



## Charleston Academy Parent Council

### Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January at Charleston Academy

**Present:** Fiona Alexander, Anne Ashton, Yvonne Brown, Kirsty Coutts, Sue Fraser, Urszula Kozak, Donald MacLeod, Rona Macpherson, Kate McEwen, Susan Mitchell, Kate Morris, Tim Muir (Chair), Gordon Stewart, Lindsey Stout, Stephen Tillman. Cornelia Wittke

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

**Apologies:** Pip Farman, Rita Farragher, Jill Kent, Linda MacLean, Fiona Morrison, Mairi Oakley, Julie Riddle Marie Waugh, Mieke 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 Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November was approved Proposed: Kate McEwen Seconded: Sue Mitchell</p>								
3.	<p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></b> • None</p>								
4.	<p><b><u>RECTOR'S REPORT</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was reported that the school dances and pantomime had been very successful</li> <li>• Staffing             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr O'Neill advised that the Highland Council budget for staffing for the next academic session (June 2013) will be reduced by up to 2%. It is anticipated that this will translate as a reduction of 2 full time equivalent posts from the current complement of 62 members of teaching staff. As the teaching allocation is role dependant actual figures will not be known until intakes from the associated primaries are confirmed, and pupils from S4 and S5 finalise their subject choices. In line with Highland Council policy all staff will in the first instance be approached to see if there is any desire for staff members to reduce hours or take retirement.</li> <li>○ Three new members of staff have recently been appointed. Joanne Fleming is replacing Kirsty Dillon in the PE department, who is now on maternity leave; Richard Smith is taking up a post as Support for Learning Teacher and Tara Jaffrey will be joining the Guidance Team.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Highland Council Curriculum for Excellence Steer Mr O'Neill reported that he had received the above draft steer document from the Highland Council and explained the vision of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Steers included in the document focus on the following aspects:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clear transition from primary to secondary education</li> <li>○ Tracking undertaken in P7 and S2</li> <li>○ Personal Support – Charleston Academy is currently developing 'tutor time' to replace registration</li> <li>○ Curriculum</li> <li>○ Including a variety of different learner pathways</li> <li>○ Discussion of CfE development with parents</li> </ul> <p>Mr O'Neill explained the current curriculum structure and the proposed changes outlined in the CfE steer. These are as follows:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Current Model</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Model outlined in draft CfE Steer</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>S1 – S2 – broad general education</td> <td>S1 – S3 – broad general education</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S3 – S4 – study 8 subjects Pupils are encouraged to make subject choices to provide a broad and balanced education across all 8 areas of the curriculum where possible. Pupils will take National 4 or National 5 qualifications as appropriate at the end of S4</td> <td>S4 – S5 – study up to 6 subjects Pupils study towards Higher qualification over this two year period (pupils do not sit National 4 or National 5 exams)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S5 – study up to 5 subjects at Higher level and sit Higher Exams in summer term</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </li> </ul>	Current Model	Model outlined in draft CfE Steer	S1 – S2 – broad general education	S1 – S3 – broad general education	S3 – S4 – study 8 subjects Pupils are encouraged to make subject choices to provide a broad and balanced education across all 8 areas of the curriculum where possible. Pupils will take National 4 or National 5 qualifications as appropriate at the end of S4	S4 – S5 – study up to 6 subjects Pupils study towards Higher qualification over this two year period (pupils do not sit National 4 or National 5 exams)	S5 – study up to 5 subjects at Higher level and sit Higher Exams in summer term	
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Mr O'Neill reported that the present S2 class will follow the current model. The school will undertake a review by June before a decision takes place regarding how the CfE might be taken forward for the session thereafter. It was noted that guidance from universities relating to entrance requirements was still awaited. The CfE steer document is currently a draft but Mr O'Neill stated that it would be shared fully with all parents once it had been finalised.

- School Website

The new school website which is now nearing completion was shown to the Parent Council. The website includes pages for news, policies, departmental information, extra-curricular information and a 'contact us' page.

- The home page includes images relating to events or banners of information to which the school wishes to draw parents' attention. It will feature a twitter feed which will allow for the sharing of information not lengthy enough to require a letter eg reminders of events being held. Although the school is able to post tweets it will not be possible to respond to these via the school website. Other information on this page includes school news links, severe weather / school closure updates, copies of daily notices and links to school meal menus.
- The news page will feature articles which celebrate pupil achievement. Mr O'Neill explained that the school intends to post photographs on the site. Each September all families are issued with Data Capture Forms which include a paragraph which assumes consent for the use of photographs and videos. Parents are asked to check and sign these on an annual basis. The school therefore assumes consent accordingly – any parent who does not wish for photographs of their child/ren to be included in the website are asked to write to the school to 'opt out'. Mr O'Neill stressed that the school would be mindful of posting material relating to 'Looked After Children' / pupils on the Child Protection Register.
- Mr Tillman and Mr MacLeod explained the schools vision for the departmental section. Although the website does not have the capacity to hold all department information it allows for links to material stored elsewhere. The Chemistry and Biology sites were showcased and highlighted the benefits these could have to both pupils and parents. Information included curriculum notes, revision notes, videos of achievement and a calendar including dates by which homework is required, tests etc. In addition there are links to other relevant sites and a twitter feed. Pupils are able to tweet staff and access support for homework if required. It was felt by staff that these developments created a healthy buzz amongst learners and stimulated discussion. Mr MacLeod reported that the development of the twitter feed had been by requested by pupils.
- It was agreed to add Parent Council content to the new school website rather than creating a stand alone Parent Council site.
- Discussion took place on moving away from paper based documents due to paper and printing costs and also in keeping with the ethos of being more environmentally friendly. This focused in particular on the 'Charleston News'. News items would instead be posted on the website. As these would be uploaded soon after the event it was felt that the feel would be more current as the Charleston News is only published once per term. All news posts would be tagged and archived and therefore remain available to parents. The Parent Council voted in favour of using the website as an alternative method of sharing news and agreed to the Charleston News being discontinued.
- The Parent Council also voted in support of the new website and its content.
- There was some concern regarding parents who do not have computers being able to access information. Mr O'Neill explained that he would issue a letter prior to the website going live and this will ask any parents who do not have access to the internet to contact him in order that a solution can be found. Mr O'Neill also advised that the format of the website is configured in such a way that it can also be accessed from a smart phone. Support will be provided to parents who need help in setting up / accessing twitter accounts.

5. **AUTHORITY CFE STEER** – please see Rector's Report

6. **SCHOOL MEALS – CASHLESS CATERING**

- Menu information will be available on the new website once this goes live. It was felt that there may have been some confusion regarding the menu on the first week of this term. This is due to the nature of the rolling programme which meant that the first week of term was actually week 3 of the menu. In addition the catering department can change the second option of the menu at their discretion eg if they feel that there would be no demand for certain meals.
- Mr O'Neill reported that there had been no reduction in demand following the implementation of cashless catering. Helen Hunter, Depute will talk in more detail at a future Parent Council meeting about healthy eating and how this can be promoted to pupils.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was explained that when pupils purchase their lunch there is a screen at the till which shows how much is being debited from their card and also the balance remaining.</li> <li>• Parents are now able to top up their children's cards via the Highland Council website. It was acknowledged that this process can be a little time consuming as each person's Scottish Candidate Number has to be entered separately and processed as separate transactions. There is no charge for topping up with a debit card; however a charge is levied for payments made by credit card.</li> </ul>
7.	<p><b><u>FINANCE REPORT</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yvonne Brown reported that the bank balance at 17<sup>th</sup> December was £5584.19.</li> </ul>
8.	<p><b><u>CORRESPONDENCE</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yvonne Brown received a very nice letter of thanks from Fiona Stewart, PT Music Department. The contribution of £500 towards the cost of putting on the pantomime and the purchase of the video cameras for the department were much appreciated.</li> </ul>
9.	<p><b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was reported that the Hospitality Kitchen had not been identified for the feasibility or capital spend budgets at the Education Culture and Sport meeting in January. Mr Albert Roux has pledged a substantial personal donation in honour of his name being used for the new kitchen. It was reiterated that Highland Council is committed to this development but still needs to identify funding.</li> <li>• Parents reported that they had thoroughly enjoyed the pantomime and thought that the production was excellent. Pupils have enjoyed getting involved in all aspects – working backstage, creating of costumes, taking part. It was felt that this project very much encompassed the ethos of the CfE and promoted teamwork.</li> <li>• Feedback was also received from parents on the Albert Roux Dinner. It was stated that this was excellent and the pupils outstanding. Mr O'Neill advised that another dinner was being organised for September this session.</li> <li>• Yvonne Brown thanked everyone who had purchased raffle tickets in aid of the hospitality kitchen. The draw has been postponed to the end of January in order to give parents /wider family members an opportunity to buy tickets.</li> </ul>
10.	<p><b><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></b> Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March - 7pm</p>