

Kirkcudbright Academy Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday 29th April 2025

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

Rector: Mr Tuffery

Parent Members: Clair Baxter, Rebecca McFarlane

Parent Forum : Marion McArthur, Colin McMillan, Joanne McMillan

Zoom: Teacher Rep. Shameen Syed

Community Council Rep: Ian Swan

1. Welcome and Apologies Claire Johnston, Neil Robins, Jacqueline White, Hannah Chen (Pupil Council), Mike Duguid (rotary), John Denerley (Cllr)

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

Action Points: The Draw and claiming running costs from Council are in hand.

3. Pupil Liaison Hannah Chen was unable to attend

4. Community Liaison Ian reported that the Community Council is in close contact with Dumfries and Galloway Council re: the bridge situation. He also said that the funding is now in place for the repairs to the seating area opposite Beaconsfield garage.

Rotary -see report from Mike Duguid

5. Heads Report

Vision & Values Mr Tuffery requested that the reviewing the Vision & Values for the school should be on the Parent Council agenda for the first meeting after the summer break.

ACTION: Laura to note for handover with new Chair

School Uniform survey Feedback was given from the survey presented to both parents and staff on a number of issues including the wearing of leggings. The view on legging was split 50/50 for and against. Mr Tuffery emphasized that football branded or other branded clothing is not allowed in line with Council policy. However, parents are not accepting this ruling. The wearing of blazers (made from recycled materials) is also under discussion though perhaps only in Y6, as is the introduction of a school branded hoodie as other schools have done.

The survey will now go out to pupil consultation.

Rebecca brought up the subject of sustainability in uniform- that items should be hardwearing and made from sustainable /recyclable materials. Laura added the importance of affordability and pointed out that the parent council has a second-hand uniform sale before each year starts which includes the sale of unclaimed clothing. D&G Council also run a second-hand uniform shop. It was pointed out that uniform is generally cheaper than pupils' own choice of clothing.

School minibus no request for further funding has been made by the school as D&G Council has not charged the school.

PEF Pupil Equality Funding The school is in receipt of PEF funding which is designed to bridge the poverty attainment gap and is calculated based on the number of free school meals the school provides. It is noted that currently only 50% approx. of pupils eligible for free school meals sign up for them. Kirkcudbright Academy receives in the region of £30 000. Mr Tuffery pointed out that this is not enough to fund a full-time teaching post. He also pointed out that bridging the attainment gap is something that is very difficult to define and quantify. Poverty is not necessarily the biggest issue in under attainment but attendance is. Mr Tuffery has allocated this money to improving Numeracy, as the school already has specialist Literacy support.

Rebecca asked if PEF was a targeted programme as in primary school?

This is targeted to S1 and the lower end of the school. It is a flexible provision and pupils can leave the provision if they choose.

Rebecca further asked if there is analysis of pupil wellbeing with the provision? Mr Tuffery responded by saying that there was not at the moment but that was something to consider.

The PC were happy for the PEF arrangements to continue in their present form.

Teaching Arrangements for S1 This year S1 has been divided into three groups with one group receiving more lessons with the same teacher in the same classroom. This has been found to be beneficial particularly for those pupils who have found the transition from primary (one teacher one classroom) to secondary (numerous teachers in different classrooms) challenging. It is not based on ability but on mental wellbeing and being able to cope with change. Decisions as to who would benefit from this arrangement are based on discussion with the primary school and parents. It has been decided that two groups of pupils will have this next year and it may extend to all three groups in future. Mr Tuffery views this as a more nurturing approach and stressed that this still involves all pupils moving around school and being taught by different teachers as part of the secondary experience (particularly for technical subjects, PE and science) but can make the transition a more positive experience for some pupils.

PVG arrangements for PC members. (Protecting Vulnerable Groups certificate) Mr Tuffery pointed out that all PC office bearers and parents coming into contact with young people in school at school events or who could influence decisions made about young people in school must be PVG checked. This must be submitted by the end of June.

ACTION: Laura to ensure PVG checks for PC members not standing down at AGM

Water contingency plans Following a burst water main in town leading to two school closures at short notice, Laura asked what contingency plans were in place particularly as far as the exams were concerned. Mr Tuffery replied that the school does have large water tanks and that for exams the SQA contingency plans are followed, however the school would have sufficient water to be able to open for the exam cohort should this occur. The same procedures would follow in the case of power loss.

6. Treasurer's Report

Bank Balance is £1591:03

Achieve - funding has yet to be paid. The PC is paying half of the cost.

Tesco Blue Chip The request to be part of the blue chip scheme to raise money for new sports kit for the school has been submitted.

Draw February Ruth Gordon March Neil Robbins April Duncan Gordon May Sunny Rathore

Quiz Fundraiser Friday 6th June at 7:00pm

7. Chair's Report

The report circulated in advance - no matters arising.

Next Parent's Evening S3 Emma to help with teas and coffees.

8. AOB

Julia made note of those who can be on the PC next session. Jacqueline, Gill and Claire Johnstone are all standing down. Laura cannot re-stand as Chair but is happy to remain on the committee.

Next Meeting

AGM Tuesday 17th June 7:00pm

Rotary Report for Parents Council

We are delighted to support the school exchange to Norway for 6 pupils from the Academy, a reciprocal event organised in collaboration with our Rotary friends in Fredrikstad. Our pupils flew out yesterday. The Norwegian students will be here from Sunday 11th May to Thursday 15th May and a full day of activities has been organised for them by the Kirkcudbright Rotary club for Tuesday 13th May.

Our next event is the Young Chemist 15th May in which pupils are set a challenge with Ms Jwojacka with a prize for the best solution.

Judging for the Young Artist competition will take place on Monday 19th May followed by a presentation evening at 5 pm on Thursday 22nd May in the old school hall. Presentations will also be made for the Young Photographer competition. A selection of artwork will be displayed in the Tollbooth from 10th to 29th June. One piece of artwork will be selected to feature in the cover of the Kirkcudbright Fringe programme.

Unfortunately, we have been unable to recruit any candidates for the Rotary Youth Leadership Award event at Barcaple in July. However, this might allow us to help fund a visit by Ukrainian children for adventure training at Barcaple in August. Most of these children have suffered the loss of a relative or they are serving on the front line.

We are very grateful to the Headteacher and staff for helping us stage events for the pupils and hope the school finds them a useful addition to the normal curricular programme.

Mike Duguid, Youth Convenor