

## **Kirkcudbright Academy Parent Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

### **Present:**

Chair: Rebecca McFarlane Clerk: Julia Archibald Treasurer: Emma Harrington

Rector: Mr Tuffery

Pupil Council: No representative

Parent Members: Pippa Copeman, Joanne McMillan, Neil Robbins (via Teams)

Rotary: Mike Duguid

Community Council: Ian Swan

Elected council member: John Denerley and BSL Interpreter (via Teams)

**1. Welcome & Apologies** Rebecca welcomed those present. Apologies: Laura Moodie

### **2. Approval of last Minutes and any matters arising**

The Minutes are approved. No matters arising.

**3. Pupil Liaison** No members of Pupil Council present

**4. Community Liaison and Rotary** Ian gave a full report on the Community Council's recent activities.

Youth Shelter -work will begin soon on the shelter costing £5000. The project involves the Incorporated Trades also.

Phone Box at mill Flats. The glass will be replaced by plastic and it has been suggested that it can then be used as a mini art gallery for childrens art.

Police Station this building is to be used as a centre for those on the autistic spectrum

Core Path 13- the path along side the river Dee to Tongland. Funding is sought for repairs and maintenance of this path. Ian queried if the Kirkcudbright Endowment Trust might provide funding> Mr Tuffery responded that this trust is now closed as the funds have been used up. In the past it had funded the school minibus, computers for the school and also the outside sheltered area for eating packed lunches etc.

Mr Tuffery also reported on the Future Me project for pupils. Mr Henry has been speaking to local employers to get involved with this work and skills project which will run throughout the school year and aims to improve student progression and build career readiness. It is hoped that a work placement for pupils will be part of this.

**Rotary** Mike reported on the progress of the activities that the Rotary has been running this year. Now there is just Young Chemist on 14<sup>th</sup> May and the Art Competition the judging for which is on 18<sup>th</sup> May and the presentation on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

Link with a school in Ghana is slowly forming up this is along side the Rotary Club of Hohoe and is hoping to promote email link between Y3/Y4 pupils of both schools here and in Ghana.

## **5.Head's Report**

Mr Tuffery was pleased to report that the exams have started and are progressing well thus far. The other main focus at this time is preparation for next year looking at timetables and staffing issues.

School Values are being revisited to see whether the original values of HEART are still appropriate. Following pupils involvement,with discussion and pupil surveys, the HEART acronym is to remain but with some subtle changes

H-Honesty remains E-Equality becomes Equity A-Aspiration becomes Ambition R-Respect remains T- Trust becomes Teamwork.

Mr Tuffery commends the work of the young people involved as pupils engaged with the school values. Although this is not directly linked to the UN Rights Respecting Schools initiative it does reflect aims embedded within this.

Garden Group Mr Tuffery mentioned that Mrs McClure has requested help with the school gardens. As pupils leave the school parental involvement with the garden stops. It was suggested that a request for help goes out on the school Facebook.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

Bank Account £1308:31

Draw: May Mr and Mrs McClure June Lisa Maxwell

Emma reported that there are 45 people in the draw which is paying out £30 a month. The need for more participants remains.

Action Rebecca to email all parents to ask them to join and to ask the new S1 parents once they are enrolled.

Tesco Blue Chip Action Rebecca to ask to be entered in Blue Chip draw again.

## **7. Chair's Report**

This was circulated in advance.

AGM Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 7.00pm. Please note change of date.

**8. Lost Property** Despite a big push on returning Lost property 7 bags remain. It has been cleaned and pressed at a cost of £130 and will be taken to the Festivities Shop /Swimming Pool shop to sell for these charities.

**9. Targets for Fundraising** Staff have been emailed and a number of requests have come back.

Mr Nicholson requests medium and large t-shirts and shorts to be used by pupils who have forgotten their sports kit. Further details required.

Action Joanne to contact Banks and Braes who are able to supply these.

Chemistry have requested a class set of burettes (glass tubes for measuring liquids) costing £120

English -Visualizer which projects an image ( e.g of written text ) on to a white board etc.

Mrs McDougal- Netbooks

Three sets of books 25 books to a set.

Downloadable Classics books Cost £201. Action Mr Tuffery to enquire further.

Subscriptions to online Newspapers. Neil suggested Readily £8 per month with access to many online publications.

Action Rebecca to look more fully at costs. It is hoped that the forth coming Bingo night will boost funds and allow purchases to be made.

Mr Tuffery has suggested that an Amazon Wishlist is created for staff to use for requests.

At the moment the PC pays £870 a year to contribute to school activities including a staff welfare fund which is very much appreciated by the school and staff.

**10.** Action Plan has been circulated. No changes.

## **11. AOB**

**Bingo Night Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June** Rebecca has made a checklist of requirements and costs involved for a Bingo night. This was circulated to those present at the meeting. Action Rebecca to send to all.

After some discussion it was agreed to proceed with this with Gary Lewis to be the Calle.

Please note following Actions.

Clair to speak to Dawn Anderson at Twynholm to co-host.

Joanne to arrange license for the evening by 8<sup>th</sup> May.

Rebecca to source wine from Tesco on a sale or return basis ( 'Chicken' wine costing £7:25 to be sold for £12 a bottle).

Neil to organise beer from Tesco. Bottles are returnable but cans have to be returned in complete boxes. Cans would be easier to recycle.

Emma will list local businesses including those in Gatehouse, to be asked for donations for Raffle prizes. She will do this on the WhatsApp group but all donation of prizes will be gratefully received. Parents should also be asked.

Emma to purchase dabbers and books of Bingo cards from Amazon.

Olivia-Head of House to organise Posters.

Preparations and on the night. Cochrane Hall to be booked !4 hexagonal tables seating six and some rectangular tables are available. It is hoped that at least 80 people would attend to meet costs. Prefects will be available on the night to be tasked. Approximately 12-14 people will be needed to run the evening.

**Constitution** The Constition needs to be amended to reflect the PVG requirements.

Rebecca to see to this.

### **Next Meeting**

AGM Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 7.00pm in the school library and on Teams.

### 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.

3M

## 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.







