



Charleston Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Annual General Meeting held on Monday 3rd October 2011 at Charleston Academy

Present: Wojciech Bonick, Yvonne Brown, Cllr Margaret Davidson, Clare Dyker, Rita Farragher, Sue Fraser, Kate McEwen, Rona Macpherson, Sue Mitchell, Kate Morris, Rachel Niefergold, Sinead Robertson, Gordon Stewart, Marie Waugh, Christian Wittke, Cllr Hamish Wood

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

Apologies: Dawn Marie Cameron, Cllr Alex Graham, Paula Mackenzie, Cllr Pauline Munro, Mairi Oakley, Jan Patience.

| | |
|----|--|
| 1. | <p><u>WELCOME</u> Jill Kent welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly the new members</p> |
| 2. | <p><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u> The minutes from the Annual General Meeting held on 28th August 2010 were approved. Proposed: Kate McEwen Seconded: Sue Mitchell</p> |
| 3. | <p><u>MATTERS ARISING</u> Please see Parent Council Annual Report</p> |
| 4. | <p><u>FINANCE REPORT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Income and Expenditure report was circulated prior to the meeting • Yvonne Brown reported that the balance of the account as at 31st July 2011 was a healthy £3205.13. The accounts have been independently examined and approved by Lorna Lumsden MBE. • Mr O'Neill explained that Charleston Academy is currently looking for a volunteer to audit the school fund account. This role would attract an honorarium. Anyone willing to undertake this work should contact Mr O'Neill. • Parents were advised that money from the Parent Council fund could be made available should they have any fundraising initiatives that require outlay for set-up / promotion. • It was reported that Friends of Charleston was an opportunity for parents / wider family members to give something back to the school. This initiative would provide on-going financial support for school projects. At the end of last term departments were invited to bid for money and awards were made to the Home Economics Department, Art Department, Religion, Moral & Philosophical Studies Department and also the Duke of Edinburgh programme. Any parents who would like a form to join the 'Friends of Charleston' should contact Yvonne Brown or Jill Kent. • Jill Kent, on behalf of the Parent Council, thanked Yvonne Brown for all her work over the past year. |
| 5. | <p><u>PARENT COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group of parents are working in conjunction with the school's art department to organise an art exhibition. This event will be held at Charleston Academy on 16 November. All first year students will have a piece of artwork displayed and there will also be a number of other stalls and refreshments. A similar event, which was very successful, was held last year. The art exhibition is an opportunity to promote art, encourages S1 parents to come into the school, and is a very positive experience for pupils as it allows them to showcase their work. • There continues to be a shortage of lockers in the school. This is due to the restriction of space in which to locate them. Work on finding a solution is ongoing and a small amount of money has been ring-fenced for the purchase of lockers once space has been secured. • Income is generated through the 'Friends of Charleston' initiative and also through 'Easy Fundraising'. Easy Fundraising is a search engine to which parents can sign up. Commission is earned by accessing on-line stores via this search engine. To date the school has earned £250 commission from a membership of 25 parents. It was reported by some parents that they had not registered as they had concerns around security. It was agreed that further information with regards to Internet security would be sought and reported back at a further meeting. • Jill Kent thanked the parents who had been involved in working collaboratively with the school on the dress code. |

- A meeting of the National Parent Forum of Scotland took place on 1st October in Bishopbriggs. Workshop topics included the new exam system for the Curriculum for Excellence being implemented by the SQA, and parental involvement in school inspections. It was reported that ministers welcome feedback from parents regarding the Curriculum for Excellence and any concerns they might have about the new exams.
- A new SMS messaging system will be piloted this year to notify parents in the event of changes to school transport in severe weather conditions. Each family was invited to submit one mobile phone number for this purpose. Text messaging will not replace the current telephone system; it will be used to update parents of any late notices received from Stagecoach. A test message will be sent shortly and parents who do not receive a message within the next few weeks should notify the school. The cost of this service is 3.5p per text, and it is thought that the total cost over the winter period is unlikely to exceed £100. The Parent Council agreed to pay for this service for 2011/12. The school will now go ahead and purchase credit ahead of usage.

6. RECTOR'S REPORT

- Chris O'Neill reported that the school roll is currently just under 800, this being slightly lower than anticipated. Although the number of teaching staff has already been reduced in accordance with the budget this may have to be revisited on account of the lower school roll.
- Mr O'Neill stated that 8 staff left at the end of last session. There have been new appointments in Maths, Chemistry and the senior management team. Mr O'Neill reported that there had been a lack of applicants for the part-time posts in Home Economics and Business Education. These positions are currently unfilled and are being successfully covered by supply staff. Mr O'Neill also advised that the school's head janitor would be leaving shortly to take up a new position with the Facilities Management Team based at Milton of Leys School. There may also be implications for the school in that the librarian's employment will be transferred to High Life Highland, an arms length company set up to deliver community learning and leisure services for The Highland Council.
- A curriculum audit will take place after the October break. Chris O'Neill advised that Charleston Academy is unique with regard to the range and quality of courses it offers its students. No other school in Inverness offers the number of courses currently provided by Charleston Academy. The reduction in budget and staffing may have an impact on the sustainability of this level of provision.
- With CfE implementation underway it is proposed that next session S3 pupils study up to 8 subjects. In addition S2 pupils have recently undertaken short courses in a range of different subjects. These are being evaluated and audited to measure the outcomes in terms of learning skills that pupils are able to transfer and take forward to other areas of the curriculum.
- A number of pupils from S3 to S5 attended Columba 1400. They will be given the opportunity to utilise their newfound knowledge and leadership skills by developing a vision for a future 'house' system for the school. Although Charleston Academy has good systems in place for recognising pupil voice it was noted that this was weighted towards the senior school. This will now be extended to ensure a more even representation across all year groups.
- The HMIE inspection identified the need to improve tracking and monitoring. The lack of capacity in respect of the IT systems have meant that addressing this issue continues to present significant challenges.
- A group of staff are currently taking forward the Highland Council framework for Learning and Teaching practice. They are working to develop and adapt this framework to suit the needs of Charleston Academy.
- Due to the significant increase in printing costs incurred by the school it has become necessary to review communication methods. It is no longer sustainable to issue colour paper copies of the Charleston News. Parental involvement is being sought to inform this review. (Please see point 8.)
- The School Improvement Plan will be issued to parents after the October break.

| | |
|----|--|
| 7. | <p><u>APPOINTMENT OF OFFICE BEARERS</u> Appointments were made as follows:</p> <p>Treasurer – Yvonne Brown Proposed – Marie Waugh Seconded – Kate Morris</p> <p>Vice Chair – Kate Morris Proposed – Sue Mitchell Seconded – Rachel Niefergold</p> <p>Chair – Jill Kent Proposed – Clare Dyker Seconded – Kate McEwen</p> |
| 8. | <p><u>SCHOOL / HOME COMMUNICATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents were invited to complete a questionnaire on school / home communication. This was completed in pairs / threes and after completion a short discussion took place. It was acknowledged that the substantial increase in printing costs being experienced by the school means that the provision of paper copies of the Charleston News is not sustainable. Most parents feel it would be acceptable to have this available on the internet providing that they received an e-mail with a link or text to alert them that this is now available on-line. Some parents indicated that they would be prepared to pay for paper copies, particularly if they wanted to keep them as a souvenir. Some parents intimated during the discussion that an interactive website might be a useful tool for home / school communication. There was also a desire for notification of assessment dates and information regarding the range of school trips. Please find attached a collation of the responses to the questionnaire. |