



## CHARLESTON ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

### Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at Charleston Academy

**Present:** Fiona Alexander, Robert Bowie, Lyndie Cameron, Moira Finlayson, Ciara Flügel, Sue Fraser, Yvette Hogan, Urszula Kozak, Rona MacAskill, Linda McLean, Kate Morris (Chair), Julie Riddle, Gordon Stewart,

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

**Apologies:** Anne Ashton, Geraldine Gill, David Gillies, Leona Hayes, Helen Hunter, Fiona Jackson, Rona Macpherson, Kate McEwen, Fiona Malcolm, Fiona Morrison, Katrina Morrison, Andrea Paterson, Lindsey Stout, Christian Wittke

1.	<b><u>WELCOME</u></b> Kate Morris welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2.	<b><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u></b> The minute of the meeting held on 16 <sup>th</sup> December was approved. Proposed: Julie Riddle Seconded: Fiona Alexander
3.	<b><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ ROWAN are holding further cooking demonstrations with a focus on 'Cooking to Save Money and Waste'. This three part workshop, being held at Charleston Academy, which will take place on the following Wednesday evenings from 7pm to 9pm:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January</li><li>○ Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February</li><li>○ Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February</li><li>○ The chef will be Ali Mitchell, Highland Council school cook and trained chef who is really enthusiastic about food education. To book a place please email Toni Clark on: <a href="mailto:toni.clark@rowan.org.uk">toni.clark@rowan.org.uk</a></li></ul></li></ul>
4.	<b><u>RECTOR'S REPORT</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Mr O'Neill reported that the school had held a number of festive activities during the last week of term. This included a Christmas lunch, Christmas Dances and also a quiz. These events were very well attended and enjoyed by the pupils. Thank you to Sally Matheson and Lyndie Cameron for their work in co-ordinating these events.</li><li>○ In the region of 60 hampers were delivered to people in need within the community – the school has received a number of thank you letters from people expressing their gratitude.</li><li>○ The National 5 prelims are now underway and are running smoothly. The adverse weather and need for the school bus to leave early on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January interrupted one of the prelim exams. Mr O'Neill has been in discussions with the SQA who are understanding of the situation and have agreed that this can be re-scheduled for February.</li><li>○ There have been a number of accommodation issues particularly in relation to leaks and problems with the roof.</li><li>○ A newsletter is being issued to all parents updating them on the recent issues in relation to adverse weather and school transport. In addition it seeks parents to register their email address and mobile number with the school. In order to try and reduce the annual £6000 postage costs the school would like to issue letters to parents via e-mail. Currently generic information only is being sent by e-mail but the school wishes to extend this to all correspondence. Although a substantial amount of the postage cost relates to work being sent to the SQA / submission of portfolios Charleston Academy wishes to make savings where deemed possible. The e-mail address provided should be a private e-mail address for correspondence and not a work e-mail.</li><li>○ It was reported that the text service advising parents of school transport and school closure information during the recent adverse weather was very successful. Activity on the school website also indicated that the notices and twitter feeds were being well-used. Parents are able to follow the school twitter feeds or alternatively register their mobile number for a text alert – the school does incur a charge for the text alerts it sends but twitter is free of charge.</li></ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The ski trip will be taking place shortly - Kay Storey and Iain McKie will be accompanying pupils. Mr McKie, who retired last session, will be undertaking some work with Charleston Academy as a supply teacher.</li> <li>○ The official opening of the Roux Kitchen will take place on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February. This will take the form of a short formal reception. Parents and pupils will be invited to a further, less formal event later in the year.</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b><u>BUDGET SAVINGS – IMPLICATIONS FOR CHARLESTON ACADEMY</u></b></p> <p>It was reported that a further meeting had taken place with Jim Stephen, Marlene Stewart and Callum Mackintosh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further to discussion there have been some dispensations awarded with particular reference to the reduction of the over-entitlement which equated to 3.3FTE (Full time teaching equivalent). Although this has now been increased to a reduction of 3.5FTE this can now be achieved over two years. Mr O’Neill explained that the over entitlement would naturally reduce over the longer term as the school’s roll is predicted to increase. The 1.5FTE reduction required by August will be achieved by not recruiting a PT for Home Economics at the present time. It has currently not been possible to recruit a suitable candidate. The additional 0.5 FTE will be achieved from changes to staff working hours – a number of staff have volunteered to reduce their hours. It is anticipated that the 2.0 FTE reduction required during the following year will be offset by the anticipated increase in the school roll. Mr O’Neill stated that the school does not expect to make any compulsory transfers out of the school.</li> <li>• The school will receive a 1% cut in the school budget, however, there will no longer be a reduction of the carry forward allowance.</li> <li>• Charleston Academy is currently not required to implement a 33 period week. In view of the recent revision of the curriculum, the implications that a 33 period week would have on school transport, and the fact that no saving would be achieved for the school or Local Authority it was agreed to continue with the current format. Mr O’Neill stated that if the 33 week format was implemented in all secondary schools in the Inverness and Inner Moray Firth area then the school would consider reviewing this position as there be may be scope for joint timetabling. This could potentially enable pupils to access lessons via video conferencing that are being delivered by another school and therefore broaden the choice of subjects available.</li> <li>• There will be a cut of 4% to the janitorial, cleaning and catering budgets.</li> <li>• Mr O’Neill thanked Kate Morris and the Parent Council for their support.</li> </ul>
6.	<p><b><u>PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE – STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT</u></b></p> <p>The Standards and Quality Report was circulated and Mr O’Neill explained the outcomes of the Parental and Pupil Surveys.</p> <p>Whilst the Parental Surveys were able to be completed anonymously some parents chose to provide their names and contact details. Where comments and contact details were provided the school sought further clarification / addressed issues raised where appropriate. The Parental Survey indicated that “Nearly all parents (93%) say that overall, they are happy with Charleston Academy.”</p> <p>The results of the questionnaire also highlighted some challenges which the school wishes to address. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>37% of parents did not feel the school kept them sufficiently informed about their child’s progress.</i> It was identified that this feedback was predominantly from parents of S1 pupils, and it was noted that the survey had taken place before the S1 Parents Evening. As SEEMIS, the new school management information system, makes it possible to extract information at any time the school will now look at ways of reporting to parents of S1 pupils at an earlier stage.</li> <li>○ <i>32% of parents reported that their child did not participate or benefit from participation in our wider curriculum.</i> The question does not allow the school to analyse whether pupils didn’t participate, or if it was felt that pupils who participated did not benefit from these activities. In addition there may be a lack of understanding in respect of what is considered to be part of the wider curriculum.</li> </ul>



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Mr O'Neill stated that the areas of greatest concern were that:

- 20% of parents felt that the school did not stretch their child to work to the best of their ability
- 10% of parents felt that their child's learning was not progressing as well as it should

The school is currently exploring how this can be addressed, and is looking at ways to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

A pupil survey was also conducted. A random sample of pupils (10%) were selected from all year groups. The pupils surveyed were not the children of the parents selected for the Parental Questionnaire – thus enabling a cross section of 20% of families across the school to participate in the survey. As pupil surveys were not undertaken anonymously it allowed staff to gather further information where this was deemed beneficial in order to address the concerns the survey identified. These included:

- Question 5 – Only 65% of pupils felt that staff talk to them regularly or provide other advice to help them improve their learning. When explored further it was found that pupils only recognised that they were being provided with this support when it was delivered within a formal setting.
- Question 9 – *I am treated fairly and with respect by staff and pupils at Charleston Academy.* Pupils included historic incidents of bullying which had been addressed and were no longer an issue for them when answering this question and therefore was not a true representation of their current situation and feelings.
- Question 14 – *My teachers make sure that pupils in my class behave well* – 19% of pupils disagreed with this statement. It was found that pupils were aware of the standards required by the teacher in each class and were able to adhere to these boundaries, however, when answering the question it was noted that it compared the different teaching styles and associated boundaries, rather than adherence to the boundary set by that teacher.
- The school was very disappointed that only 54% of pupils felt that Charleston Academy encouraged them to make healthy food and lifestyle choices as it felt that the canteen, which promotes healthy eating, is well used. In addition the school provides a wide range of information and guidance through the delivery of its PSE programme. Pupils will now take part in consultation through the Year Group Committees in order to try and explore this issue.
- In contrast, the school was very pleased that 93% of pupils thought that Charleston Academy would allow them to reach their potential.

The school will continue to analyse all the feedback received, seek clarification where appropriate, and then consider what action needs to be taken.

### 7. **FINANCE**

- **FINANCE REPORT.** It was reported that the current bank balance is £4864.84.
- Funding application forms. It had been noted that the application forms did not request sufficient information to allow decisions to be made, particularly where views were being sought from Parent Council members by e-mail. Revised forms were circulated and it was agreed to now use 2 separate forms - one for bids up to £300, and a slightly more detailed form for applications of over £300. This asked for slightly more detail in the financial breakdown and also seeks to identify which aspects of the funding are essential for delivery of the project / activity. This will assist with the decision making process, particularly where it is only possible to provide part-funding. It was agreed to proceed with the new forms. These will now be required to be submitted to the clerk electronically at least seven days before a Parent Council meeting in order that the information can be circulated before a meeting.
- Mr Tillman provided information in relation to the bid for shinty equipment. He explained that in the region of 60 pupils now take part in shinty – this is made up of both boys and girls as a girls team has recently been formed. Mr Tillman and Mr Todd currently run three weekly training sessions; a session for S1 and S2 first time players using first shinty equipment to train new skills and techniques; a session for existing S1 and S2 players to build upon and develop existing skills; and a senior training session for experienced players. Mr Tillman explained that the wearing of helmets would help less experienced and younger players to feel more confident



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	<p>during training sessions. In addition all participants are now required to wear safety helmets when playing in matches. Each team participates in 4 tournaments each year and pupils will play a number of matches in one day. Mr Tillman explained that the funding bid sought to consider all the items that the shinty club would need, but there was no expectation that all the funding would come from one source. £250 has now been secured from Muirtown Community Council, and an application has been submitted to Awards for All. He intends to continue to pursue all possible funding streams. The priority item on the funding request is the safety helmets and the school would like to purchase 10 - some small and some medium. Mr Tillman confirmed that these would be the property of the school and not individual youngsters. Further to discussion it was agreed that the Parent Council would make an award of £600 towards the purchase of safety helmets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ It was agreed that the Parent Council would provide £180 to pay for a hot drink and bacon roll or similar for bus monitors in recognition of the important role they play, particularly in the recent adverse weather.</li></ul>
8.	<p><b><u>CORRESPONDENCE</u></b></p> <p>A letter thanking the school for a very positive S3 parents evening was received. The information provided on subject choices was most helpful – thank you to all the staff.</p>
9.	<p><b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p> <p>It was agreed to provide a staff lunch for all teaching and support staff at the inset day in June. This is to thank staff for all the work they undertake which is over and above their remit and includes provision of extra-curricular activities, revision classes, additional cleaning for Parents Evenings / events and all the other things that go on behind the scenes which are so often not acknowledged. A budget of £500 has been allocated for the staff appreciation lunch.</p>
10.	<p><b><u>DATES OF NEXT MEETING – 7pm on:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015</li><li>○ Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015</li><li>○ Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2015</li></ul>