



CHARLESTON ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held on 2nd December 2015

Present: Kate Morris (Chair); David Gillies; Fiona Malcolm; Julie Riddle; Rona MacPherson; Urszula Kozak; Andrea Paterson; Gordon Stewart; Helen Hunter; Marie Bisset.

In Attendance: Chris O'Neill (Rector); Maureen Gallie (clerk)

Apologies: Lyndie Cameron; Ciara Hannam; Ann Ashton; Lindsey Stout.

1.	<p><u>WELCOME</u> Kate welcomed everyone to the meeting which started at 7pm.</p>
2.	<p><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u></p> <p>Proposed: Andrea Paterson Seconded: Julie Riddle</p>
3.	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING</u> There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.</p>
4.	<p><u>Rector's Report</u></p> <p>Mr O'Neill began by saying that his report would be mainly concerning the budget cuts announced by Highland Council and the proposed move to a 4 and a half day week for all schools. He was in attendance at a Head Teacher's meeting in Millburn Academy today where the cuts to the education budget were being discussed. Budget cuts of 6% have to be achieved over the whole council and as the Care and Learning department has the biggest budget then they also have to make the biggest savings. A 6% cut for education equates to savings of £7.5 million. Head of Education, Jim Steven, has already found £3.4 million worth of savings. The cuts, at the moment, are worse than was anticipated. The actual budget figures will not be known until February 2016, and as such the school cannot really proceed with any finalised plans as changes may still be made to the proposed cuts then.</p> <p>The council are suggesting that all secondary schools in the area will move to a 4 and a half day week, with the school buildings being shut to all staff and pupils for one half day a week. This will equate to an expected saving on building running costs of £3 million over the course of a year for Highland.</p> <p>This would mean a move to a 33 period week compared to the current 31 period week currently offered at Charleston. This will mean an increased workload for teachers who will have to prepare lesson plans for an extra 1, 2 or even 3 classes a week. It will also affect the amount of courses that the school can offer – but again this cannot be finalised until more details of the cuts to the budget are known. The Curriculum Group in school is meeting regularly to consider the impact of the changes. As the schools timetable changes in June all decisions will have to be finalised well in advance of that date.</p> <p>Mr O'Neill did not anticipate that extra-curricular activities would be adversely affected by the move – even a shortened lunchtime would still allow time for the 30 minutes most clubs run for, and a later finish to the day should only be an extra 15 minutes, so this again would still allow clubs to continue with the goodwill of staff.</p> <p>The 1% cut in teaching staff which Mr O'Neill managed to avoid last year has been reinstated along with a further 1% cut – as Charleston Academy has been overstaffed according to council figures for several years. This equates to the loss of 2 FTE teaching post.</p> <p>As any increase in Council Tax may reduce the education cuts there is a danger that if cuts are 'rushed into' the savings made will become permanent with a long-lasting impact that could not be reversed.</p> <p>Overall, the budget cuts make for very depressing reading and we will face many challenges and</p>



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	tough decisions in the coming months.
5.	<u>Finance</u> The current bank balance is £3349.59 which includes £220 raised at the Art Exhibition. No funding requests have been received. It was decided that any funding request should be e-mailed to the clerk at least one week prior to a meeting. The request would then be e-mailed to all members and be discussed at the next meeting. Clubs should also consider funding requests to outside bodies.
6.	<u>Any other business</u> There was no other business for discussion.
7.	<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u> No correspondence for discussion had been received.
9.	<u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS –</u> There being no other business Kate closed the meeting at 8pm, thanking all those present for their attendance.
10.	<u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING –</u> 7pm on: Tuesday 26th January 2016