

Kirkcudbright Academy Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday 11th February 2025

Present: Chair: Laura Moodie Treasurer: Emma Harrington Clerk: Julia Archibald

Rector: Mr Tuffery Teacher Rep. Shameen Syed

Pupil Council: Iona White

Parent Members: Neil Robbins Jacqueline White Clair Baxter

Community Council Rep. Ian Swan

1. Welcome and Apologies Claire Johnston, Gill Durham, Rebecca McFarlane

Laura welcomed Ian Swan taking over from Lesley Garbutt as the Community Council Rep. Ian introduced himself.

2. Approval of last Minutes Matters Arising The Minutes were approved unchanged

Matters Arising Laura to follow up on Rotary List. The Common Room is in use. Parent Survey on fund raising has been carried out -see below. A response has been given about pupil involvement in the band for Legally Blonde – see below.

3. Pupil Liaison Iona White represented the pupil Council and gave a run-down of activities being undertaken.

Candlemas- went well.

Sport's Committee -Inter house competitions are being set up to take place February / March

Quiz - is on 5th March. Help may be needed with teas and coffees.

Play – The Murder of Lord Wilkinshire on a Budget. This is in aid of Alzheimer's Scotland. Tickets are now available from the school office and Thompsons price £6.

Calendar – a good number were sold at the Winter Fair and those that are left will be available at the Parent Evening.

4. Community Liaison Nothing from the Rotary. Ian Swan is now the rep of the Community Council which he has been involved with for 3-4 years. He is looking forward to being involved with the Parent Council.

5. Heads Report

Legally Blonde - Ms Gill has responded to the query raised around the use of a 'professional band' in the production of Legally Blonde.

Ms Gill stated that the full score for the production is only released four weeks in advance, and it would be a breach of license not to play the full score. Having seen a brief fore-runner of the full score, it has been decided that this will be too difficult and too time consuming for staff or pupils to master, particularly given the short rehearsal time. A couple of pupils have agreed to perform nevertheless. She further states that in common with schools across D&G, instrumental instructors and paid professionals are used when pupils do not have the proficiency needed. Ms Gill states very strongly that a pupil and staff band has always and will always be, her preference. She takes this opportunity to state that there is a huge commitment

from staff and pupils to rehearse and put on each performance and is very keen to get volunteers involved with the band and the staging of this performance and any future performances.

Laura asked if there was a 'junior' version of the score? Mr Tuffery responded yes but it is a very simplistic version.

Ian asked if there was a pre-recorded score? Mr Tuffery – No, not available.

Iona White commented that the shows have got better and better over the years and the staff have supported this effort to excel.

It is noted that the full drama production, including the professional score, is the only means of developing and stretching the skills of the drama students beyond their curriculum work.

Mobile Phone Policy In the light of the Government Policy being published and the school's policy being reviewed, a parent questionnaire was sent out eliciting 151 responses. The policy states that mobile phones should not be used within the school buildings without permission. The sanctions are that the phone will be removed for the day and for repeat breaches the phone will have to be collected by a parent or carer at the end of the day. Results showed that 90% of parents who completed the questionnaire are aware of the policy requirements and 71% agree with the sanctions.

There were further comments about provision for children with additional needs, on whether there should be a total ban on phones but more access to other technology, whether there was pressure from the school for pupils to have a phone when they start secondary school, and whether pupils without phones were sidelined. Mr Tuffery will consider the results of the survey but foresaw no changes to the policy at this time and reminded all that the office is the best place to contact in an emergency. He also stated that inappropriate use of mobile phones had not gone away but there was a significant change in pupil behavior for the good.

School uniform- Mr Tuffery will be conducting a consultation with parents on the wearing of school uniform, stating that the only specified item of uniform is the school tie - parents are otherwise able to purchase uniform from many sources. Hoodies are allowed as outdoor clothing. He is against transparent leggings being worn as they are inappropriate and immodest, and this also goes for sportswear with mesh panels. Most pupils and parents are supportive of uniform policy.

Exams – Mr Tuffery stated that the big push has started towards the exams. He further commented that the first years are well and truly settled in!

Neil asked whether there were changes to SQA timetables. Mr Tuffery responded by saying that there were no major changes but that pupils must use their personalized timetables. School exam timetables are unique to the school which adjusts some timings to allow for extra time candidates etc.

Norway visit There may be clashes with this and dates for the Rugby training. Mr Orr would be the best person to consult on this.

Rights Respecting Schools The Pupil Leadership Team are running teaching sessions with S1 classes. Mr Tuffery commented that peer-based learning is to be encouraged as difficult issues are sometimes better received from within the peer group.

6. Treasurer's Report

Emma Harrington has now taken over as Treasurer. Bank Balance is £1621.26.

ACTION Laura to forward information on applying for grants from Council.

Achieve the online revision tool. The yearly license costs £750. The PC will cover half of the cost for this.

Fund raising- Laura went over the results of the parent survey on fund- raising ideas for which there were 32 responses.

Adult Candlemas- this was not popular - most people were not ceilidh fans. A quiz was the most popular fundraising idea along with a film screening and a Bingo night. Local company Driftwood Cinema can support communities to secure screening licences. Laura will investigate holding a film night using Community Cinema Kit and has circulated the current film list of films for different age groups. She stressed the importance of having the right venue to ensure good sound quality. The Cochran Hall and the Parish Church Hall were both mentioned. Mr Tuffery mentioned the need for appropriate supervision from the PC as this is not a school organized activity.

Neil mentioned a senior pupil cinema club. A hospitality license for a year would cost £100 approx. which would reduce costs of running film events.

Mr Tuffery suggested using Group Call to contact parents about a Film Club.

Iona was keen to suggest an evening event aimed at young people. Mr Tuffery suggested a double bill aimed at older and younger age groups.

Draw This could not be done at the meeting as Emma did not have the list of names with her.

ACTION Chair and Treasurer to carry out draw for the coming months. The outcome will be shared at the next meeting.

7. Chair's Report

Further to the report circulated in advance, Mr Tuffery stated that the faulty wall panels in the gym were repaired in less than a week.

Next Parent's Evening Monday 17th February. Neil, Laura and Jacqueline to help with teas and coffees

8. AOB

Library Emma asked about the library. Mr Tuffery said it was a long-term concern as there was no funding for a Librarian. Pupils can borrow books. He hoped a pupil led system would develop.

Iona said that the Library Club meets on a Friday lunchtime and is reviewing the books keeping them current. She hopes that there will be a study section for exam revision. Mr Moses supervises this activity.

Laura asked if parents could help? Yes. Clair asked if donations of books (current and contemporary) were welcomed? Yes but not until the present review was completed.

Next Meeting Tuesday 29th April 6:00pm

AGM Tuesday 17th June 7:00pm