



## CHARLESTON ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

### Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014 at Charleston Academy

**Present:** Fiona Alexander, Robert Bowie, Sue Fraser, Jill Kent (Chair), Urszula Kozak, Fiona Malcolm, Linda McLean, Rona Macpherson, Alex Mezals, Susan Mitchell, Kate Morris, Katrina Morrison, Julie Riddle, Gordon Stewart, Lindsey Stout

**In Attendance:** Margret MacRae (Clerk)

**Apologies:** Chris O'Neill, Anne Ashton, Andrew Barrie, Yvonne Brown, Rita Farragher, Cathy Fraser, Kate McEwen, Fiona Morrison, Pauline Tuthill, Christian Wittke

1.	<b>WELCOME</b> Jill Kent welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2.	<b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b> The minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2013 was approved. Proposed: Sue Mitchell Seconded: Robert Bowie
3.	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ It is anticipated that representatives of RoWAN will be in school on the afternoon of the S2 parents meetings in order to continue to undertake surveys with parents. Rona Macpherson advised that feedback received from the latest school audit shows an increase in the footfall in the canteen. Although the school has been successful in reducing packaging there has been an increase in the amount of food waste as it is now possible to scrape the plates. RoWAN has offered some suggestions on how food waste could be reduced.</li><li>○ The structure of the S5 / S6 curriculum is to be changed in order to improve attainment. It was felt that the current format does not allow for guidance and support if pupils are experiencing difficulties in their learning. The restructure will incorporate 2 periods of support, 2 periods of PE and 1 period of PSE. In order to accommodate these additional periods the teaching of subjects will be reduced from 6 periods to 5 periods per week. It was stated that the decrease in teaching time may also help to increase focus and challenge so that students are working at the optimum level at exam time.</li><li>○ A sub-group will take forward the formation of a quality assurance questionnaire for parents. The feedback will then be used to inform future developments and the school improvement plan. Kate Morris, Anne Ashton, Sue Mitchell, Urszula Kozak, Katrina Morrison and Jill Kent have all indicated an interest in being part of this working group.</li><li>○ A speaker / trainer is being sought to deliver a session on parenting teenagers. Jill Kent would welcome any suggestions in relation to someone who may be willing to deliver this type of information session.</li><li>○ It has not yet been possible to explore the extension of the timing of the '20s plenty' flashing light as PC Elliott has been on annual leave.</li></ul>
4.	<b>RECTOR'S REPORT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Gordon Stewart reported that there had been a high turnout for the two very successful Christmas Dances. Students very much enjoyed these and behaviour was excellent.</li><li>○ Helen Hunter organised a special Christmas Lunch for students whereby they were served their lunch by staff. In addition a Christmas Quiz, planned and coordinated by Val Macrae, was held on the last day of term. These events were greatly enjoyed by students, and it is hoped to repeat these events again in the future.</li><li>○ A very successful hamper appeal allowed 44 hampers to be distributed to those in need within the local community</li><li>○ The school canteen provided a traditional 'Burns Supper' on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January. Students participated by piping in and addressing the Haggis and also reciting the Selkirk Grace.</li><li>○ The school has now taken delivery of a new minibus</li><li>○ The Charleston Academy Team was the successful winner of the International Rotary Quiz after beating a team from La Baule in France. This follows on from a number of wins against teams in the Inverness area.</li></ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The official opening of the Community Café will take place at 12pm on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January.</li> <li>○ Prelims for 4<sup>th</sup> year pupils were held over the last 2 weeks. The conduct of students was highly praised by the invigilators. Prelims for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year pupils will take place for the 2 weeks commencing Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February.</li> <li>○ Mr McCulloch (Maths Department) leaves the school on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January. Three pupil support assistants have now been recruited and the permanent post for Principal Teacher Support for Learning is due to be advertised shortly.</li> <li>○ An organisation known as the Student Support Centre has approached the school to inform them of a service for students. They supply materials for a variety of subjects for students to work through. As the school has not had sight of the resources, and has no knowledge of the services this business supplies, it does not wish to endorse the products and is therefore unable to circulate the letters as a mail drop. Any parent who wishes a copy of the letter advertising the Student Support Centre is welcome to request this from the school office.</li> <li>○ Discussion took place on the National 5 exams. Mr Mezals explained how the Maths exam was set and reported that revision classes for Maths are being held after school on Tuesdays and on Thursday lunchtimes. He advised that the past papers at credit level are more similar to the format of the National 5 exams than the Intermediate 2 papers as the questions have more of a problem solving focus. Any parents with concerns about individual performance should contact their guidance teacher.</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b><u>FINANCE</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>FINANCE REPORT.</b> Sue Mitchell reported that the bank balance at 17<sup>th</sup> December was £4187.68</li> <li>○ <b>FUNDING APPLICATION FROM SUPPORT FOR LEARNING DEPARTMENT.</b> It is anticipated that an application will be submitted shortly by the Support for Learning Department. They are likely to be seeking funding to provide breakfast for pupils where financial hardship has been identified as an issue and students are arriving in school hungry. This is known to also have a negative effect on their learning. The Parent Council felt this was an excellent initiative and would be willing to support an application of this type.</li> <li>○ <b>SSE FUNDING.</b> It was reported that funding is available from SSE for community groups in Highland, particularly within areas where they have undertaken renewable energy work. Initial thoughts had been around making up any remaining shortfall for the Roux Kitchen and the development of hospitality training opportunities for the community. However, this type of development is not possible within the time constraints as there are implications regarding supervision. Further to a suggestion from a member of the parent council it was agreed to see if it would be possible to apply to this fund for a grant which would allow for the re-instatement of the late bus. Any bid would also include a request for funding for transport to Abriachan. It was felt this was particularly important at this time to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to attend revision classes that are being held at the end of the school day.</li> </ul>
6.	<p><b><u>BUS MONITOR UPDATE</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gordon Stewart reported that the bus monitors had very much appreciated the hot chocolate and filled roll. It was acknowledged that bus monitors play a vital role in keeping the school buses as safe and pleasant as possible. As the behaviour and safety also affects the wider community it was agreed that the Parent Council would approach community funds for sponsorship of refreshments for the bus monitors during periods of severe weather.</li> </ul>
7.	<p><b><u>FUNDRAISING</u></b></p> <p>Jill Kent advised that the 'Friends of Charleston' initiative has now been discontinued. Consideration is to be given to ways funds could be raised in order to ensure that a healthy balance of the Parent Council fund can be maintained. It was suggested that increased promotion of the Easyfundraising initiative could be undertaken. A sub-committee will discuss this further and consider additional ideas. Lindsey Stout, Sue Mitchell and Kate Morris volunteered for the sub-committee.</p>
8.	<p><b><u>STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCH ON INSET DAY</u></b></p> <p>In recognition of the challenges faced by staff in light of budget cuts and curriculum changes it was agreed to provide a lunch for all staff on the INSET arranged for Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February. The lunch is</p>



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	<p>also to show the appreciation of parents for all the things that staff undertake over and above their remit. This includes the provision of revision classes, extra curricular activities, additional cleaning for Parents evenings / events and all the other things that go on behind the scenes which are so often not acknowledged. Sue Fraser volunteered to liaise with Leachkin Bakery and organise a soup and sandwich lunch and cake for approximately 120 staff. Cakes will be supplied for any members of the cleaning staff who may not be able to attend the lunch due to other commitments. The lunch will be held in the main hall from approximately 12.30pm to 1.30pm. Gordon Stewart will inform Sue Fraser of actual numbers and confirm timings.</p>
9.	<p><b><u>CORRESPONDENCE</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Jill Kent has received a letter of thanks from Gordon Stewart and the Bus Monitors for the funding award from the Parent Council</li></ul>
8.	<p><b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ There is a desire to build stronger links between the Parent and Pupil Council</li><li>○ Senior pupils are developing an online facility for peer mentoring. This will include links to accredited sites and include support on issues such as exam stress, bullying and self harming. Pupils felt that an online blog would allow for support to be accessed in a confidential way. Posters and business type cards will also be created in order to publicise the address for the blog. Any resources or information regarding suitable websites which could be linked to the blog would be welcomed by pupils - please send these to Rona Macpherson.</li></ul>
10.	<p><b><u>DATES OF NEXT MEETING</u></b> Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014 – 7pm</p>