

BANCHORY ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of the Meeting held on 12 November 2020: Virtual Meeting via MS Teams

Present (members): Trish Amundrud, Jacqueline Conroy, Ruth Duddy Vikki Duncan, Rebecca Glansbeek, Megan Hare, Scott Newey (Chair), Jeanne Ritchie (Treasurer), Alison Smart (Secretary) and Linda Stromberg (Vice-Chair).

In attendance: Cllr Rosemary Bruce, Moira Langmuir, Emma Ritchie (School Captain, for item 3) and Judith Wight (Rector).

Apologies: Katie Davies, Cllr Eileen Durno, Kate Ellison, Andrea Hale, Colin MacLeod, Cllr Anne Ross.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair (**SN**) welcomed everyone to the second formal meeting of 2020/21.

2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2020 were approved.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

An email had gone out to members highlighting online courses and information sessions being offered by Connect that might be of interest.

SN welcomed Emma Ritchie, School Captain to the meeting. Emma updated members on recent activities undertaken by her and fellow School Captain, Rhys Bradley, including weekly meetings with the Rector to address current issues, and the creation of a new online S6 sign in process (see item 4 below). A step-counting competition was currently underway for 'Movember' and members were asked if PC would contribute a small amount for the purchase of trophies; this was approved unanimously, and Emma would email **SN (cc JR)** to process this accordingly.

ER to
SN/JR

Also underway was a photography competition and it was hoped that local photographer Logan Sangster would judge the entries. The prize was a free family photo shoot. It was discussed whether the photos could be posted on the PC Facebook page.

ER to LS

4. RECTOR'S REPORT

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

- **Staffing:** several updates were given:
 - o Drama - the post vacated by Mrs Lindsay had been readvertised, a qualified Drama teacher was taking the affected classes.
 - o English – Robert Biggart had replaced Ashleigh Machin.
 - o Congratulations to Anna Carey Miller (Pupil Support) who had a baby boy.
 - o Congratulations to Gerry Urquhart (English) who welcomed a baby boy.
 - o Chemistry – Bruce Duncan was retiring at Christmas. His post was currently advertised.
 - o Additional government funding was being used to appoint 4 fixed-term Principal Teachers: PT Digital Literacy; PT DYW; PT Wider Achievement; PT Targeted Support.

- **SQA:** school was still awaiting confirmation of what would happen with Higher and Advanced Higher exams this year. As already publicised, Nat 5 exams had been cancelled and staff would use the year to gather evidence. Prelims had yet to be decided across the authority. She asked for thoughts from PC on having study leave with a traditional prelim diet to allow a dress rehearsal for the summer exams. There was general agreement that it would be useful to proceed with the prelims as planned. As well as providing exam experience and feedback, it would also help to focus many pupils on their revision. The school would continue to work day-to-day to address guidance as it was produced by the SQA and to communicate as much as realistically possible with parents.
- **Working Groups:** these were now up and running and school was looking for parent representation for Literacy, Numeracy, Health and Wellbeing and Digital Literacy. These groups would meet primarily at lunchtimes on MS Teams.
- **PE:** Scottish Government Guidelines had changed and PE could now take place indoors. The PE Department would update pupils on activities and guidelines. For the moment, pupils would continue wearing PE uniform on PE days as they cannot use changing rooms. Participation had increased as a result of less pupils forgetting their kit.
- **Remembrance Day:** parents had received a link for the amazing film that the S6's devised, which had been edited by Angus Rodger. This was truly outstanding and had also been shared within the local community.
- **Children in Need:** this was the next day and the school had already reached its initial fundraising target. Many thanks to everyone who had already donated.
- **Litter:** the school had reminded pupils about keeping the local area tidy, but concerns had again been raised as a result of the actions of a small minority.
- **S6:** the School Captains had created an online sign in/out procedure for S6's. This had been well received and not only allowed school to know who was in the building but could be used should there be a need to use Trace and Protect.

5. WORKING GROUPS

Following on from confirmation of the working groups above, members were asked to express an interest in any group that they wished to join, to the Convener by the following Thursday.

Members
to SN

6. FINANCE REPORT

JR reported on the current balance which was £1380.22. The annual cheque from Aberdeenshire Council had now been received. A further £100.63 payment to the school for an outdoor composter had now been made.

It was noted that Senior Prom had been re-booked for April. The school was also planning a Christmas lunch for the S6 pupils and PC confirmed it would be willing to contribute to the purchase of something for this, for example, Christmas crackers. Any other suggestions could be submitted to the Rector by the following Thursday.

ALL

7. **LIAISON WITH FEEDER PRIMARIES**

TA offered to kick-start renewed contact with the primary school PC Chairs. It might be easier for them to liaise amongst themselves. It might also be possible for the working groups to consider membership from the feeder primaries.

TA
JuW

There was a desire to encourage attendance/new members from parents with children in lower years.

8. **ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PARENT FORUM NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE**

No issues had been raised in advance of the meeting.

9. **SQA**

This had been covered elsewhere.

10. **COVID-19**

School was dealing with a number of contingencies should the local area go into a higher Covid-19 Alert Level. It had been fortunate to have no positive cases in school yet. A 'dry-run' had been undertaken to plan for the action to be taken in the event that a pupil tested positive. Staff were in a good position to deal with this appropriately. It was confirmed that if this happened, staff would review that pupil, their classes (which had seating plans) and where they had been and start to create 'bubbles' of who they had been with. It was acknowledged that it would not always be possible for school to account for lunchtime contacts. Advice would then be taken from Test and Protect to advise those who needed to self-isolate, with parents advised accordingly.

It was recognised that blended learning was difficult if some pupils were at home and some at school. It was generally accepted that it was much better, especially from a mental health / wellbeing perspective, for pupils to be in school, with the company of their peers. In addition, some struggled immensely with MS Teams. Concerns were raised around the potential effectiveness of teaching and learning for any pupils who had to self-isolate. Teachers were doing their best to provide work for pupils in this situation, and to support each other, but it had been a steep learning curve.

JuW was aware that many of the senior pupils, particularly in S5, were extremely stressed about assessments and school was doing what it could to alleviate this and support and reassure those who needed it.

It was confirmed that there were very few supply teachers willing to come into school; in addition, they could only go to so many schools in a week, which limited the benefit.

11. **FUTURE OF THE PTA**

As previously highlighted, all current members of the PTA would be leaving at the end of the year, as their children left school. Further discussions were had around the PTA becoming part of the PC. As the PTA was a charity, governed by OSCR, further advice was required from OSCR in this respect.

Advice had been sought from various sources, including Connect who were unable to advise on charities. It had been very difficult to progress this during lockdown.

The PTA also had quite a bit of money accrued from the Sportathon and the PTA Chair was currently undertaking the rather large task of ensuring that gift-aid, where pledged, could be accounted for, now that gift-aid status had been given. This would make a huge difference to the final total. **JR** had experience of dealing with gift-aid and offered to help Kate Diamond with this, which would be hugely appreciated. Once this aspect had been dealt with, the legal aspects would be further considered.

JR to KD

In terms of fundraising, the school had no pressing need for money at the moment although it would struggle to continue with the prospect of no funds in future. Any ideas for uses for the current funds would come back to a future meeting.

JuW

12. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 28 January 2021
- 11 March 2021
- 3 June 2021
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A number of other items remained on hold for fuller discussion at a future meeting:

- **Information evenings:** it was agreed it was too late to hold an event this academic year. Ideas for next year should be submitted to chair.bapc@gmail.com
- **Parent Council Constitution Review:** this was on hold until there was more clarity around what might happen with the PTA. The March meeting was proposed as timely to take this forward. If there were no major changes, it may simply be possible to email the Constitution to the Parent Forum for comments before voting it through.
- **Focus topics/sessions:** two topics were proposed for future meetings: the CFA Machine; and child protection/safe-guarding. It was agreed that meetings should be kept as short as possible so this would remain under review. There was a desire to identify topics that might encourage other parents to attend PC meetings.
- **Cost of the School Day:** this remained as a 'watching brief' for now.

ALL

**Holding
File**

**Holding
File**