



## Charleston Academy Parent Council

### Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at Charleston Academy

**Present:** Fiona Alexander, Anne Ashton, Yvonne Brown, Rita Farragher, Sue Fraser, Helen Hunter, Urszula Kozak, Rona Macpherson, Linda McLean, Alex Mezals, Sue Mitchell, Kate Morris, Tim Muir (Chair), Julie Riddle, Sinead Robertson, Gordon Stewart, Lindsey Stout

**In Attendance:** Chris O'Neill (Rector), Margret MacRae (Clerk),

**Apologies:** Jill Kent, Kate McEwen, Rachel Niefergold, Mieke White, Trevor White, Christian Wittke,

1.	<p><b><u>WELCOME</u></b> Tim Muir welcomed everyone to the meeting</p>
2.	<p><b><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u></b> The minute of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> March was approved Proposed: Sue Fraser Seconded: Kate Morris</p>
3.	<p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></b> • Art Exhibition – please see Any Other Business</p>
4.	<p><b><u>RECTOR'S REPORT</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr O'Neill reported that it had not been possible to deliver an assembly on e-safety to pupils as S4-S6 are currently on study leave. New guidance is also expected shortly from the ICT information officer at the Highland Council as there has been growing concern regarding the issue of e-safety at national level from both the police and social work.</li> <li>• A 16 strong prefect team has now been selected. Rona MacPherson led the new system whereby pupils were invited to apply and were selected by interview. This was deemed to be much fairer in that it was not based on friendship groups. Interviews took place prior to study leave so that everything was in place for pupils returning after their exams. Mr O'Neill advised that the quality of the interviews was of such a high standard that it was agreed to appoint 16 prefects rather than 12.</li> <li>• Helen Hunter arranged an excellent Graduation Ceremony which was attended by approximately 300 people.</li> <li>• Year Group award ceremonies will take place during May and June. These will celebrate achievement as well as attainment, and in line with this ethos the school wishes to extend the number of awards it presents. This year has seen the incorporation of a new award – the 'Integrity Award' which is presented to pupils in recognition of their contribution to the school in honouring the school values of 'Respect, Responsibility and Achievement'. Nominations for the integrity Award are made by staff and then considered by the Guidance staff and Senior Management Team. The award, together with a photo will then be kept in the trophy cabinet. Pupils will receive a photo and certificate as a memento of their award. Mr O'Neill advised that George Ashton had been presented with the Integrity Award this year. George was part of the Lead Prefect Team and has agreed to return to school next session to meet with the new lead prefect team to share his learning in respect of potential pitfalls and what he might now do differently.</li> <li>• In addition, the four members of staff who are retiring this year will each nominate criteria for further awards – for example Confidence and Public Speaking.</li> <li>• The school is continuing to develop 'Pupil Voice' throughout the life and work of the school. Currently there is a pupil council and a year group committee, onto which staff representatives can also be co-opted. More awareness of opportunities such as parliamentary representation will be raised in order that pupils can aspire to these positions. Other developments are the formalisation of both pupil council and staff representatives on the Parent Council; and also representation of the Parent Council at Pupil Council meetings.</li> <li>• Staffing – Mr O'Neill advised that Mr Paterson will be retiring in June, Mrs Fraser has taken up a full-time post at Millburn Academy and that Mrs Ballantyne will take up a permanent post at Glenurquhart High School next session. Appointments have already been made for temporary positions in History and Geography, with interviews for the vacant post in English to be held shortly.</li> <li>• Further to a review of support for learning needs the school currently has an entitlement of 11 Pupil Support Assistants. One of these posts had been undertaken by a former head boy. Mr O'Neill explained that this has been a huge success as he was young, dynamic, not that far removed from the school and therefore pupils engaged very well with him. He is now moving on to train as a PE teacher, and Mr O'Neill would like to employ someone similar to replace him.</li> </ul>

- Mr O'Neill reported that the current S3 pupils are studying 8 subjects. Pupils are completing a self-assessment of their progress across the 8 curricular areas and also consider their wider achievements. This document will then be circulated with their school report.
- The Local Authority has now issued their new directive on the Curriculum for Excellence which will see pupils studying a broad range of subjects from S1-S3 and then studying up to 6 subjects in S4. The school has formed a curriculum review group to consider how this will be taken forward. All principle teachers have asked to be part of the curriculum review group. Mr O'Neill advised that the school is looking at aligning S4, S5 and S6 as this may help to make a broader range of subjects viable in a way that has not been possible in the past. Levels of subjects will be set discreetly. Column 6 for S5 and S6 pupils is still to be decided, however it is envisaged that these will comprise of PSE type life skill classes. Mr O'Neill stressed that it is imperative to the school that these are meaningful and not regarded as an 'add on'. Topics being considered include personal finance, driving skills / road safety, and e-safety.
- It was reported that the Albert Roux Kitchen is now almost fully funded, with £40,000 having been received from the Common Good Fund following approval by the Inverness Area Committee. The current shortfall is £20,000 however it is hoped that savings may be found during the tendering process. The aim of this project is to provide an 8 station quality hospitality kitchen. Documentation which outlines the requirements for a kitchen which will benefit the hospitality industry throughout Highland has now been drawn up and submitted to the procurement department of the Highland Council. Three competitive tenders to carry out this work will now be sought.
- The P7 transition days are being held on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June. An information evening for parents, which will also include a fashion parade of school dress code, has been arranged for 17<sup>th</sup> June. Mr O'Neill reported that Guidance Staff will visit schools ahead of the transition days and that during these visits they will distribute a quiz to encourage pupils and parents to familiarise themselves with the new school website. It was noted that the school website had 500 hits last Sunday afternoon.
- The e-mail database is currently being finalised. A test e-mail will be sent shortly to check addresses – a message will be placed on the website to advise that this has been undertaken so that any parent who has not received an e-mail can contact the school to update their details. As per previous discussions the system of sending home paper copies of correspondence and Charleston News will be replaced by e-mails including links to the relevant information.
- Signage at the front of the school will be replaced and this will include a smaller sub-sign for the Highland Football Academy.

**5. FINANCE REPORT**

- Yvonne Brown reported that the bank balance at 28<sup>th</sup> February was £5615.72
- A nice thank you letter has been received from the Art Department following receipt of funding towards a new camera. Ms MacLeod confirmed that the S1 Art Club has not yet been progressed and therefore this money and the more recent award were combined to cover the cost of the camera.
- Winners of the Friends of Charleston Club were as follows:
  - January – Anne Forsyth
  - February – Gordon Stewart
  - March – Caroline Crawford
  - April – Gordon Hines
  - May – Paula Mackenzie
- Numbers of Friends of Charleston remain similar to last year. It was agreed that Yvonne Brown would send information on this initiative to Mr O'Neill for inclusion on the school website.
- A link to Easyfundraising will also be included on the school website
- Further to previous discussions Yvonne Brown confirmed that some money had been ring-fenced for the 'Dream and Teams' project which includes exchange visits with South Africa. Mr Mezals reported that pupils from South Africa are welcome to visit Charleston in 2014 and that it is hoped that pupils from Charleston Academy will visit South Africa in 2015. However, it was stated that it was not possible to undertake fundraising to the same extent as previously. A daily allowance for pupils and staff will be provided from monies raised through 'easyfundraising'. Mr Mezals explained that 34 pupils will also be visiting Botswana in 2014.

**6. FUNDING APPLICATIONS TO PARENT COUNCIL**

- A request for a financial contribution towards a greenhouse, polytunnel, seeds / plug plants and other items to allow pupils to grow fruit and vegetables has been received from the Eco Group. It is envisaged that these facilities would be used as follows:

- Boath House in Auldearn has committed to support Mrs Bremner and the hospitality classes to grow organic produce which will then be used in the Albert Roux kitchen.
- work undertaken by eco groups
- teach rural skills classes
- allow pupils working towards ASDAN awards achieve additional goals
- support the S1 and S2 Science curriculum
- allow new S1 pupils to extend their learning following work undertaken with ROWAN in their primary schools

Tim Muir proposed that the Parent Council contribute £2000 towards this initiative. This was seconded by Kate Morris and ratified by a vote. It was also stated that further applications towards this project would be considered.

- A template for funding applications was circulated and it was agreed that future requests for funding should be submitted on this form.

7.	<p><b>PARENT COUNCIL AGM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion took place regarding membership of the Parent Council, and the difference between the Parent Forum and the Parent Council. There appeared to be a lack of clarity regarding current membership of the Parent Council and it was felt that the current constitution required review. It was agreed that a small number of representatives of the Parent Council will meet with Moira McCarrell,(QIO Strategic Initiatives) in order to seek advice – Mr O’Neill kindly offered to arrange this. This item will be added to the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.</li> <li>• It was agreed that a teacher representative and pupil council representative will be present, where possible, at Parent Council meetings</li> <li>• Yvonne Brown stated her intention to step down from her role as treasurer as she has now completed her three years. A new treasurer will need to be elected at the AGM.</li> <li>• The AGM will take place at 7pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September</li> <li>• Tim Muir will attend the Information Evening for P7 parents arranged for 17<sup>th</sup> June in order to raise awareness of the Parent Council with parents who will be new to the school.</li> </ul>
8.	<p><b>CORRESPONDENCE</b></p> <p>Tim Muir advised that he has received the National Parent Forum of Scotland Newsletter - if anyone would like to see this please contact Tim and a copy will be made available</p>
9.	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion took place on changes which have recently taken place in the canteen. These are in line with Highland Council policy on Healthy Eating. However, there was some concern that this would lead to pupils using the Chinese Take-Away. It was felt that a more common sense approach of ‘moderation’ was desirable in order to encourage pupils to continue using the canteen and ‘Grab &amp; Go’ facilities offered at the Charleston Complex.</li> <li>• There was an enquiry regarding the possibility of an extra-curricular Drama Club. It was stated that personnel to deliver this opportunity is required – any person who would be interested in undertaking this should contact the school.</li> <li>• It is hoped to provide a rugby club next year following the recruitment of a new PE teacher who has expertise in this field.</li> <li>• The S1 Art Show will take place towards the end of the calendar year. The Art Department will organise all the artwork and displays. A sub-group of parents is required to organise and publicise the event, and also arrange for stalls selling craft / Christmas items. Kate Morris and Sue Fraser are both happy to help out, but a volunteer to co-ordinate the event is still required. It was agreed to revisit this at the meeting of the Parent Council in August.</li> <li>• A display of Higher Art Photography can currently be viewed on the first floor gallery at Eden Court. Parents commented that they were delighted that pupils were given this opportunity.</li> </ul>
10.	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August - 7pm</p>