



Charleston Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on
Tuesday 29th March 2011 at Charleston Academy

Present: Anne Ashton, Suzann Barr, Robert Bowie, Sheila Bowie, Leona Boa, Donald Christie, Clare Dyker, Rita Farragher, Anne-Marie Johnstone, Deirdre Mackenzie, Linda MacLean, Kenneth MacKay, Pat Mackay, Kate McEwen, Susan Mitchell, Kate Morris, Fiona Morrison, Jan Patience, Dougie Robinson, Marjory Sandilands, Diane Stewart, Gordon Stewart, Marie Waugh.

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

Apologies: Yvonne Brown, Cllr Helen Carmichael, Cllr Margaret Davidson, Pip Farman, Cllr Alex Graham, Holly Grey, Ishbel MacNeil, Mieke and Trevor White, Christian Wittke

1.	<p><u>WELCOME</u> Jill Kent welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that it was good to see so many parents</p>
2.	<p><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u> The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th February were approved Proposed: Kate McEwen Seconded: Sue Mitchell</p>
3.	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no update on the issue of lockers • Parents are asked to continue to pass any issues relating to transport on to Gordon Stewart • Jill Kent reported that the school is currently considering events that may be eligible for sponsorship by Robertson Homes.
4.	<p><u>RECTOR'S REPORT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris O'Neill reported that the school had recently celebrated the following pupil achievements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gary Millard competed in the Scottish Final of the Rotary Young Chef Competition and did very well ○ Pupils assisted front of house at the Albert Roux Dinner at Culloden Battlefield in February. The school is planning a further celebration in November. Albert Roux will visit the school in May to begin planning for this. This will be the beginning of a long-term fundraising project to raise £80,000 for a commercial kitchen for the Home Economics department. ○ A group of pupils from the Debating Club took part in The North of Scotland Schools' Debating Championship in Aberdeen ○ A further group of pupils took part in the 'Big Green Challenge'. This debate was streamed live over the Scottish Parliament website. Mr O'Neill was delighted to report that the S1/2 girls won first prize and have been awarded a 4-day trip to Spain to look at renewable energy. • Positive feedback was received from the ski trip that took place in February. It will not be possible to offer a ski trip during the February inset in 2012 as this coincides with the English half-term and prices being charged are unreasonable. Staff have proposed the week after the February break but Headteachers involved have said that cannot allow staff and pupils out of school for five days. The planned trip to Colorado is going ahead in Easter 2012. • The school held a 'Wear Red' day to raise funds for Comic Relief. In the region of £700 was raised on Red Nose Day with a further £200 having being received in additional donations. • Charleston Academy will be holding a litter pick on Friday 1 April. Pupils will also be invited to wear something green to school as part of the activities arranged by the eco-committee. • Mr O'Neill reported that Dochgarroch Primary School has been awarded its 4th Green Flag. Former pupils who were instrumental in the Primary School achieving its first Green Flag have been invited back to Dochgarroch to join in the celebrations. • The school will pilot an extended registration programme after the Easter break. Registration will be extended from 5 minutes to 10 minutes. This will allow for longer registration assemblies to celebrate pupil success and allow senior pupils to develop leadership skills. • The activity days for S1-S3 pupils and the Senior School Induction Days will take place on 9th and 10th June

- It was reported that the school is currently reviewing its policies and practices. Mr Stewart has begun this process by looking at the Cyber Bullying Policy and the policy relating to registration has also recently been reviewed.
- Fujitsu were awarded the contract for the supply and maintenance of the Highland Council's IT equipment during last year. Outdated equipment is to be replaced and print services rationalised. This process has been more difficult than initially anticipated and solutions will be implemented in due course.
- Tom Speirs, Depute Rector, will retire in June. An advert for his replacement will be posted in April / May. Members of the Parent Council will be invited to assist in the appointment process.
- Mr O'Neill informed the Parent Council that due to the 5% reduction of the school's staffing budget it is necessary for the school to make significant savings. This will require a reduction of the equivalent of 5 full time members of teaching staff. The management team have looked at the viability of classes and the decision was taken to remove German and Business Studies from the curriculum for S1-S3. Discussion took place with regards to this decision. Parents who had unresolved concerns relating to how this would affect their children were encouraged to make an appointment with a member of the management team. Mr O'Neill stated that the school hopes to offer pupils the opportunity to study a variety of modern languages in S5 and S6.
- Mr Cripps, Principal Teacher – History, has received an award from Oxford University for being an 'Inspirational Teacher'. Charleston Academy celebrated this achievement by holding an assembly on Monday 28th March. A representative from Oxford University personally presented the award in the presence of pupils who are currently studying history.
- Further to Charleston Academy's visit to Botswana in June 2010, and as part of the work the school undertakes with regards to Global Citizenship, a number of staff and pupils from Botswana will be arriving in Inverness on Saturday 2nd April. They will stay until the 12th April and will take part in a variety of activities arranged by the school.

5. FINANCE REPORT

- Jill Kent reported that the Parent Council fund currently stands at £4250.04. In the region of £500 is ring-fenced for school lockers.
- Jill Kent stated that Yvonne Brown has put a great deal of effort into fundraising and was to be commended for all her hard work.
- Mr O'Neill would like the Parent Council to be involved in the decision making process as to how this money should be spent. It was agreed that it should be used on projects that would benefit all of the pupils

6. TRANSITION

- Gordon Stewart reported that meetings with teachers from the primary schools in the associated schools group to discuss the needs of individual pupils have now been held. Processes are in place to ensure that there is a strong pastoral transition. A Health & Well-being transition event, which allows pupils to meet their peers from other schools, takes place each year. Although this is beneficial and enjoyable for most pupils it is recognised that not all pupils like taking part in competitive sporting activities. It had been hoped to incorporate an art / drama based activity but due to reduction of budgets for outreach work at Eden Court this is no longer possible. To ensure that there is something for everyone a yoga section and a Nordic walk have now been included in the programme for the Health & Well-being day. Mr Stewart is meeting with Nikki Rasdale (Youth Development Officer), the Active Schools Co-ordinators and Mr Skinner to look at the development of an inclusive programme of events.
- The school will consider the possibility of organising a 'treasure hunt' to allow pupils to familiarise themselves with building. This would take place at the same time as the meeting for parents on the second of the two transition days.
- Mr Stewart confirmed that the DVDs have been made and ordered. Induction packs will be distributed to children in the associated primary schools and also St Joseph's School.
- The Parent Council were informed that in future a number of S1 pupils will visit their former primary schools as part of the transition process. It is intended that 2 pupils from each associated primary will go back to their old school for a day and talk to the P7s about their experiences and answer their queries.
- Jill Kent reported that she had attended a consultation meeting in Nairn to which all parents had been invited. The focus of the meeting was school handbooks and Jill was pleased to advise that the handbook and DVD produced by Charleston Academy were noted to be of a very high standard.

7.	<p><u>CORRECT ORDER</u></p> <p>If any member of the Parent Council has an interest in taking on the role of parent representative on the National Parent Council for Scotland then they are asked to forward their details on to Jill Kent.</p>
8.	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Charleston Community Complex Gala will take place from 12 noon – 4pm on Saturday 4th June. A number of pupils from Charleston Academy will be involved in running stalls and the Parent Council have been invited to participate. Ideas for an activity or stall are being sought and a decision will need to be made by mid-April. • Mr O'Neill confirmed that pupils continue to have the opportunity to work towards a Science Baccalaureate. Economic pressures have a lesser affect on course choices for senior pupils as the structure of these types of courses lend themselves to independent study. • Charleston Academy works in partnership with the Abriachan Forest Trust to deliver the Rural Skills Course. Mr O'Neill advised that the school is always open to developing new partnerships and parents / organisations are welcome to submit their details and suggestions. He reported that links between the school and the Loch Ness Lodge Hotel are currently being forged. Pupils are working on developing a herb garden for the hotel. • It has not yet been possible to progress the working group on 'reporting to parents'. This is due to a number of factors including the evaluation and outcome of the computerised reporting system piloted by Charleston Academy. Jill Kent confirmed that there are a number of parents willing to work with the school once the school is clear on the options available. • Mr Speirs is currently on secondment to Learning Teaching Scotland (LTS). He is working on the development of the Curriculum for Excellence and it is hoped that he will be able to report on the work he has been doing at a further Parent Council meeting.
9.	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>To be arranged</p>