

BANCHORY ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of the Meeting held on 23 September 2021: Virtual Meeting via MS Teams

Present (members): Jacqueline Conroy, Louise Considine, Ruth Duddy, Rebecca Glansbeek, Andrea Hale, Claire Hesketh Crafts (Vice Chair), Sofi Izaat, Colin MacLeod, Scott Newey, Alison Smart (Secretary) and Linda Stromberg (Chair).

In attendance: Cllr Rosemary Bruce, Uduma Agwu Ikpa, Joanne Owen, Cllr Anne Ross, Judith Wight (Rector), Joanne Wisely.

Apologies: Trish Amundrud, Cllr Eileen Durno and Kate Ellison.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The incoming Chair (**LS**) welcomed everyone to the first formal meeting of 2021/22, which immediately followed the Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which office-bearers and members for the year had been voted in.

All parents and carers i.e. the Parent Forum, had been sent an email inviting them to attend, as well as put themselves forward for membership of this year's council, and advising that members would be voted in at the AGM, where the Chair would give a brief report on Parent Council activity in 2020/21.

2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2021 had yet to be drafted and would be circulated for approval at the next meeting.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Details of relevant training sessions from Aberdeenshire Council would be circulated to members where appropriate. There was nothing else to report that was not already covered on the agenda.

4. RECTOR'S REPORT

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

Return to school:

- The return to school had gone well. S1 pupils were settling in well and some extra-curricular activities were resuming.
- The school had launched core values and school rules as part of 'Promoting Positive Relationships'. The core values were Consideration, Opportunity, Responsibility and Excellence. The school rules were Ready, Respectful and Safe. These would be highlighted in documentation, on the school website and around the school building. Weekly virtual themed assemblies reflecting these were also being held.

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Staffing:

- A number of new staff had joined the school:
 - Mr Robbie Cordner – Modern Studies
 - Mr Tim Browett – Physics
 - Miss Stephanie Benzies – English
 - Mrs Lyn Forman was appointed Acting DHT 0.4
 - Mrs Fiona Burnett was appointed Acting PT English 0.4
- A number of part-time posts were currently being advertised and it was noted that Mr McRae was leaving the maths department with his full-time post also being advertised. It was confirmed that a temporary maths specialist would be providing support in the meantime.

Covid Update: There had been an increase in positive cases since returning after the summer break. Letters were being issued when required to parents as directed by the Local Authority. Work would be posted on Teams for pupils that were self- isolating due to a positive result.

Duke of Edinburgh: The school had been made aware of a letter that had been issued by the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme stating that Banchory Academy had not taken on the licence after it had expired for BOAG. The school had no prior knowledge of this letter being issued and had in fact looked at ways to support the scheme and continued to do so. Refer also item 8 below.

Parents' Evenings: Parents' Evenings would be held online again this year; further information would be issued nearer the time.

School Captains: School Captains for the year were Tegan Jaffrey and Hannah Jaypalan. Both girls would be invited to attend the next Parent Council meeting.

BAPC Chair: The Rector extended her thanks to Scott Newey, outgoing Chair. He had been a support to her over the last two years which she had very much appreciated. She was very much looking forward to working with Linda Stromberg who was taking up this role.

JuW

SN

LS

5. **WORKING GROUPS**

The school working groups had not managed to meet as normal in 2020/21. **JuW** confirmed that as soon as the 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 £556.27 and covered the cost of: outdoor education, pupil Christmas party, trophies for 'Movember', Uniform Exchange, and post-lockdown welcome back. The closing balance for the year was £1424.23. It was noted that a further spend of £411.00 for Senior Prize Giving was still outstanding.

7. **LIAISON WITH FEEDER PRIMARIES**

SI confirmed that she would take on the role of liaising with the feeder primary schools.

SI

8. DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

This had been covered in the Rector's Report above and **CM** provided further detail on behalf of the Banchory Open Award Group (BOAG):

- Prior to the end of the last academic session, three Bronze groups and two Silver groups completed the qualifying expeditions for their Award.
- At the end of July 2021, the licence held by Aberdeenshire Council for BOAG expired. The consequence of this meant that, currently, there was no DofE scheme for the young people in Banchory unless they were members of, for example, the Banchory Scouting Association or the ATC.
- On 1 September 2021 an email was sent out from HQ DofE Scotland by the Operations Officer NE Scotland informing of a change in circumstance in the delivery of the DofE in Aberdeenshire Council. This indicated that, although schools had been encouraged to continue to offer the DofE through their own license, Banchory Academy had taken the decision not to continue to offer the DofE. There had been no attempt to contact the BOAG Leaders/Co-ordinator in advance of this letter being issued to participants and, as indicated in the Rector's Report above, the school had not been contacted either.
- The Leaders were prepared to continue to support and advise those participants who had yet to complete their current Award level.
- As indicated above, the school continued to review options.

9. UNIFORM EXCHANGE

The next uniform exchange was scheduled for 13 November; this activity had been successful to date. Morrisons had donated school shirts and were willing to help out if other types of items were required with the option for members of the public to contribute by paying for a bag of items for donation. Discussions were also underway with the food bank in Banchory to help identify families that might benefit from clothing. Local primary schools were included and all Headteachers were aware of the scheme and could request specific items through Parent Council. Volunteers were sought to help out.

ALL

10. PARENT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION REVIEW

The review of the Constitution was still to be undertaken. It was confirmed that this would not include merger of the PTA as PC did not currently have the capacity to subsume PTA activity. There was discussion about the transfer of remaining PTA funds; these would not come to PC.

In relation to fund-raising it was suggested that PC could potentially have a sub-group with fund-raising capacity, although without charity status this would not permit any claims to matched funding (i.e. gift-aid). This kind of arrangement had been put in place at Crathes Primary and similar discussions had been undertaken at Banchory Primary. **CHC** offered to look at the arrangement at Crathes and discuss with **CM**. It was noted that Connect membership might cover PC in terms of insurance when raising money.

CHC

CM agreed to have a look at the Constitution and circulate this to members for comment prior to submitting updates to the next meeting. It was unlikely that there would be any significant changes albeit some tweaks might be required in order to permit the PC to have a fund-raising

CM

sub-group should that be desirable at any time. **LS** would check with **MH** (past member) about related discussions.

LS

11. **FOCUS TOPICS/SESSIONS**

A presentation on the CFE Machine had previously been proposed. Other ideas included an overview of the targeted interventions for pupils to support them with their emotional and mental wellbeing. This included a dedicated nurture programme for identified pupils, individual and group sessions, and a drop-in group at the beginning and end of the school day. ASL staff might also be invited to speak about the support that they provided in school. Any other suggestions would be welcomed.

ALL

12. **INFORMATION EVENINGS**

These events required a lot of planning and organisation; past events had been very well received. It was suggested that another (possibly online) session on drugs and alcohol might be welcomed by parents who were new to the school and hadn't attended the previous one on this topic. Any other suggestions would be gratefully received

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

No issues had been raised in advance of the meeting.

14. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Proposed dates for future meetings:

- 11 or 18 November 2021
- 27 January 2022
- 10 March 2022
- 2 June 2022