



CHARLESTON ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12th March 2014 at Charleston Academy

Present: Fiona Alexander, Sue Fraser, Jill Kent (Chair), Urszula Kozak, Fiona Malcolm, Linda McLean, Alex Mezals, Kate Morris, Andrea Paterson, Julie Riddle, Gordon Stewart

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

Apologies:, Anne Ashton, Andrew Barrie, Cathy Fraser, Kate McEwen, Rona Macpherson, Susan Mitchell, Katrina Morrison, Lindsey Stout, Christian Wittke

1.	WELCOME Jill Kent welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES The minute of the meeting held on Monday 27 th January 2014 was approved. Proposed: Urszula Kozak Seconded: Kate Morris
3.	MATTERS ARISING <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ In response to feedback received from parental surveys RoWAN has offered to deliver a lesson / demonstration on cooking with leftovers. Discussion took place and it was agreed to see if it would be possible to hold this in the Community Centre. This would enable members of the wider community to attend also and ensure that the event is viable in the event of a low turnout of parents.○ Discussion took place on the potential information / advice session on parenting teenagers, with particular focus on supporting and guiding them through their exam preparation and exams. It was felt that any session to be run this year would need to take place in the week before the Easter holidays as the exams start shortly after the Easter Break. Jill will approach Bernadette Cairns to see if she would be available. In addition Mr O'Neill will find out if the motivational speakers that deliver sessions to pupils each year also have a programme that they deliver to parents.○ Mr Mezals was thanked for the Maths revision classes which are now being offered to students – this is much appreciated by both students and parents.○ At the meeting in January it was agreed to investigate the possibility of applying to SSE for funding for the late bus. Unfortunately this proposition does not fit within their funding criteria and therefore it has not been possible to progress this. Alternative sources of funding have still to be identified.○ The Community Council has not yet been approached regarding funding to pay for hot drinks / rolls for the bus monitors. This was due to the mildness of the winter as the purpose of the drink / roll was to recognise the sterling work bus monitors undertake particularly during adverse weather when school transport is disrupted.○ Sue Fraser reported that the staff appreciation lunch had gone well and that she enjoyed being able to organise an event that acknowledged the hard work and dedication of staff. Feedback was that the quality of the food was excellent and that the cakes were very big – smaller cakes would have been equally acceptable. A note of thanks was received from the Chemistry Department. Fiona and Sue were thanked for organising the lunch and helping out on the day, and thanks was given to Helen Hunter for her assistance in co-ordinating.
4.	RECTOR'S REPORT <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mr O'Neill reported that the school newsletter containing information on a number of events which had taken place since January had now been issued. This information is also available on the school website.○ Mrs Lenka Nagle joins the Maths Department where she fills a vacancy created by the departure of Mr David McCulloch earlier in the term. Mr O'Neill advised that the quality of applicants applying for this post was excellent. Mrs Nagle, who also has experience of working abroad, will be a great asset to the school.○ Sheila Cameron (Library Assistant) retired at Christmas time. This post had previously been paid for by the school through 'School of Ambition' funding but this is no longer available. The school



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	<p>was very pleased when High Life Highland agreed to fund this post 3 days per week as this allows the school library to remain open at all times during the pupil day. Mr Peter Morrell now joins the library staff as Assistant Librarian to Mrs Anne Cripps, the School Librarian.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE</u></p> <p>Mr O'Neill reported that the current School Improvement Plan ends in June. In order to inform future developments and the next three year plan the Parent Council has been asked to assist with the formation of a quality assurance questionnaire for parents. Mr O'Neill circulated a sample questionnaire which included questions that would be asked by Education Scotland and /or Quality Improvement Officers. The questionnaire is reasonably broad in its structure as it is intended to act as a first broad sweep and identify any issues which may require further exploration. It also allows for the analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Discussion took place and it was agreed to use this sample as a basis for the questionnaire rather than develop something new as this would then be driven by the school and not necessarily provide the required information. It was agreed to make the following additions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include a broad question around homework. For example: The homework my child receives is sufficiently challenging and of benefit to their learning ○ Include a comments box in order that parents can provide additional information ○ Although the questionnaire is completed anonymously provision to be made for parents to be able to include contact details should they wish someone from the school to get in touch with them to discuss any concerns they have raised <p>Discussion also took place on the best way of circulating the questionnaire in order to ensure a good response rate. It was noted that the website is very well used and receives in the region of 164,000 views per year.</p> <p>Discussion also took place on reporting to parents. Many members of the Parent Council felt that a second face to face meeting would be preferable to paper reports. This was particularly the case for parents of senior pupils who felt that a short meeting just after the prelim results were known would be most helpful. Mr O'Neill agreed to investigate this further as there may be restrictions within teachers' contracts that prevent flexibility with regards to reporting.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>FINANCE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FINANCE REPORT. It was reported that the current bank balance is £3614.60. Outgoings included £500 for the staff appreciation lunch, and income was £32.92 generated through Easyfundraising. ○ FUNDING APPLICATION FROM SUPPORT FOR LEARNING DEPARTMENT. Funding of £100 was sought to purchase nutritional and non-perishable snacks that can be stored in the Arches and provided for pupils where financial hardship has been identified as an issue. Students may have not had breakfast or missed another meal during the day, and as a result their behaviour, effort and attitude are adversely affected. The snacks would be given to students as and when necessary. The Parent Council felt this was an excellent initiative and is willing to support this application.
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>FUNDRAISING</u></p> <p>Jill Kent advised that the Charleston Community Complex will be holding its Annual Gala Day on Saturday 7th June. The Parent Council is welcome to host a stall / event at the Gala. The theme for the Gala this year is The Commonwealth. Anyone who has any suggestions / would like to assist with a stall should contact Jill Kent.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>CORRESPONDENCE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A note thanking the parent council for the 'Staff Appreciation Lunch' was received from the Chemistry Department ○ Jill Kent advised that the Chairs of Parent Councils had met informally to discuss issues affecting schools. As a result she has written to local councillors to draw to their attention how hard staff are working, particularly in light of the changes to the curriculum. There is currently uncertainty around the levels of funding from 2015 onwards, and further budget cuts are anticipated. The Parent Council agreed that it was important to highlight the level of work undertaken and support the school as best as possible.



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9.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING Tuesday 13 May 7pm, Staffroom.
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