working towards this and 76% of Staff have completed the training.

Receiving Teaching and Learning in house staff training is ongoing.

Attendance- levels of attendance are on par with levels across the county. Pupil Support teachers are looking at ways to improve attendance and pupils themselves are involved with this.

Staffing, curriculum choice and timetabling for next session are being reviewed.

Candlemas Dance- Ms Brown thanked the PC for the water bottles provided for the event. Ms Brown also commented how much she had enjoyed this and how impressed she had been about pupil behaviour.

Funding of new laptops. Ms Brown asked whether the PC would be willing to help with funding for new laptops. It is proposed that 20 new laptops are purchased at the cost of £3300 (based on a previous purchase).

Debbie Trotter commented that Dumfries and Galloway council should be the provider of laptops for schools and are behind in this across the county. Ms Brown said that the school does have the designated provision with computers. John Denerley stressed the importance of IT provision for young people.

ACTION John to enquire whether match funding with the school and Education committee would be available.

Gill Durham queried the cost of the laptops as being too high. Jacqueline White asked whether reconditioned laptops were an option? Gill replied that they were not as they could not be used to access the Internet. Gill suggested local businesses might sponsor the purchase or the Community Grant scheme run by Tesco.

ACTION Gill and Jacqueline to investigate this.

4. Rotary Report

No report at the moment but Rotary intend to get back to us. Scheduled events are continuing. The Y3 assembly concerning the Norway exchange will take place on 7th February

5. Treasurer's Report

The bank balance stands at £4264:78.

PC to pay £250 for the renewal of Achieve online revision support.

Liz Kettle has reported vandalism of the school shed. The Half Marathon signs and equipment were stored in there. However, the Summer Festivities now hold these. It is felt that a donation for these items should be made by Summer Festivities as the items were expensive.

ACTION Laura to approach Summer Festivities about this.

Gill suggested another push to get people to sign up to the monthly draw as numbers have dropped from 55 to 36. Suggestions were made that sign up again features on Facebook and parents are approached at Parent Evenings.

Draw Winners: January John Crony February AJ Houfe March K. Flattery

Gill is standing down as Treasurer at the AGM so a volunteer to take over is required.

5. Chair's Report

Ms Brown suggested using QR codes to secure names and details of new parents. Jacqueline stressed that it is a big change between Primary and Secondary and getting new parents involved and informed on how to be a good Kirkcudbright Academy parent was important.

ACTION Laura to look at ways to reach out to new parents.

Candlemas dance for adults. Debbie Trotter asked about this. Laura replied that it would need a committed group of organisers. Jacqueline asked about community involvement perhaps Jack Nurse who was involved with a New Year event. The possibility of a dance at the time of the Fringe was raised.

ACTION Laura to contact Gerry Hassan about a Fringe event.

In connection with the pupil Candlemas events comments were made about the possibility of car sharing being organised in the future for drop off / pick up. John Denerley emphasised the Council support for car sharing as part of their Net Zero targets and mentioned the possibility of using Dial-a-ride for this

6.AOB

School Buses. Debbie reported that school buses were running well at the moment. Ms Brown was asked to be aware of a change in start time for SQA exams to accommodate bus arrival times.

Prelim results. Debbie also raised concerns about the Applications of Maths Higher prelim results which were not great. The course should be accessible but seems to be more demanding than thought or does it need more specific teaching? Would credits be available for passing a unit? Ms Brown is aware of the results and appreciated the concerns raised. She will report this Parent Council concern to the Maths Faculty Principal Teacher and can look at other schools in the authority and see how they are finding the course. Feedback to SQA also to be considered.

Toilets. Gill raised the subject of access to Toilet facilities. Ms Brown commented that although pupils would be expected to use the toilets in their breaks, generally they would not be stopped from leaving a class to go to the toilet. Angahard Storrie commented that the main access doors to the toilets were being propped open. Ms Brown was not aware of this but will investigate.

ACTION Ms Brown to review Toilet policies.

Vaping. Debbie asked about vaping in school. Ms Brown replied that it is an issue in all schools but not a major one at the Academy. Staff do check for this when passing the toilets.

Angahard mentioned that the Rotary had arranged for Simon Lamb -poet- would visit S2 English

Dogs in school. Gill asked about dogs in school following a parent's query. Pupils with allergies to dogs was a concern. Ms Brown confirmed that there was a therapy dog- Darcy- public liability insurance was in place for this but she would check the details of the cover.

Senior school Parent Evening will take place on 7th February. The PC will provide milk and biscuits but obviously can't really staff this.

Jacqueline suggested that Y4 course work and revision books that parents have purchased could be sold/passed on perhaps for a donation to PC funds?

ACTION Shameen to coordinate.

ACTION: Mrs Brown to confirm extent of PLI cover for dog.

7. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 7th May 6:00pm

AGM Monday 17th June 2024 tbc