

Kirkcudbright Academy Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday 10th February 2026

Present:

Chair: Rebecca McFarlane

Rector: Mr Tuffery

Teacher Rep. Shameen Syed

Pupil Council: No representative

Parent Members: Pippa Copeman, Clair Baxter, Joanne McMillan, Angharad Storrie, Laura Moodie (via zoom), Neil Robbins (via zoom)

Rotary: Mike Duguid

Community Council: Ian Swan

Elected council member: Andy MacFarlane (via zoom)

1. Welcome & Apologies Rebecca welcomed those present. Apologies: Julia Archibald, Emma Harrington.

2. Approval of last Minutes and any matters arising

The Minutes are approved.

Matters arising -The issue of being quorate was raised by Mr Tuffery. According to the Constitution June 2024 4.17 The Parent Council requires a minimum of three Parent Members to be present for a meeting to be quorate. This needs to be amended to ensure that the three voting members present have been PVG-ed. Rebecca had noted it is not possible to amend the constitution until next AGM. The meeting was found to be quorate.

ACTION Constitution to be amended at AGM

3. Pupil Liaison

There were no members of the Pupil Council present, however they submitted a report to the parent council summarising their activities to date, reflections on the leadership team, challenges and improvements.

There was discussion around appointment of future leadership teams and Mrs Sayed presented a proposed structure for future teams: 3 staff leads each with an area of focus from 1. Pupil leadership, wellbeing and development, 2. operation and support and 3. publicity and partnership. Three house captains, one appointed to each area. Six prefects to assist the house captains with roles in wellbeing and inclusion, events, charity & fundraising, student mentorship, interhouse competition, communication and publicity. The suggestion is that pupils would apply for designated roles specifically suited to their interests and skills as opposed to the role of "prefect". Selection would be by all staff including teachers, office, janitors etc. There would be no pupil vote as it has felt in the past this can be a popularity vote and doesn't consider the skills or attributes of the prospective candidates. Application to

include written statement completed in school/ digital presentation. No decision has been reached on whether there will be equal split of roles between 3 houses and there are pro's and con's for each option. Other children will also volunteer to assist in helping with these roles, organising events etc and their experience in doing that can also be used towards personal statements in UCAS applications etc.

Please see below for full Prefect Report.

4. Community Liaison and Rotary

The Rotary has supported the young musician competition and has plans for upcoming competitions in chemistry, art and photography.

Early discussions regarding engagement with a school in Ghana to tie in with pupil voice project on clothes recycling.

Unfortunately, joint ceilidh event between school and rotary has been postponed due to low tickets sales. Not sure if time of year was factor. To be revisited later in year with proposal with possible tie in with fringe festival if organisers agree. Carol Hodginson from rotary leading on this.

5. Head's Report

The Standards and Quality Report 2024/2025 and School Improvement Plan 2025/26 are available on the school website for public viewing.

Senior School prizegiving will be on Wednesday 27th May.

Exam preparation is at the forefront of priorities.

Ian Swan asked for an update on the roof repair. A temporary repair has taken place that is preventing water ingress to the music rooms.

Pippa Copeman asked about the possibility of solar panels being added to the school building. Roof has been assessed and is not suitable for the addition of solar panels.

6. Treasurer's Report

Bank Account £1474.06

Draw: February- Gavin Scott March – Sarah Crudgington April – Jane Maitland

Tesco Blue Chip money- £500. Mrs Cluckie has supplied a list of sports equipment which has been ordered.

Aldi Sports Fund – unsuccessful.

No updates on local small business sponsorship.

ACTION Emma to approach local businesses and ask them to offer support to the school in return for publicity at school run events. She will also simplify the application form for the draw.

7. Chair's Report

This was circulated in advance.

Next PC meeting is Tuesday April 28th at 6:00pm in the school library and on Zoom.

AGM Tuesday 16th June 7.00pm

8. Parent Forum Budget Consultation

No update/response provided

9. Action Plan

Action Plan has been circulated. Working document.

10. AOB

Study support workshop. Proposal well received. Parent council to lead on offer and provision of Study Workshop to parents. School can provide facilities/laptops. Suggested this should be on offer to parents as soon as it can be arranged due to upcoming exam periods.

Fundraising. Request from the parent council for a fundraising “goal”. Mrs Storrie enquired if there was a fund for children who required assistance with the cost of school trips etc. Mr Tuffery confirmed such a fund was already in place. Teaching staff to provide their own suggestions for materials or equipment required and parent council to decide what they will fundraise towards.

Joanne provided details of a successful Bingo night held by local primary school which was a well-supported community event. Maybe something to be considered as a future fundraiser.

Lost property event. To align with parent events already in place eg. S2 parent evening, when school buildings already open. Any parent can attend to view lost property.

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Prefect Report

What we have been up to

This year, we have been organising and supporting a wide range of events and initiatives across the school. A key focus of our work has been fundraising and encouraging greater school involvement through charity and sporting activities. We successfully organised several charity sports matches, including a beginning of year football match and a staff versus student's volleyball match with paid entry, which helped raise money for charitable causes.

We have also supported and coordinated inter-house competitions, such as netball and football competitions, with a volleyball competition planned next. In addition, we coordinated and planned the school's annual Christmas Fayre, contributing through stalls such as Santa's Grotto, charity tote bag sales, and a sports committee stall, all of which raised further funds for charity.

Social events have been another significant part of our year with successful school dances held at Christmas and Candlemas. Looking ahead, we are preparing to host an upcoming quiz night on Thursday 12th February, as well as planning another charity match and hopefully organising a bingo night or a similar style fundraising event.

Alongside these larger events, we have continued to help with a variety of smaller activities throughout the school year, and I feel the leadership team has made a positive contribution to the wider life of the school community. We hope to continue these kinds of activities till the end of the year!

Thoughts from our team

Overall, our S6 Pupil Leadership Team has expressed and demonstrated that there have been many strengths throughout the year and that being a part of the team has provided a valuable experience for us all. A few consistently described the team as supportive and approachable, with strong friendships between us all and positive working relationships developing across the group. This created an environment where we felt comfortable seeking advice and encouragement from one another, leading to a strong sense of teamwork.

Being part of the prefect and house captain system has been widely seen as an important opportunity for personal development for most of us. A few prefects reflected that participation "massively boosts confidence" and "helps to build a sense of belonging", responsibility, and pride within the school community. Our leadership roles have supported our development of key skills such as communication, organisation, and social confidence, while encouraging us to contribute positively to school life.

The selection process for the leadership roles was mostly viewed positively overall. (Cons below) Pupils felt it was fair and inclusive, particularly because it was not based on popularity but instead provided opportunities for a broad range of individuals to be recognised. This meant that our team had members with a variety of different personalities and interests contributing to our broad range of ideas for the school. Importantly, the involvement of all teaching staff in the voting process strengthened this fairness, as each teacher is able to know certain pupils in different contexts and recognise strengths that may not always be visible to every teacher. This ensured that leadership opportunities were

distributed more equitably and allowed individuals with varied school experiences to succeed.

When our events and initiatives were successfully carried out, they were described as “enjoyable” and “effective”, highlighting the enthusiasm and potential within our leadership team when supported by clear planning and collaboration.

Areas for Improvement and Challenges

Several areas for improvement were identified that affected the overall effectiveness of the leadership structure.

A recurring theme was a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Pupils reported that the system at times felt “messy,” with unclear duties and expectations to us. This occasionally resulted in an uneven distribution of workload, where some members took on a significant amount of responsibility while others contributed less or had fewer opportunities to be involved.

Communication was also highlighted as a key challenge. Both pupils and staff were sometimes unsure of expectations, particularly when organising larger events involving the wider school and despite meeting on a somewhat regular basis (varied between weekly to monthly) it was felt that this was not a near enough amount of time spent planning and communicating between the leadership team and staff to organise events and discuss important matters.

There was uncertainty around planning procedures highlighted by some members, such as how far in advance events needed to be organised and which members of staff or departments needed to be informed. This occasionally caused delays and made it more difficult for initiatives to run as smoothly as they should.

In addition, some pupils felt that although they were encouraged to take responsibility and organise events, they were sometimes left without sufficient guidance or support from staff. Several committees experienced limited teacher involvement, which made leadership tasks more challenging to manage effectively. Clearer guidance once roles are assigned. Responsibilities were sometimes vague, and not all members felt sufficiently informed about practical procedures such as event planning, booking facilities, or contacting relevant staff. Improved communication, clearer role descriptions, and more effective use of committees were identified as important steps to reduce confusion and strengthen organisation in future years.

Additionally, a couple members expressed a concern about aspects of the selection process. While the system was beneficial for most of us, it was felt by some that the process may not have identified the most suitable candidates for leadership roles. **There was a perception that certain “highly capable” pupils may have been overlooked, and that competitiveness between house groups could disadvantage applicants depending on house size or competition between candidates.** As pupils have no control over which house they are placed in, it was suggested that this should not affect opportunities for leadership positions. Furthermore, it was felt that the initial application process, particularly written forms, did not fully allow pupils to demonstrate their personal qualities, motivation, or suitability for the role. A more structured interview process for all positions was recommended to ensure fairness.

Lastly, although pupils were initially given the impression that the leadership team would have a significant voice in shaping school activities and decisions, many members felt that their ideas were often restricted or difficult to implement in practice. Proposed initiatives sometimes faced limitations from staff, making it challenging for events to progress. This could have reflected a lack of trust or confidence in our own ability to carry out responsibilities independently, which at times reduced our motivation and limited the overall impact of the team.



Recommendations for Future Improvement

To strengthen the effectiveness of the future Pupil Leadership Teams, the following recommendations are suggested by us

- **Introduce clearer role definitions and responsibilities** at the beginning of the year, ensure all candidates, then chosen prefects and house captains understand their expectations and duties.
 - **Improve communication structures** between staff and the pupil leadership team, including clearer planning timelines and much more consistent points of contact for organising events.
 - **Develop a more balanced committee system**, ensuring groups are evenly staffed and supported so that workload is shared fairly and all pupils are able to contribute meaningfully.
 - **Provide stronger staff guidance and mentorship**, particularly when pupils are planning larger initiatives, so that pupils feel supported rather than left to manage independently.
 - **Review the selection and application process**, potentially including interviews as an application to allow pupils to demonstrate their qualities beyond written applications and to ensure consistency across house groups.
 - **Encourage greater trust and actual pupil leadership**, allowing the leadership team more ownership over their ideas and events, while maintaining appropriate oversight.

