

BANCHORY ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of the Meeting held on 15 September 2022: Learning Plaza, Banchory Academy

Present (current members): Sofi Izatt (Chair), Rebecca Glansbeek (Treasurer), Ruth Hutchinson, Sophie Logue McLeod and Alison Smart (Acting Secretary).

In attendance: Julia Fleming, Linda Stromberg and Judith Wight.

Apologies: Trish Amundrud (Secretary), Louise Considine, Cllr Eileen Durno, Scott Newey, Cllr Ann Ross and Cllr Yi-Pei Chou Turvey.

Action

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The incoming Chair (**SI**) welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year, which immediately followed the Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which office-bearers and members for the year had been appointed. New attendees in particular were welcomed. 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.

2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2022 were approved.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair, having just been appointed, did not have anything in particular to report on but work would be ongoing to ensure effective communication with the parent forum, and to consider topics for information evenings that parents might find beneficial.

4. RECTOR'S REPORT

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

Staffing – a number of new staff had been welcomed to the school in August:

- Nat Coe was now Principal Teacher of ASL.
- Dougie Kinnear was Acting Faculty Head of Science replacing Matt Skellern who was Acting DHT at Gordon Schools Huntly for this academic year.
- Colin Blakely had joined the Business Education Department.
- Nicola Murray had joined the Physics Department
- Georgia Pinson had joined Maths
- Melody Mitchell had joined English
- Mr Liam Ball had been appointed Faculty Head of Art, Design and Technologies and would start after the October break.

In general, schools had many vacancies and had not been given the probationer teacher allocations needed.

SQA Results: overall these had been very strong and the school was proud of its young people. A lot of work was undertaken last year by both staff and pupils and she was proud of them all. It was difficult to quantify the extent of the allowances that had been made for pupils undertaking assessments during the challenges of the past two years. However, it was anticipated that things would start to return more to 'normal'.

S1s settling in: new pupils were settling in generally well. There were lunchtime activities for them to take part in and many had taken up the opportunities on offer. An extra-curricular fayre had been held to allow them to see what was on offer.

S1 Open day: an S1 open day would be held next Tuesday allowing parents to visit the school. Those attending after school would also have the opportunity to see in classrooms. The school was very much looking forward to welcoming parents back into the building. Consideration was also being given to inviting S2 parents in next, and potentially S3 too, given that parents in these year groups may not have had a chance to visit the school before i.e. if their first child had started at the school during the pandemic.

Careers Fayre: the school was holding its Careers Fayre on Monday 26th September and looking forward to welcoming Further and Higher Education establishments, hearing talks on UCAS, and meeting and chatting with local businesses.

School Uniform: this had greatly improved and pupils were turning up to school looking smart. Thanks were extended to the parents supporting this. Some adaptations had been agreed to encourage better adherence.

School Captains: Femke Andrew and Matthew Mair were the 2 new house captains this year. JuW would pass their emails to SI. A list of house captains was also noted.

JuW to SI

Student News: congratulations to Holly Dunlop in S6 who was joint winner of the Aberdeen University Nan Shepherd Creative Writing competition. This was the first time a pupil had won this competition.

Greenpower car: congratulations to the Greenpower team who returned with 3 trophies at the weekend. Two were for winning their class in each of the two races and the 3rd for being the best presented team and in particular the politeness of the team. They had now qualified for the international final at Goodwood on Sunday 9th Oct.

Finally, Banchory Academy was very sorry to hear the sad news last week regarding the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. Last Friday, there had been a whole school assembly with a 2 minute silence. School notice boards showed beautiful photographs of Her Majesty throughout the day. The pupils respect shown that day was heart warming.

The [Queen's Green Canopy](#) initiative, created to mark the Platinum Jubilee, had provided the opportunity to plant a large number of gifted trees on the school campus, with help from the Eco Group to plant and look after them; some were beside the stone at the front of the school, others were by the huts near the staff car park and along the lane towards Arbeadie Road. The enclosed garden along the lane was cared for by pupils in the ASL department with the vegetables used in the kitchen. All S1 pupils would have an opportunity to spend time outdoors.

5. **WORKING GROUPS**

Every member of staff was a member of a working group. Continuing groups included the Literacy and Numeracy groups, with a new Family Learning group this year. The Curricular group would be reporting on curriculum restructure, which potentially will have an impact on different year groups, and the school day; a consultation was coming. Representatives from PC would be sought where appropriate. The majority of meetings were at lunchtime, every 3-4 weeks. JuW would come back to PC with details and invite parents.

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6. **FINANCE REPORT**

The Treasurer had submitted a financial report for the year ending 31 July 2022 to the AGM immediately before the meeting, as follows:

- The opening balance for the year was £1012.23 in September 2021.
- PC spent £379.20 on parka jackets and hoodies for the Banchory Academy Outdoor Learning group to work in the garden. Often children would not have appropriate clothing for outdoor learning. The purchase of the jackets and hoodies would help keep the kids stay dry and will be kept at the school for the benefit of all.
- In May, Aberdeenshire Council deposited the annual allowance of £499.65 into the BAPC account. This was normally deposited in December, however due to COVID it had been delayed.
- The last deposit was made in December 2020.
- The Uniform recycle exchange had been successful and funds had been given to the school directly with a donation to the church. However, in June it was decided that the money would go into the PC account and used for specific clothing or school requests.
- A deposit of £268.23 was made from the Uniform exchange leaving the current balance
- The balance as of Aug 2022 was £1401.91.

In respect of fundraising, this activity had ceased following the demise of the PTA. It was more complex for Parent Council to undertake this, although there might be potential for a sub-committee of PC to raise funds. The school did do some but was reluctant to ask people for donations at the moment, in light of the cost of living crisis. It was noted there would be a Sportathon in February.

7. **LIAISON WITH FEEDER PRIMARIES**

In the past PC had had a member who liaised with the primary schools. It would be useful to invite Michelle along to talk about the primary transition, materials, films etc. **JuW** would be happy to visit the primaries.

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JuW

8. **UNIFORM EXCHANGE**

The uniform exchanges continued to be successful, and thanks were extended to members who continued to dedicate their time to running these (**RG/LC/RH**). **RH** would ask the school office to issue a call for additional helpers.

RH

9. **PARENT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION REVIEW**

Some queries around voting and the number of non-parent members would be followed up with **SN/CM**.

SI

10. **FOCUS TOPICS/SESSIONS**

These sessions were when someone (often a member of staff) was invited along at the start of PC to talk on a particular subject of interest. **LS** had undertaken a parent survey some time ago and there had been some suggestions; she would pass feedback to **SI**. Additional suggestions related to school reports e.g. wording and levels, reporting templates, broad general reporting (S1-S3), and the CFE machine, which provided data on results, as well as data on each young person, for example, where they are, tracks, estimates, achievements, early intervention etc.

LS to SI

11. **INFORMATION EVENINGS**

Potential topics included:

- Drugs and Alcohol – this had been a topic several years ago, well received.
- Mental Health – this was the subject of the most recent event. It was suggested that a leaflet for parents might be helpful.
- Social Media

It was agreed that a newsletter to parents, summarising the issues discussed at meetings might be helpful.

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12. **COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

This was an item for future consideration in light of the cost of living crisis. It was possible to get funding for families who needed it but parents needed to come forward. **JuW** was looking at the bigger picture, for example, pupils going home to cold houses, not eating properly etc.

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13. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (PROPOSED)**

- 10 November 2022
- 19 January 2023
- 9 March 2023
- 18 May 2023

Meetings to start at 6:30pm until 8:00pm.