

Ratified Minutes of AHS Parent Council Meeting 29th October 2013

Present: Tricia Jenkins (Chair) (Brodict), Andrew Walsh (Treasurer) (Whiting Bay), Gordon Provan (Whiting Bay), Alison Richards (Lochranza), Jane Macbeth (Teacher Representative), Joyce Beasley (Community Member)

In attendance: Mr Auld (Head Teacher), David Fyfe (Depute Head), Sharon Gregg (Depute Head), Jenny Lyon (editor of the 'Banner'), Kate Jenks (Clerk).

1. Apologies: Deborah Robertson (Blackwaterfoot), Heather Allison (Lamlash), Beth Mowatt (Kildonan), Ruth Betley (Vice Chair) (Shiskine) and Janine Hart (Brodict).

2. Welcome – TJ welcomed and introduced Jenny Lyon to the meeting. She is planning an article about the work of the parent council both to encourage new membership and also promote the 50:50 fundraising scheme. The October winner - Gillian Lythgoe – was drawn by Mr Auld.

3. Minutes of 30th September: agreed for accuracy

4. Matters Arising:

4.1 Action Points completed – all discussed and to be carried forward to new plan as required.

5. Parental Concerns

5.1 Report from Commission on delivery of Rural Education – PC members to research further – see Action Plan

5.2 After School Clubs

a)– parents had asked PC members how they could find out about them – SG responded that she had asked staff, in September, but that there was a huge array of supported study so there are only a limited number of 'After School' clubs. DA did not feel able to put out a list.

b) – there is not enough for girls. DA advised that Tim Allan is the Active Schools Coordinator and had invited International players in to the school (Table Tennis) but ?what next. Miss McGhee had tried in the past but had poor support. The Gym is open Mon – Thurs. and the most popular session is 'Y-Dance'.

DA advised that the SMT are looking at it. As a Cluster, the Arran

schools are bidding for more resources for teaching sport and PE. Plan - raise this again **ACTION TJ/ Clerk** to January Agenda.

5.3 AR wondered where the idea of 'Don't Bake – Donate' had got to – it was felt that this could only be used at the beginning of the session, which has now passed. Mr Auld advised that, although the education budget for NAC would be severely tested over the next three years, he felt that there were no projects requiring help with funding at present. He will let the parent council know when he does need financial support.

DA acknowledged that there are issues with CforE resources not being available but 'can feed it' this year.

6. For Discussion/Update

6.1 School Housing – recent sale of school housing discussed. 'Prospect House', in Whiting Bay, has been sold. It is understood that a second house in Whiting Bay - 'Ardow', and the house in Shiskine, are on the market. The house next to Kilmory School is being taken off the market and is to be kept for teachers. The school house in Corrie is to be used as part of the school. It is not clear who is making these decisions. TJ to discuss letter with RB

ACTION RB – letter to NAC

6.2 Date of training still to be set **ACTION RB**

7. Head Teacher's Report:

7.1 DA confirmed that an advert for the Faculty Head (Technical, Home Economics and Health) closes next week, as Mr Barr is leaving, although probably not before Christmas.

7.2 DA advised that the format of the upcoming S4 parents' evening would be different. He and Mr Fyfe will discuss the progress of CfE and, having already asked pupils for their views about the issues, discuss these with parents. TJ asked whether this would mean a 'free for all' for parents wishing to talk to individual class teachers during the second part of the evening and asked for the rationale for changing the format. DA advised that he did not want to bring parents out twice unnecessarily and a similar event for S2 last year – which was forced by the severe weather in March – parents had not been asked prior to changing from an appointment system – DA will collect feedback from parents during the evening.

7.3 DA advised that a pupil from the school (over the age of 12) is to be chosen to carry the baton for the Commonwealth Games, in

Ayrshire, next summer.

7.4 DA was pleased to say that two European trips had taken place during the October holiday: one group of students went to Paris on a cultural visit; the other group went to a conference in Kassel in Germany, to mark the end of the Comenius programme.

7.5 The "Choose Life" group had arranged for a group of drama students to deliver 'Inside Out' – a series of short plays featuring mental health issues – to pupils at the school. Pupils then had an opportunity to discuss some of the points raised.

7.6 DA advised that two senior pupils: Ceile Swinton Boyle and Moir McCallum were visiting Auschwitz as part of an awareness raising programme.

7.7 Other opportunities for pupils: S2&S3 taking part in project tasks to construct a 'Tower' to make the most profit; S2 will be involved in a 'Philanthropy initiative' - groups are to find out about a local charity and have the chance to win £3000 for that charity.

7.8 DA advised that the Duke of Edinburgh group are presenting a Talent competition as part of their award ceremony, this Friday.

DA presented a short promotional video, that has been devised by pupils working with Graham (Youth Worker), to be placed on the school website with the aim of attracting new teachers to the school. There had been a mixed response from teachers. Plan to refer to it on PC facebook page **ACTION BM**

8. Chairperson's Report

Items already discussed

9. Curriculum for Excellence:

9.1 Potential Changes to Senior Programme – next steps. DA informed the group that the Senior Management team had met on 28/10 to discuss the paper/booklet for a way forward. DA had put to them a paper regarding the combining of Years S4,5,6; the number of courses to be taken in 4th year and a model of the 35 period week. DA is to provide a copy of comments from the parents' evening to PC members. **ACTION DA**

DA wants it finished by early December – he will produce a pamphlet; and survey parents and pupils including those of S4 & S5 and anticipates a 2-3 week turnaround. DA declined to involve the parent council in the production of the pamphlet/survey. He did agree to show the responses to the parent council. He advised that the main problem for the current 4th years is the number of

hours needed for each subject. Although Dornoch Academy provides the 'Broad General Education' (BGE) over 2 ½ years – teachers present said that it was not possible to meet all the 'Es&Os' (Experiences and Outcomes) in that time. DA agreed to an additional meeting with parent council members after the process was completed, before the decision was finalised ?at the beginning of December.

9.2 New Appeals process – AR asked whether AHS would be 'ditching' prelims as other schools had done so, as there will only be reliance on prelim results in the case of sickness or bereavement. DA advised that AHS will not be ditching prelims. He reminded the group that the SQA appeals procedure is not for use when pupils 'don't get what they think they should' but will not penalise pupils in stressful situations. If a pupil receives an unusual mark – the school can ask for a clerical check. SG stated the importance of prelims for pupils, so that they go through the 'exam experience', as there is now no 3rd year exam diet in the formality of the hall.

9.2 School Improvement Plan:

10.1 Parental involvement - DA advised that the S.I.P. is on the school website and that there had been an opportunity to put forward priorities.

10.2 Standards and Quality Improvement Report - Mr Auld provided those present with the printed report – the main difficulty is the 'Jargon' used.

Standards and Quality Improvement Report –

10. Finance –

10.1 AW reiterated his frustration that he has not received a response from NAC regarding the reduction in grant for running the parent council. He has given them the figures, which demonstrate that – if there is a member of the parent council from each village on the island – the grant is now insufficient to cover the costs of running the parent council.

Current balances are: Admin account ~£500; Fundraising account ~£1600.

10.2 50:50 – If the number of people taking part increases, this will contribute enough funds to enable the parent council to support projects that the school may wish to undertake. JL (Banner editor) is preparing an article for the newspaper to promote the 50:50

club.

11. A.O.C.B

11.1 The School 'Banner group' has been resurrected.

11.2 TJ asked that PC members keep in contact with each other between meetings and Share Information with everyone.

11.3 It was suggested that two Pupil representatives could come to the Parent Council every couple of months and a parent attend the pupil council meetings.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm