

## BANCHORY ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

### Minute of the Meeting held on 10 September 2020: Virtual Meeting via Skype

**Present (members):** Trish Amundrud, Vikki Duncan, Kate Ellison, Rebecca Glansbeek, Megan Hare, Colin MacLeod, Scott Newey (Chair), Jeanne Ritchie (Treasurer), Alison Smart (Secretary) and Linda Stromberg (Vice-Chair).

**In attendance:** Cllr Rosemary Bruce, Moira Langmuir, Cllr Anne Ross, Ian Sharp and Judith Wight (Rector).

**Apologies:** Jacqueline Conroy, Katie Davies, Ruth Duddy\*, Cllr Eileen Durno and Andrea Hale\*.

\*technical issues on the night prevented two members from joining the meeting.

#### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair (**SN**) welcomed everyone to the first formal meeting of 2020/21, which immediately followed the Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which office-bearers and members for the year had been voted in; all school years were covered by the agreed representation

All parents and carers i.e. the Parent Forum, had been sent an email advising that they were invited to attend, as well as put themselves forward for membership of this year's council, and that members would be voted in at the AGM, where the Chair would give a brief report on Parent Council activity in 2019/20. Dates for Parent Council meetings along with an overview of the purpose of Parent Council was also given, again with an invitation to all to attend these.

#### 2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2020 had only recently been circulated; it was agreed that members would have until Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September to provide any feedback, after which the minutes would be considered approved.

The final meeting of the year had been cancelled following the Covid-19 outbreak and a reduced online meeting with office bearers and the Rector was held instead (4/6/20), to pass on and discuss a wide range of concerns and issue raised by parents, of which members were briefed. Notes of that meeting had been circulated to members (19/6/20).

#### 3. CHAIR'S REPORT

**SN** stressed the ongoing importance of BAPC, whose role it was to work constructively and respectfully with the school, and noted that an update on activity during 2019/20 had been given at the AGM held immediately prior to the meeting.

#### 4. RECTOR'S REPORT

**JuW** gave an oral update on the following key issues:-

- **Welcome back:** to all parents, carers and pupils. The last 5 months had been testing for many different reasons; she was both very proud and grateful to the staff who had done an amazing job and the pupils who had dealt with what was being asked of them

in such a responsible manner. Since returning to the school, changes had been put in place to minimise risk for everyone in the building.

- **SQA Results:** initial results were very good. There had been some changes since the Scottish Government changed how the awards were being decided and this would have an effect on the final results.
- **Staffing:** several updates were given in relation to new members of staff and arrangements for the coming year:
  - o Faye Lockwood - Technical Department
  - o Shelly Douglas - Business Education
  - o Alexander Ryland - Modern Studies
  - o Laura Thomas - History/Modern Studies
  - o Callum King - PE
  - o Alexander Samoza - Modern Languages
  - o Diane Shepherd was now full time in Maths
  - o Paul Mather (Geography) and Kate Mauchline (Chemistry) had both returned from career breaks.
  - o Claire Burt had a baby girl in the summer holidays.
- **Covid-19:** She joined 3 Skype calls per week with NHS Grampian to receive updates on Covid-19. As we entered the cold and flu season, parents were asked to not send their child to school if they were unwell. If any young person was presenting with any of the 3 main Covid-19 symptoms, the school would contact home and request that they were taken home and a test arranged. Parents/carers were then being asked to contact the school with the test results.
- **S6:** as a follow-up to the First Minister's announcement regarding face masks and minimising large groups meeting, and listening to the S6's themselves, the decision was made to allow this year group to only be in the building when they had classes. Designated classrooms had been allocated per period (3 in total) for senior pupils to work in. The coffee bar had been changed to a whole school area for Grab and Go lunches allowing numbers to reduce in the dining hall. A signing in and out sheet was in place for S6's to help with fire procedures and also Track and Protect should school require to know where a young person was during the day. It was queried whether the PFR room (off the games hall) or a new area could be used for S6 to enable more social interaction, but the issue was that there could be up to 72 S6 pupils gathering outwith timetabled classes which meant that social distancing became very difficult.
- **PE:** guidelines remained the same as outlined in recent communications to parents. All PE classes would continue to take place outside. Pupils could wear their PE uniform on the days they were in the Department.
- **School Transport:** masks were now required for all pupils who used school buses. No pupil would be turned away from the bus should they not have a mask but school would like to see everyone prepared before the bus arrived.
- **Masks:** as everyone was aware, pupils were required to wear masks in school when moving around the building and in communal areas; it was acknowledged that this had changed the feel of the school significantly. Pupils had also been asked to wear them in both HE and Technical when undertaking practical work. This was for their own safety, allowing staff to work more closely with them.
- **Parents Evenings:** the local authority had advised that these did not take place until at least November. There was every likelihood that the current situation would not

change and therefore the school would have to look at an alternative to inform parents and carers of their child's progress. Parents would be updated on this as appropriate.

- **Changes to the curriculum:** those pupils in S4 sitting Nat5 Maths and Nat5 Applications of Maths would have an additional period of Maths weekly, reducing their time in PE to one period per week. Miss MacKay, Mrs Dixon, Mrs Shepherd and Mr Macrae's classes would attend Maths on their first PE period of the week and only attend PE on Fridays. All students would attend an additional period of English, the first Thursday of every month, they would attend English with their English teacher instead of PSHE. It was acknowledged that this had caused some anxiety amongst parent and pupils, but the school believed this would provide time for consolidation and give students more confidence in their learning. The intention was to alleviate the pressure on young people to get swiftly through course content, while still recognising the vital role physical activity and social education played in a young person's mental health.
- **Maths - flipped learning:** as a continuation to the learning that took place during lockdown, the Maths Department had introduced a flipped learning approach this session to classes in both Nat 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. This had received mixed views from pupils and parents. The Maths Department had subsequently carried out a survey with pupils and the decision had been taken to revert back to the previous teaching method.
- **Pupils self-isolating:** the local authority had advised that pupils who were self-isolating due to them or a household member receiving a positive Covid-19 test should, where possible, be provided with work. Any pupil who was absent due to the household wishing that they did not attend school could access work through the Education Scotland website or BBC Bitesize. The majority were now back in school. It was queried whether there was provision to provide recorded classes for pupils who had to self-isolate, potentially for a 2-week period, which was significant. There was potential for this on MS Teams and the school was still learning as it went.
- **Donations:** a number of donations had been received over recent weeks for which the school was very grateful:
  - o Members of Parent Council had donated cakes, biscuits, tea and coffee for the staff's first day back. It had been a real boost to everyone and very well received.
  - o Morrison's supermarket very kindly donated hand sanitizer and face masks. A very kind gesture and very much appreciated.
  - o Banchory West Church raised funds during lockdown to provide chromebooks for young people who did not have access to IT equipment. The school was extremely grateful to everyone involved with this. It had made a huge difference to many young people.
- **Sports Day:** Sadly this had had to be postponed.
- **Parents visiting the school:** thanks were extended to parents for following the request to not come into the school building. Any parent wishing to speak to somebody should contact the school by email or phone.
- **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD):** this was currently being looked at by the school. It would allow young people to bring their own device to school and they would have

access to Wi-Fi during school hours. Parents would receive more information on this later in the term, as appropriate.

- **S1 Transition:** staff had enjoyed the S1 transition period which had taken place online; it was acknowledged that there had been a high level of interaction with pupils which had supported them during this period. Having only the S1s in on the first day back to school had been effective.

## 5. **WORKING GROUPS**

**JuW** confirmed that as soon as the school working groups for the year had been established, BAPC would be advised so that representatives could be confirmed, as appropriate.

**JuW**

## 6. **FINANCE REPORT**

**Financial:** the annual accounts had been considered at the AGM. Payments made during the year amounted to £688.33 and covered the cost of compostable cups for use at events, travel costs, and costs associated with the Careers Fair (food and booklets). The closing balance for the year was £1489.85. It was noted that a further spend of £100.63 on outdoor items was owed to the school; JR would issue a cheque to the school shortly and reconfirm the closing balance for the year.

## 7. **LIAISON WITH FEEDER PRIMARIES**

A nomination was sought for a member to act as liaison with the feeder primaries. It was not necessary to have a child in primary school in order to undertake this role. Anyone interested should contact the Chair.

**ALL**

## 8. **PTA**

The future of the PTA was at risk and would be discussed with PTA members and staff and brought back to a future meeting for consideration. **LS & MH** would take this forward.

**LS/MH**

## 9. **COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

Cost of the School Day – click [here](#) for website. This would be discussed in more detail with the school in due course. Please have a look at the resources in the meantime.

**Holding File**

## 10. **CFE MACHINE**

All parents/carers had received a Privacy Notice for the CFE Machine, which allowed schools to make an in-depth analysis of whole school attainment. This involved all pupils' raw results data (forename, surname, candidate number and exam results) being shared with the company which then processed it to produce a series of in-depth reports which schools could access at the touch of a button. It was agreed that it would be helpful to invite Moira Patterson to talk about this as a focus topic/session at the start of a future meeting.

**SN/  
JuW**

## 11. **FOCUS TOPICS/SESSIONS**

Focus topics/sessions – suggestions for future meetings should be submitted to [chair.bapc@gmail.com](mailto:chair.bapc@gmail.com)

**ALL to  
SN**

12. **INFORMATION EVENINGS**

Information evenings – suggestions for a topic for an event in 2021 would be gratefully received at [chair.bapc@gmail.com](mailto:chair.bapc@gmail.com). **LS** had been in touch with Gill Bruce prior to lockdown about the potential for an event related to the creative arts. She would follow this up, although she was unable to commit to organising another event herself this academic year.

**LS**

It was queried whether it would be possible to organise any careers talks under current circumstances; **JuW** believed there might be potential to do this virtually in small groups and the school would be happy to support anything that BAPC wished to take forward. **MH** confirmed she would contact 2 speakers who had been cancelled as a result of lockdown.

**MH**

It was also confirmed that consideration was being given to what might be possible in terms of activities week for S1-S3.

13. **BAPC CONSTITUTION**

The Parent Council Constitution was last approved in 2018 and is due for review. It is proposed that this is deferred in the short-term.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

12 November 2020