



Charleston Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on Thursday 1st November 2012 at Charleston Academy

Present: Fiona Alexander, Anne Ashton, George Ashton, Robert Bowie, Yvonne Brown, Rita Farragher, Helen Hunter, Urszula Kozak, Linda MacLean, Rona Macpherson, Kate McEwen, Susan Mitchell, Kate Morris, Tim Muir (Chair), Hazel Oakley, Mairi Oakley, Julie Riddle, Lewis Robertson, Gordon Stewart, Marie Waugh

In Attendance: Margret MacRae (Clerk),

Apologies: Ian Cowan, Susan Mitchell, Fiona Morrison, Rachel Niefergold, Chris O'Neill, Lindsey Stout, Mieke White, Trevor White, Christian Wittke,

1.	<p><u>WELCOME</u> Tim Muir welcomed everyone to the meeting</p>
2.	<p><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u> The minute of the meeting held on Monday 30th April was approved Proposed: Kate Morris Seconded: Yvonne Brown</p>
3.	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING</u> • None</p>
4.	<p><u>RECTOR'S REPORT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gordon Stewart introduced Helen Hunter who was appointed Depute Rector and will be joining the Senior Management Team in December. ○ Gordon Black has joined the staff in the History Department ○ In addition to her Support for Learning role Sandrine Bernery also now teaches French ○ Brian Yates has joined the Support for Learning Department ○ Fiona Seymour has taken up a post as Pupil Support Assistant ○ Alison Neave (Guidance) and Dave Kemp (Support for Learning) will both be leaving the school to move on to pastures new • Rona MacPherson explained that pupil voice is being promoted through a number of different initiatives including the pupil council, class representatives and youth voice. • The sponsored walk raised approximately £10,500. It was reported that pupils enjoyed this event and a number of them elected to wear fancy dress for the walk. • The new cashless catering system is now operational. The transition has been successful and has not had a negative impact on the number of pupils using the catering facilities within the school. There has been a good uptake of the 'Grab & Go' with approximately 40 lunches each day having been ordered in advance. A second machine to facilitate advance ordering is due to be installed. It was reported that the pre-payment machines do not accept the new £20 notes. Parents can now pay online via the link on the Highland Council website using their child's Scottish Candidate Number. It was confirmed that the canteen will still accept cheques. • The History Trip to the World War I Battlefields was very successful and ran very smoothly. Gordon Stewart reported that this trip had greatly enhanced pupils' appreciation and understanding of history. • The Head Boy and Head Girl will be attending a ceremony at the cenotaph. • A letter was received from the Provost who commended the school on their large turnout at the Kirking of the Council • The Albert Roux Dinner which was held to raise funds for the new hospitality kitchen went very well. It was reported that there was a good turnout and that the total raised is currently being calculated. • The Macmillan Coffee Morning organised by Frances Milne raised in the region of £2000. • Pupils are busy rehearsing for the panto which will be staged on 13th and 14th December. Tickets will be on sale shortly. • The school was visited by STEM Ambassadors from various employers throughout Inverness including Lifescan. All S1 and S2 pupils were given the opportunity to experience the 'lab in a lorry'. • Lifescan also delivered a careers / science session to S4 pupils as part of the Bridge to Employment programme

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S4 prelims will commence on 26th November. • S4 pupils will take part in work experience over the next few weeks. There has been some difficulty in gaining verification on self found placements due to issues at the Dingwall office of Highland Council. However, most arrangements are now in place with only a small number of work experience placements still to be approved. • It was reported that the earlier start times of Parents Evenings has been successful with 80% attendance recorded for the S3 Parents Evening held at the end of October. • The S5/S6 Parents Evening has been arranged for Thursday 15th November, and the S1 Parents Evening will take place on 21st November. The Parent Council will attend the S1 Parents Evening to promote their work and fundraising initiatives.
5.	<p><u>IN-SERVICE DAYS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of the inset days held on 22nd and 23rd October was as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monday 22nd October – departmental staff focused on their particular subjects ○ Tuesday 23rd October – Quality Assurance and Exams <p>It was reported that subject events were organised across secondary schools eg Charleston Academy hosted a Maths event, Culloden Academy hosted RME and Social subjects events. Teachers attended events which were specific to their departments.</p>
6.	<p><u>QUALITY ASSURANCE and EXAMS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was explained that the National 4 qualification does not have an external exam. Mr Stewart stated that the school is currently working to ensure that assessments in class are both rigorous and transparent. There is already a policy in place for internal marking of assessments such as NABS whereby there is an assessor and a verifier who both mark the tests. The marking of National 4 assessments would be done in a similar way. In addition there will be a course of appeal for any assessments that are disputed – Charleston Academy would prefer this to be an external process. It was also reported that the Highland Council is heavily involved in developing verification systems and is attending national events to ensure that standards across Scotland are uniform. In addition schools can access an online National Assessment Resource (NAR) which provides guidelines and benchmarks. The SQA will also conduct visits across schools and request evidence in order to verify National 4 grades / awards. It is anticipated that there will be a considerable amount of verification done initially to ensure that the new exam structures are properly bedded in. • It was confirmed that the National 5 exams are externally assessed. • Pupils will be entered for either N4 or N5 exams. Parents will be involved in the decision making process and the school is currently looking at how this information is to be communicated to parents. It was explained that if pupils should fail the N5 exams they do not receive any qualification – this is similar to the current Intermediate 2 exams.
7.	<p><u>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN</u></p> <p>The priority for the School Improvement Plan is the Curriculum for Excellence. Charleston Academy is also looking at tracking and monitoring. It was reported that assessment tools include INCAS and AFE (Assessment for Excellence). Gordon Stewart explained that AFE helped to identify areas where pupils may require additional support, and also provided an indication if pupils were working to potential. The School improvement Plan also includes initiatives to develop pupil voice.</p>
8.	<p><u>SCHOOL HANDBOOK</u></p> <p>This item was deferred</p>
9.	<p><u>ART EXHIBITION</u></p> <p>The Art Exhibition which will feature the work of S1 pupils is being held from 6.30pm – 8.00pm on Wednesday 14th November. It was reported that plans for this are now well underway and thanks were given to Marj MacLeod and Mairi Oakley for all their hard work. Invitations to publicise this fundraising initiative have been sent to the parents of S1 pupils. In addition to the sale of artwork there will also be a number of craft stalls and school enterprise stalls. There are still a few spaces available and anyone wishing to take a stall should contact Mairi Oakley – cost of a stall is £10.</p>
10.	<p><u>BUDGET ALLOCATION</u></p> <p>Two bids for funding were received by the Parent Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Drama Group requested £250 towards the cost of the pantomime. Funding is sought for set building, painting, sound cables, hire of lighting and costumes. As the costumes currently owned by the school have been recycled several times and are now somewhat tired it is necessary to purchase new materials this year. It was reported that the cost of putting together this production is in the region of £1500. Further to discussion it was agreed to contribute £500 towards this project. ○ The Music Department has requested £300 for the purchase of two portable digital recorders. These will be used by all year groups and will assist in evidencing learning for the Curriculum for Excellence's new exam system. This request was approved by the Parent Council.

It was explained that the Parent Council had agreed at a previous meeting that some of the fund would be saved for a larger project such as the Roux Kitchen or refurbishment of the hall. However, all departments within the school are welcome to approach the Parent Council for funding if they require resources for an initiative / development.

11. FINANCE REPORT

- Yvonne Brown reported that the bank balance at 27th September was £6018.24.
- 'Friends of Charleston' currently has 30 members. The winner for the October draw was Catriona Fraser.
- There are currently 32 members of the Easy fundraising scheme. Yvonne Brown reiterated that this is a very simple scheme which has generated £620 for the school to date. She explained that there is no additional cost to members when making purchases from participating online shops, the donation to the school is paid by the retailer. It was agreed that information regarding this scheme will be incorporated into the next letter to parents issued by the school. Yvonne to provide the school with text for inclusion.
- It was reported that a number of primary schools had benefited from the 'Ragbag' initiative. This textile recycling scheme pays schools by weight of items collected. Yvonne Brown agreed to look into this potential fundraising opportunity.
- Raffle tickets to raise funds for the Roux Kitchen were circulated. The prize is 2 nights dinner, bed and breakfast for 2 people at Loch Ness Lodge. Further tickets, priced £10 each, are available from Yvonne Brown or Elaine Bremner, Home Economics Department. The draw will take place during the first week in January.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

Tim Muir advised that he has received a copy of the latest edition of the PTA magazine.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Gordon Stewart advised that consideration had been given to the delivery of German. It is hoped to provide an online distance learning course which will be supported by a tutor. Two pupils intend to access this shortly - the start date is still to be confirmed. It may be possible to incorporate German into future course choice providing that sufficient tutor support is available.
- Hazel Oakley and Lewis Robertson explained that the school is working towards Fairtrade status, which they hope to achieve by Christmas. They advised that much of the work has now been completed and asked if a member of the Parent Council would be willing to take a look at the reports and policies they had prepared. Tim Muir agreed to undertake this and sign this off in order that this could be progressed with Fairtrade.
- Robert Bowie advised that he had been in contact with the Highland Council regarding the play park at Charleston View. A number of pupils like using this facility during their lunch break and Mr Bowie reported that the Highland Council would be willing to provide a bench for the play area. They would also be willing to provide a bin, however this would be on the condition that Charleston Academy took responsibility for the emptying of this bin. It was agreed that this matter needs further consideration as the play park is used by the wider community.
- The development of the school website, which will have a new domain / web address, is now nearing completion. Much of the text is in place however there was a delay in obtaining the photos. These have now arrived and will be incorporated shortly. The Parent Council asked if it would be possible to have a page on this site. They would like to include minutes of meetings and a variety of fundraising opportunities
- Feedback is still awaited from the Highland Council regarding the building issues in relation to the installation of the Roux Kitchen.
- Tim Muir and Jill Kent attended the National Parent Forum held on 29th September. He explained that this forum discussed the various models of the Curriculum for Excellence, and offered parents an opportunity to discuss these and share concerns. This forum also provides an opportunity to meet parents from other Parent Councils and share ideas with regards to practice, fundraising and community involvement.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 21st January - 7pm