



Charleston Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on
Monday 30th May 2011 at Charleston Academy

Present: Yvonne Brown, Jill Kent (Chair), Kate Morris, Gordon Stewart, Christian Wittke

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

Apologies: Anne Ashton, Cllr Helen Carmichael, Cllr Alasdair Christie, Carol Clark, Cllr Margaret Davidson, Pip Farman, Rita Farragher, Drew Hendry, Linda MacLellan, Kate McEwen, Susan Mitchell, Jan Patience.

1.	<p><u>WELCOME</u></p> <p>Jill Kent welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was reported that although Cllr Margaret Davidson was unable to attend the meeting the school should let her know if they felt she could be of any assistance.</p>
2.	<p><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u></p> <p>The minute of the meeting held on Tuesday 29th March was approved</p> <p>Proposed: Kate Morris</p> <p>Seconded: Gordon Stewart</p>
3.	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></p> <p>Transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gordon Stewart reported that he is working on the transition process with the primary head teachers in the associated schools group.• Linda Brown, who will be the year head for the incoming S1, is currently making arrangements for the new pupils.• Mr Stewart will speak to the pupils who have taken part in Columba 1400 when they return to school next week with a view to them planning a series of events to aid transition.• Parents who may have difficulty with regards to childcare are welcome to bring their children to the information evening arranged for Tuesday 14th June. Letters will be issued to P7 pupils in the associated primary schools. <p>School Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Stewart has been in contact with Caro Munro regarding a bulk SMS messaging system which would allow schools to inform parents of school closure / transport issues in severe weather. Discussions are taking place at Highland Council level to see if a Highland-wide rollout of such a system would be viable.• The Parent Council were informed that there had been some improvements in communications with Stagecoach as the bus company is now e-mailing the school and letting them know if buses are running late.• Parents enquired whether buses on the more rural routes would be fitted with snow tyres during the winter months. It was reported that this had been very successful last winter. As the contract for the provision of transport is due for renewal parents would be grateful if this could be considered in the tendering process. Jill Kent will forward this request on. <p>Modern Language Choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr O'Neill reported that all S2 parents who had concerns with regards to how their children have been affected by the withdrawal of German from the S3 curriculum next year have now met with the management team. This is due to the fact that the class size is not viable. The pupils concerned have reviewed their curriculum options. It is hoped to offer a wider language choice for S4-S6 in future years, depending on staff availability. <p>Curriculum for Excellence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was reported that the timetable and model Tom Speirs has been developing can be viewed on the Learning Teaching Scotland website (www.ltscotland.org.uk). The vision for how this might look in 2013/14 is not quite finished, and Mr Speirs is still to draw his conclusions and present these to SMT. The model Mr Speirs has envisaged for the school will make it possible for pupils to have the option to study up to eight subjects in third and fourth year. Mr O'Neill reported that the school is very pleased with this model as it incorporates substantial changes but does not move too far from the school's current position. This has the advantage that the school can pull back from developments should this become necessary.

- Mr O'Neill explained that pupils would undertake a broad general education in S1-S3. They will then take the new National 4 or National 5 qualifications in S4. Early presentation for exams is not encouraged or supported. Pupils may be working towards national assessments at an earlier stage but they would not be presented before they had completed S4. It was confirmed that the Higher qualifications remain the gold standard required by universities.

4. RECTOR'S REPORT

- Chris O'Neill informed the Parent Council that the May edition of the Charleston News has been issued this week. This includes a variety of reports such as the trip to South Africa, the visit from pupils from Botswana, and celebrates a number of pupil achievements.
- The school is in the process of reviewing its assessment and reporting calendar. Currently the workload is not evenly distributed, as parents' evenings for all the year groups tend to take place in the winter. Additionally written reports for a number of the year groups are all issued in the period between February and May. Consideration is being given to, for example, holding the S1 and S3 parents evenings earlier in the session. This would allow for parents of S1 children to gain feedback on how their child is settling, and a written report on academic progress would be issued approximately 6 months later. Similarly parents of S3 pupils would have the opportunity to meet the new teachers, gain insight into the new timetable and become familiar with what is expected of pupils. It was noted that there is likely to be less flexibility around the timing of S2 reports and parents evenings. This is due to the selection of curriculum choices and the necessity to have this information available to enable staff to draw up timetables. Consideration is also being given to changing the timing of the parents' evenings. Parents will be consulted on these proposals and a number of options will be piloted and evaluated.
- The Parent Council was advised that the school dress committee is currently reviewing the dress code. The aim is to decide on a dress code that will be accepted and adhered to by all the pupils. It is envisaged that the dress code will be much the same as it is now but incorporate greater choice.
- Discussion took place on the provision of a late bus for pupils who take part in extra curricular activities. It was reported that some days only a handful of pupils use the service, and that the cost of this provision is in excess of £10,000 per year. Previously the cost of this service has been supplemented by funding from the Ward Discretionary Fund but this is unlikely to continue at current levels. As the school is not tied into a contract with DE Coaches a more cost effective way of providing transport is being explored. It is intended to enter into discussion with Stagecoach in the first instance to see if it would be possible to divert a service bus via the school at around 5.00pm. As pupils are entitled to free transport up until 5.30pm this would be an ideal solution. However, if this is not possible alternatives will be explored.

5. FINANCE REPORT

- Yvonne Brown reported that the Parent Council fund currently stands at £4292.67. In the region of £500 is ring-fenced for school lockers and it was felt prudent to retain £1000 for running costs of events / income generation. Principal teachers were invited to submit bids for the remainder of the funds.

6. PARENT COUNCIL FUND - how money is to be spent

- Yvonne Brown circulated a document detailing bids received for a share of the £2800 available. It was agreed that the criteria for deciding the allocation of money was that the proposal should benefit as many youngsters as possible. On this basis the following awards were made:

£60.00	Duke of Edinburgh	Three mobile phones for group leaders	Each year Charleston Academy operates Bronze and Silver Awards involving c30 S3 pupils participating in Bronze and c20 S4+ in Silver. Allows Group Leaders to supervise student groups more effectively
£250.00	Duke of Edinburgh	Three pairs of binoculars for Group Leaders	
£50.00	Religions, Moral & Philosophical Studies	Artefacts	To enhance the understanding of religions beliefs. Helps department to build up a bank of religious artefacts for pupil use giving hands on experience
£100.00	Art & Design	Art Materials	For the purchase of materials for Lunchtime Art Club which will be run by Senior Pupils

£250.00	Home Economics	Machine embroidery threads, traditional components and card for the creation of 'Christmas Cards' for parents	To allow all Fashion and Textile Technology pupils to make personalised Christmas Card/Stocking. Boxes of machine embroidery thread cost £60 each. Traditional components £50-£100. Card £30
£132.00	Home Economics	Service Gloves for use during Albert Roux Charity Dinner and School Events	Front of House Pupils are required to wear 'service gloves' to protect hands from 'hot plates' and also for hygiene. Pupils enjoy such events and all S3-S6 Hospitality pupils participate at various times throughout the year. 50 pairs required.

Further bids for the allocation of the remaining funds (which are in the region of £2000) will be invited next session.

7.	<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u> None
8.	<u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jill Kent will be making contact with the Chair of each of the Parent Councils in the associated schools group with a view to holding a meeting in June. The aim is to develop a support group and forge / strengthen relationships with other Parent Councils in the cluster. • The school is currently recruiting a depute rector to take over from Tom Speirs next session. There had been a very encouraging number of applications, and dates for interview are being finalised. Parent Council volunteers to sit on the interview panel are being sought and interested parties should e-mail Jill Kent. Highland Council policy is for two Parent Council members to accompany two councillors on the panel for Depute Rector posts. • The May draw for the Friends of Charleston Club took place at the end of the Parent Council Meeting. The winning number was 7 which belongs to Mieke White.
9.	<u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u> The next meeting will take place in August – date to be finalised.