

Banchory Academy Parent Council Meeting

Minutes

21 March 2024 6.30-8.30pm

Learning Plaza, Banchory Academy and Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Sofi Izatt (Chair); Ruth Hutchinson (Treasurer); Louise Considine; Jennifer Currie (online); Jennie Morrison; Sophie Logue McLeod; Scott Newey; Karen Alford; Fiona Shanley;; Marion Fyfe, Bridget Rhodes

School representatives: Judith Wight (Rector), Fiona Shanks (DHT)

Apologies: Sarah Little (Secretary), Rebecca Glansbeek; Fiona Melville

1. Review actions and approve minutes of last PC meeting

The minutes from the last meeting on 25 January 2024 were approved with no matters arising.

2. Chair's Report

- The PC Chairs letter to the Cabinet Secretary re teacher shortages had resulted in a meeting being scheduled, but this has now been cancelled twice.
- SI met with JW to gain a greater understanding of the SQUIP report. JW will present the plan to the PC at the start of the new academic year, with a review of the previous year. This will allow us greater understanding of the priorities for the school and how well it is meeting the targets that are set.
- PC was approached by a new local action group regarding any update on plans for a new academy. The group formed to coordinate the community response to the Local Development Plan, and so have a wider remit than just an academy. As far as everyone present knows, Banchory remains well down the list for areas earmarked for any new infrastructure.
- A useful digital parenting webinar was provided by Aberdeenshire Council. SI will inquire as to whether we can share the slides from the webinar.

Action: At the first meeting in the new academic year, JW will present on the SQUIP. SI to find out if the slides from the webinar can be shared with the parent forum.

3. Treasurer's Report

Financial Statement for meeting held on 21/03/24

Opening balance from previous meeting	2186.09
Income: Local Authority payment to PCs	499.65
Closing balance 21/03/24	2685.74

- PC offering up to a total of £1000 to provide a pot of funds that pupils could put forward bids for, to allow them to identify need from within the student body.
- The theme for their bids should be around things that would improve their experience of a school day, make them feel better and have fun.
- Whether bids are accepted by each year group, or senior school and then lower school was discussed, and when would be a good time frame for this to take place (with the seniors about to sit their exams)

Action: SI to draft a proposal for bids, which JW will then implement in school as she feels appropriate (eg through an assembly, juniors before summer, seniors after summer, for example)

4. Rector's Report 21st March 2024

Staffing

- Mrs Michelle Skellern DHT is returning to Banchory Academy having been seconded to the Northern Alliance, she will return straight after the Easter holidays.
- Mrs Fiona Shanks who has been acting DHT will remain as part of the Leadership Team until the summer holidays.
- Mrs Laura Will has now started in Guidance.
- Mr Euan Maharg has started in Technical until June 2025 to cover for Mrs Will.
- Mrs Melody Mitchell English Department has left, we are currently advertising for a replacement.
- Ms Catherine Lawson has been appointed full time in Maths and is starting early next term.
- HE is currently being re-advertised.

S2/S3 Course Choice information

Parents were asked for feedback regarding our course choices. The data is very positive.

The range of courses offered to our new S3 pupils.

Out of 40 responses: 7 Excellent, 22 Very good, 6 good.

The range of courses offered to our new S4 pupils is

Out of 24 responses: 4 excellent, 19 very good, 1 good

The information session led by Mrs Bruce on the course choice process.

Out of 42 responses: 15 excellent, 19 very good, 5 good.

The staff where departments were able to answer queries

Out of 42 responses: 12 excellent. 13 very good, 9 good. 5 did not attend.

How do you feel the change of the school day will benefit your learner?

Main responses

Increased time in English will support development of skills.

Increased time in Maths will support development of skills.

Seven qualifications will increase opportunities and pathways.

Six qualifications is sufficient for progression.

How helpful did you find the information from staff in reports to support your child to make their course choices?

Out of 63 responses: 13 excellent, 28 very good, 15 good

The information issued to pupils and families vis MSTEams and the Learner Pathways website

Out of 54 responses: 12 Excellent, 38 very good, 11 good.

Pupil information

Curling – four of our pupils recently made it to the quarter finals of the Scottish Schools Curling Championships

Three pupils participated last night in the senior public speaking Rotary Final for North East Schools with Tom Condy awarded best speaker.

Jago Stevens and Georgie Steven have been shortlisted for the Scottish Schools' Young Writer of the year.

A group of S2 pupils made it through to the final of Build your Future competition and won the event.

Ski trip took place this year in Andorra and the feedback has been very positive. Many thanks to the parents that wrote lovely thank you pieces for the staff.

Poet Don Paterson presented an online session with our Higher English pupils who are studying his work this year.

Illustrator Tom Foster came to Banchory Academy for a whole day to work with our S1's. He worked on how you can tell a story using images.

House Assemblies took place last week with the focus on achievement. Staff nominated pupils for a variety of different reasons and they were recognised at this event.

Our S1 girls competed recently in the albyn school cross country competition and finished second overall.

National 5 Drama class are showcasing their play next Wednesday in preparation of their practical exam.

Communication with Parents

As part of our ongoing evaluation of the school, parents will be asked to participate in an online survey about the information they receive from the school. The parent council have been asked to help with this. Survey to be distributed after the Easter break.

Parking

Gentle reminder that Parents should not be parking in the staff car park, on pavements and next to buses at the end of the day. The safety of our young people is important and current practices are dangerous.

Changes to the school day

Next term will see the introduction of our change to the curriculum structure. This will affect our school day and will be introduced in June. I previously wrote to you all in November but as a reminder of how this will look, I have noted below the times for each day.



Asymmetric Week: 32 periods plus one (5 x 10 mins) Session 2024 -25

Pupil Contact Period	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
US Time	8.40 – 8.50					
Period 1	8.50 – 9.40					
Period 2	9.40 – 10.30					
Break	10.30 – 10.50					
Period 3	10.50 – 11.40					
Period 4	11.40 – 12.30					
Lunch	12.30 – 13.20 Warning bell 13.15					
Period 5	13.20 – 14.10					
Period 6	14.10 – 15.00					
Period 7	15.00 – 15.50					

Action: 1.PC to support school in disseminating a reminder about parking practices.

2. To provide input into the communication survey, the PC will discuss and SI will contact JW with our suggestions.

5. Presentation by DHT F Shanks on SAMH, a mental health initiative

SAMH - Scottish Action for Mental Health

- Offering support to both young people and staff in the school around well-being
- Provision of SAMH practitioner in school once a week
- Pupils identified within school as having low attendance, which may be for different reasons around anxiety.
- Pupil referred to practitioner (Melanie) and will be supported over a 6-7 week programme
- Meetings may take place in school, in the community or online

- The first wave of pupils involved in the programme are currently mid-way so we do not yet have any information around outcomes.
- Evidence from other schools is that attendance does improve after participation in the programme
- SAMH provides other types of support to parents and carers, details can be found on their website (www.samh.org.uk) and their active social media feeds.
- Four current programmes:
 - Listening to and Supporting my Child
 - Understanding and Managing Stress and Anxiety
 - Mental Health Awareness
 - Managing My Wellbeing
- Can be accessed via a QR code which was sent out via Groupcall
- Once the pupil has completed the SAMH provision, they may receive further support in school from their wellbeing worker, such as through the LIAM scheme.
- The in-school pupil counsellor position has also recently been filled.

Action: Fiona Shanks to provide link to slides, which PC can publicise along with reminders to parents about the above programmes.

6. Working groups

- No members present had attended a working group since the last meeting. H&WB group yet to meet, but will hopefully get going as a priority after the summer.
- SI suggested that dates for all working group meetings be circulated so that any available parent could attend rather than rely on one person being free during a weekday.
- LC reported that she had been in school to conduct mock interviews with school leavers in S4 and S5, those that were not continuing to higher education. It was suggested that mock interviews would actually be useful for all pupils, even if conducted peer-to-peer in PSE for example, it would be a useful exercise.

7. Post as PC Secretary soon to be vacant

Due to work commitments, SL will be stepping down as Secretary and this is a position that needs to be filled with some urgency.

8. PR and Communications officer role

As advertised at the last meeting. No one has yet come forward to assist with this.

Action: to advertise these roles once more. Anyone interested should contact SI in the usual way. A secretary post-holder will be a matter of urgency.

9. Meeting days

Will be rotated going forward to allow anyone who cannot come on a Thursday to attend.

10. AOB

The West Church has asked for a date for the proposed June Uniform Exchange.

Action: LC to liaise with RG to agree a date in late June. Advertising via social media and Groupcall to ask for leavers to donate study books and school ties before they finish at the end of May, with a collection point at school for them to drop off when they come in with their leavers forms.

11. Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 7pm 15th May 2024, learning plaza

(moved from 18th June to coincide with P7 Transition Evening)