



## CHARLESTON ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

### Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016

**Present:** Kate Morris (Chair); David Gillies; Julie Riddle; Rona MacPherson; Urszula Kozak; Andrea Paterson; Gordon Stewart; Fiona Alexander; Rona MacAskill; Ciara Flugel; David Garvie; Lyndie Cameron; Jacquie Morrison; Annetta Crookes.

**In Attendance:** Chris O'Neill (Rector); Maureen Gallie (clerk)

**Apologies:** Fiona Malcolm; Christian Wittke; Lindsey Stout.

1.	<p><b><u>WELCOME</u></b> Kate welcomed everyone to the meeting which started at 7pm.</p>
2.	<p><b><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u></b>  Proposed: Urszula Kozak Seconded: Julie Riddle</p>
3.	<p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></b> There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.</p>
4.	<p><b><u>Rector's Report</u></b> Mr O'Neill began by saying that there was a lot going on in Charleston recently and that there was much to celebrate with success both academically and in extra-curricular activities. The school website is updated regularly with full details and photographs. January is a busy time with exams and our school invigilator, Jenny, once again praised the attitude shown by the pupils towards their exams. Teaching staff will now look at where the pupils are and how to help them move forward to their exams next term. Parents Evening for S4-6 was very well attended and the timing of this, just after the prelims, was a success with both teachers and parents giving positive feedback. A very successful ski trip was run once again by Kay Storey and Ryan MacKintosh. This will be Mrs Storey's last trip as she will be leaving Charleston to take up a new post at Glenurquhart High School. Mr O'Neill praised her work both in school and in the many extra-curricular activities she has been involved with – in particular the annual ski trips. The Science Club has once again had a very successful year. The club is unique in that it is run by our science technician, Pam Hamilton, assisted by prefects. Pam has successfully bid for funding for the club from outside agencies, which helps greatly with the running of the club. The school also enjoyed great success at the Inverness Music Festival, mainly in the prose/public speaking categories. Charleston has once again won the Florians Trophy. Congratulation are due to all involved. The Rotary Club Quiz team performed brilliantly once again with a very creditable 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Following on from our success in previous years the competition had increased in size with many more schools taking part. The school's American Football team, started from scratch by Donald MacLeod 3 years ago, were unbeaten in all league games this year. Unfortunately they were beaten by Dingwall Stags in the final. The team have had a fantastic year and the camaraderie shown by all the players is a credit to the school. The Climbing Club have attended competitions in Gairloch and Glasgow recently with great success. Photos should be arriving on the website soon. Thanks go to Jonathon Richards for running this club. The Teens and Toddlers group have been attending Kinmylies Primary School and this initiative will continue next term. Mr O'Neill advised that the website gets over 800 views a week on average and that the school</p>



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	<p>will continue to lead the way in the Highlands in the use of social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to get information out to both parents and pupils in the most effective way.</p>
5.	<p><b><u>Change to a 33 period week</u></b></p> <p>Following on from the last point on the website – the information regarding the change to a 33 period week gained over 8000 views in the course of a week.</p> <p>Mr O’Neill gave those present a handout with details of how the new school day will look once the 33 period week is introduced.</p> <p>He gave a brief recap on the reasons behind this decision – which was discussed fully at the September Parent Council Meeting.</p> <p>Although the Highland Council have backtracked on their decision to make this compulsory for all schools this year (this will now be compulsory from 2017) as Charleston had already started to look at this proposal in detail it was decided that the school would move to the new timetable this year.</p> <p>The new timetable will have a minimal impact academically on pupils in S1 to S3. Pupils in the upper years will have 6 period per week for 5 subjects with 2 periods of Personal and Social Development/Well Being. The extra period will be used for mentoring and coaching and will allow guidance teachers time to give support to pupils.</p> <p>School will start earlier and lunch will be 15 minutes shorter. School will also finish 5 minutes later on Monday to Thursday with a 12.35 finish on a Friday.</p> <p>Staff and parents have been consulted as have the bus company and catering staff.</p> <p>Concern was expressed at the lunch break being shortened and the late break. Mr O’Neill reassured parents that an enhanced breakfast service would be introduced along with more snacks at break time. At present pupils entitled to Free School Meals are unable to access their daily allowance before 10am but this will change to allow breakfast to be provided for all pupils, where required.</p> <p>The staff voted overwhelmingly for the shorter lunch break and the later break. Academically pupils perform better in the morning and the proposed timetable was agreed by staff to give the best possible teaching time.</p> <p>A concern was also raised about the earlier start, in particular for bus pupils, but Mr O’Neill advised that the times agreed would mean that the extra-curricular activities in the school could continue whereas a later start/finish time may curtail many of these.</p> <p><i>After the meeting Mr O’Neill advised that the bus times in the morning would remain the same as pupils arrived in school at 8.30am at present.</i></p> <p>The new times will be closely monitored and it may be that the lunch time may be extended to 45 minutes should the shorter time prove to be problematic.</p> <p>As from 2017 every school in Highland region will have to move to a 33 period week so it may be that we will have to change again to conform should it be decided that all schools should follow the same timetables.</p>
6.	<p><b><u>Budget cuts/Staffing</u></b></p> <p>Mr O’Neill gave those present a handout with details of the current teaching staff at Charleston (also available on the school website). This included details of the projected roll for the school and the attendant changes in staff provision.</p> <p>The current teaching staff equates to 52.3 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) posts. Plus 4 Learning Support posts which are paid for by the authority. Based on our pupil numbers our FTE should be 50.78.</p> <p>Mr O’Neill gained agreement from the council that we retain our surplus of 1.97, which means we are under-staffed by 0.4.</p> <p>Last week the council gave notice to reinstate the deferred 1% cut from August plus a further 1.5 <a href="#">FTE</a> cut in teaching staff – and the removal of our surplus. This would mean we were 3 staff over-compliment. Mr O’Neill advised that he was unable to do that at all. A reduction could be made of</p>



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	<p>1.22. Charleston are one of only 6 schools to have a budget surplus and Mr O'Neill has requested authority to use this to retain a teaching post that would otherwise be lost. He is awaiting confirmation of this from the Director of Education.</p> <p>The council as a whole is giving 500 staff voluntary redundancy in April but no teaching staff will be included at this time due to exams. However, 70 teaching posts will also be lost – either through voluntary or, if necessary, compulsory redundancies. Teaching staff will only be given voluntary redundancy where their post will not be replaced.</p> <p>The question was asked about whether teacher's leaving the school would be replaced. In this situation Mr O'Neill would have to look at the staffing requirements of the department affected and the council staffing formula would be used to determine any replacement.</p> <p>If the school roll increases during the academic year no further staff would be allocated – it is likely that our numbers would be 'capped'. This has happened previously and meant that a waiting list for pupils in the catchment area was required.</p> <p>Parent's asked if there was anything that they could do to help support the management team over these issues. At the present time because of the overall Highland Council budget deficit Mr O'Neill was unsure that anything further could be done. He expressed his thanks to the Parent Council for their continuing support of the school.</p>
7.	<p><b><u>Finance</u></b></p> <p>The current balance of the Parent Council bank account is £3024.59.</p> <p>A funding request has been received from Michael Sharkey for £591.12 for the Basketball Club. This was a large request and it was felt that the Parent Council should grant half of the request and Mr O'Neill said that a request could be made to the School Fund to match this.</p> <p>Kate proposed that the Parent Council once again provide a Staff Appreciation Lunch on the In Service day in June. Although this is a large expense from the budget it was agreed that this should once again go ahead. Lyndie Cameron said that the staff thoroughly enjoyed this last year and that the gesture would be very much appreciated by all the staff.</p> <p>Kate asked that anyone willing to help out should contact her direct.</p>
9.	<p><b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS –</u></b></p> <p>There being no other business Kate closed the meeting at 8.30pm, thanking all those present for their attendance.</p>
10.	<p><b><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING – still to be agreed.</u></b></p>