



Charleston Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on Tuesday 26th March at Charleston Academy

Present: Fiona Alexander, Robert Bowie, Yvonne Brown, Sue Fraser, Jill Kent, Rona Macpherson, Kate McEwen, Kate Morris, Tim Muir (Chair), Julie Riddle, Gordon Stewart

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

Apologies: Anne Ashton, Pip Farman, Linda McLean, Susan Mitchell, Fiona Morrison, Lindsey Stout, Marie Waugh, 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 21st January was approved Proposed: Kate McEwen Seconded: Tim Muir</p>
3.	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING</u> • None</p>
4.	<p><u>RECTOR'S REPORT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing. Mr O'Neill reported that the school now has 2 new members of staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tara Jaffrey, Principal Teacher of Guidance ○ Richard Smith, Support for Learning Teacher <p>Vacancies for teaching staff in Geography, History, Maths and for a Principal Teacher of Modern Languages will be advertised, with interviews to take place after the Easter break. Mr O'Neill also advised that Frances Milne and Jim Paterson will be retiring at the end of this academic year. Charleston Academy will receive a 1% cut in capitation funding for next year, and also a 1% cut in the staffing allocation. It is expected that this equates to a 1.65 FTE (full time equivalent) cut in staffing due to present slight over-staffing and a slightly reduced S5/6 roll. Mr O'Neill explained that this would not impact on subject choices as the reduction will be managed by changing the configuration of teaching staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website. This is now almost complete - there are just a small number of departments who have yet to upload their information and it is anticipated that this should be completed during May. The school will continue to produce the Charleston News which will be uploaded on to the website as a PDF file, and editions will be archived in order that parents will still be able to access the information. It was reported that the website is, on average, receiving 200 hits per day, with 1,500 pages being viewed per week. It was noted that parents were using the website to access information in relation to adverse weather / school closure – hits on the last snow day totalled 634.
5.	<p><u>DRESS CODE</u> Discussion took place around the school dress code as it was noted that a number of pupils were not wearing school colours / clothing. This was particularly the case with 3rd and 4th year pupils. The issue is being raised at school assemblies and pupils are asked to adhere to the school dress code. In addition dress code for more senior pupils (S5 and S6) was discussed. The inclusion of a school blazer was mooted and costs are to be investigated.</p>
6.	<p><u>ENERGY DRINKS</u> Mr O'Neill will issue a parental letter in relation to the consumption of energy drinks (for example, Monster) by pupils. The school will undertake some health promotion work to raise awareness of the risks associated with these high caffeine/sugar drinks. In addition it is also necessary to reduce the school's refuse costs which are currently in the region of £10,000 per year (9 bins emptied every week). The banning of canned drinks would go some way to help achieving this target. (Update: The local Spar is now refusing to sell these drinks to under 16's, and at all before 9am. The school is extremely grateful for their cooperation and work with them to address this issue)</p> <p>Mr O'Neill also advised that the Catering Department is taking over the running of the Community Café. This additional facility, which will provide additional space, will be fully integrated to the School Canteen. Payment can be made by Smartcard in the usual way.</p>

7. E-SAFETY

Mr O'Neill outlined some of the incidents the school has had to deal with in relation to inappropriate use of Facebook and other social networks. There is a concern that parents are not aware of the nature of the material their children may be posting. This includes cyber bullying and the posting of inappropriate images and information which may leave a young person at risk.

The school is also concerned about the risk taking behaviour being exhibited by a number of pupils. Students attempted to purchase tablets which they believed to be some form of illegal substance. The tablets were a natural herbal remedy; however, youngsters were willing to purchase these whilst having no knowledge of the substance. The pupil involved in attempting to sell these has been excluded, but the school wishes to address the serious concerns it has around pupils willing to try these. Mr O'Neill advised that this would be done through school assemblies and that an information session for parents would also be arranged.

8. FINANCE REPORT

- Yvonne Brown reported that the bank balance at 28th February was £5615.72
- Rag Bag Scheme – as the school is already looking into this initiative the Parent Council no longer intend to progress this but instead aim to support the work undertaken by the school. Rona MacPherson advised that Stephen Tillman is currently working with the Eco Group and that they are looking at various recycling schemes including the recycling of phones. Income achieved will be used to purchase better greenhouse facilities, seeds / plug plants and other items required to allow pupils to grow fruit and vegetables. The Home Economics Department will then use the produce grown. It is hoped that the recycling schemes will generate regular income in order to sustain this project.
- A request has been received from the Art Department for a financial contribution towards the purchase of two SLR cameras. These would be used by pupils across the school to take photos of the various events which take place and provide photos for the school website. Currently there is a pressure on the number of cameras available as they are also required by the Higher Photography class. Discussion took place on the allocation of grants to departments within the school. Concerns raised were:
 - uneven distribution leading to some departments receiving far more than others
 - lack of feedback (have awards been spent, have projects been successful)
 - co-ordination of bids – similar items have been requested by different departments. As these requests were received at different times it was felt that maybe best value wasn't achieved ie being able to negotiate discount on bigger purchase or purchase slightly different item that would have benefited both departments
 - clarity regarding how much of the Parent Council fund to distribute – this year awards have exceeded income generated
 - decision also required regarding ring-fencing some funding for particular projects

Mr O'Neill explained some of the financial implications of the devolved school budget. It is a requirement that schools spend their budget each year and do not carry any more than 3% of capitation funds over to the next financial year. This ensures that the budget is spent on the current pupils in the school, however, it does not allow departments to 'save' for larger items. Other sources of funding therefore need to be identified.

The Parent Council agreed to fund the purchase of one camera to the value of £250. It is thought that the £100 awarded for the lunchtime Art Club has not yet been spent as this club is not going ahead at the present time. The Parent Council will award £150 which is to be supplemented by the £100 which is thought to be unspent. If this is not the case, then a further £100 will be forwarded to the Art Department to ensure that they have sufficient funds to purchase one camera. Should the Art Club be progressed at a later stage than a further award may be made at that time.

Discussion took place on the process for allocating funds to departments in the future. It was agreed to consider setting a date / time of year for submission of bids so that these can be considered collectively. In addition a simple application form will be drawn up to allow departments to demonstrate the need for the funding and the difference this will make to pupils. Feedback from departments will also be requested so that the Parent Council is able to share this information with the wider parent forum. It was re-iterated that the Parent Council wishes to fund projects that will benefit a large number of pupils. The template will be circulated with the minute of this meeting.

9.	<p><u>CORRESPONDENCE</u> Tim Muir advised that he has received the National Parent Forum of Scotland Newsletter - if anyone would like to see this please contact Tim and a copy will be made available</p>
10.	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The S1 Art Show will take place towards the end of the calendar year. The Art Department will organise all the artwork and display. A sub-group of parents is required to organise and publicise the event, and also arrange for stalls selling craft / Christmas items. There are usually two meetings to organise this - one in June and one in September / October. Volunteers are sought for this sub-group. It was agreed to re-visit this at the meeting of the Parent Council in May. • Roux Kitchen. Mr O'Neill reported that the Business Plan has been written and that a meeting with Mr Roux has been arranged for 22nd April. A survey to assess the disruption to the rest of the school during the installation of the school is to be conducted. Mr O'Neill advised that £120,000 of the £200,000 required has now been raised. In addition Mr Roux has pledged a personal donation although the amount is currently unknown. Tim Muir and Fiona Alexander offered to assist in the writing of funding applications in order to secure the shortfall. • Concern was raised regarding a number of pupils smoking behind the Spar and Chinese Take-Away. Mr O'Neill advised that a group of staff patrol the school grounds and the areas highlighted. Appropriate action is taken with any pupils who are caught smoking. • Mr O'Neill was thanked for the new website which is thought to be excellent. Mr O'Neill explained that the transition information for the Primary 7 classes in the associated primary schools would be uploaded onto the website in order to cut down on the costs of reproducing materials. • It was agreed that the minute of each Parent Council meeting would be posted onto the school website after it had been checked by Tim Muir and Mr O'Neill. The minute would then be formally approved at the following meeting.
11.	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u> Wednesday 15th May - 7pm</p>