

Minutes of Mintlaw Academy Parent Council Meeting and Parent Council EGM

Wednesday 29th January 2020

Present:

L Duthie (HT), J Mannion, L Neubold, K Osterberg (sec), V Fowlie (chair), D Willox, P McLean, Cllr Smith

Apologies:

Cllr Simpson, N Elrick, A-M Craig, E Preston, C McHugh, J McAdam, Y Beagrie

1. Welcome

The Chair V Fowlie welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Minutes of last meeting

Some small amendments were made to the minutes. A few corrections of names in the HT report and E Preston added that she had offered to attend the business dinner.

Propose - V Fowlie

Second - J Mannion

Update from minutes of last meeting:

The daily bulletin has now been reinstated.

3. Chairperson's report

VF attended a Connect workshop which she said was very useful and resourceful. VF felt that as the S3 Parental survey previously highlighted a problem with parents/carers knowing about the work of the PC we could be more pro-active in building a relationship with the forum. She suggested we set up a Facebook page. K Osterberg and V Fowlie will do this. L Duthie suggested that as it will be independent of the school it should be well administered by the PC.

L Duthie stated that owing to the GDPR rules we cannot have a corporate "aberdeenshire.gov" email address and we will have to get a generic one. VF and KO to set this up also. It was suggested Christine McLennan- Aberdeenshire Council Education Officer (Parental Engagement)- might be able to offer advice in this area. The Facebook page and the PC email can be promoted on the school's Twitter feed.

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer not present and no balance available. VF said as far as she knew there had been no transactions.

5. Head Teacher's Report

• Staffing

The PT of Creative Arts (K Corney) has left and there has not been a great response to the advertisement of the full time post. This has now been advertised as an acting post and this is currently filled by Jackie Arbuthnott from our Drama Dept which is going very well. Between Feb and Easter the post will be re-advertised as full-time and it is hoped that J Arbuthnott will apply for it.

Maths- Norma Sellar and Debbie Snape are retiring. Both their posts will be advertised after Easter to begin after the summer holidays.

English- Mrs Herridge is leaving after summer. Donna Donald (ASN teacher) has been the Literacy leader and will go back to ASN once this post is filled. Owing to increase in pupil numbers two posts in English will initially be open to probationers and then full-time. All posts should be filled by August 2020.

The large number of pupils in S1 is also requiring some re-formatting of PE, English, Maths and Modern Languages classes to make them smaller.

Mrs Hynd (Maths) is returning full time.

• **Technology Update**

Staff worked hard over Nat 5 prelims working full time to support pupils doing practical technology in order to get all the work done that had delayed due to the tech lab closure. After the last meeting Cllr Smith approached Vince Docherty (Aberdeenshire Council Head of Education) regarding the urgent Technology Department issues. VD said we could overspend to resolve our most urgent issues in the short term. Purchase orders for this work have been problematic owing to constraints in Aberdeenshire's budget.

Following the contracting of Flametech, Aberdeenshire Council have gone back to Quality Assurance practice. There has been concern about the amount of "not fit for purpose" findings and subsequent department closures across the authority by Flamefest and whether their method of testing is too rigorous. Mech and Tech may come back as independent assessors.

Absolute essential work has been promised by the council but the school has no extra monies before the end of the financial year. At 35 years old it has further requirements for upgrading including Drama and Home Economics facilities but these have to be assessed alongside all the other schools in the shire. Being an older school there will be ongoing repairs. There will be long term plans proposed for over the next 24 months. Cllr Smith agreed and confirmed that this is Aberdeenshire's intention. Council budget cuts mean the school's devolved budget is smaller in real terms and they are waiting for the Government's budget to be announced.

• **S1 Parents' Evening**

42 responses. Overall very positive. Q25 "Overall I am satisfied with the school" had a 100% positive response.

• **Use of Social Media**

2 children have been excluded for fighting and 2 children have had their social privileges withdrawn. Both began fighting on social media. Our guidance teachers are constantly battling with social media issues. L Duthie stated that no one is ever excluded without a robust investigation, evidence and it being the last and most appropriate option. All primary schools in the shire have banned mobile phones at school. There was a discussion about use of phones at school and both pros and cons were acknowledged. It was also the feeling that most online bullying occurs out of school at home. L Duthie stated that the school runs online safety lessons and that the next day (Jan 30th) there will be a P7 parents' night and G McCluskey will be raising this issue. The local police representative will also be coming in to give advice on how to stay safe online. L Duthie asked for ideas on how to deal with the problem of social media bullying and after a discussion a survey of parents was suggested. L Duthie thought a parents' evening would be a good time to put one out.

• **February Inset 3 Year Planning**

L Duthie would like parental input into the school's 3 year plan. Parents will be asked to come in on the 19th February 10.30-12.30.

• **Choice of Course Seniors Options Evening**

An evening where parents and their children are able to discuss and listen to advice on further education courses, UCAS SQA etc. There will be a workshop for parents on "supporting your child at home" and any PC members who can help would be greatly appreciated. Those with children in S3, 4 and 5 best. Secretary will email members not present about both events.

At this point Cllr Smith had to leave to attend another meeting and L Duthie had to also leave.

6. Data Protection Policy

The draft DPP had been emailed out to members prior to the meeting. As we were updating the constitution using the recommended Connect template Connect also recommended supporting this with a Data Protection Policy. K Osterberg drafted the policy using one she had previously created for New Deer primary school and the Connect template. Everyone present agreed it was acceptable and no members had made contact to state otherwise. The DPP was adopted. A copy will go on to the school website along side the updated constitution.

7. Sharing Members Emails

This had been mentioned previously but for clarification it was put on the agenda. Everyone present agreed it would be useful to have one another's email addresses for communication. Of those not present one had raised concerns about data protection but it had been explained that it is acceptable within GDPR guidelines for committee members to have one another's emails although GDPR rules do apply and they must not be shared out side of the committee without consent. It was agreed that members' emails would be shared amongst one another.

8. Facebook Page

This item was raised earlier in the chairperson's report. It was agreed that the PC would set up a Facebook page for ease of communication.

AOCB

We need to nominate an auditor and have our accounts audited as it hasn't been done for a while. V Fowlie suggested asking Y Beagrie. K Osterberg will email her. J Mannion also suggested contacting the old treasurer Lynn Thompson.

Date of next meeting (General meeting)

April 22nd 6pm in B2

VF closed the meeting at 7.10 pm.

EGM Business

Present:

J Mannion, L Neubold, K Osterberg (sec), V Fowlie (chair), D Willox, P McLean

VF opened the EGM at 7.12 pm. The meeting was declared quorate.

1. Amendment to the Parent Council Constitution

The current constitution was drafted in 2007 and Connect recommend that it be updated to include GDPR guidelines. VF drafted a new constitution using the Connect template. This was circulated amongst all PC members, regular attending teaching staff including the head teacher and regularly attending elected councillors. It was also put out to the forum via Expressions along with notice of the EGM. There were no comments from any members of the forum or other members/attendees of the PC meetings prior to the EGM.

After going through the constitution the following amendments were made.

2.1 Amend to show "A maximum of 15"

2.3 "Any parent of a child at the school can volunteer to be a member of the parent council. All parents can take part in the selection of parent council members by text during August and September. This will be co-ordinated by the current parent council. Parents shall have 2 weeks to select their representatives." The first sentence was kept the rest (in red) to be removed.

2.12 Extra statement added from Connect template. "or be represented by another member of staff. The head teacher attends meetings in an advisory capacity and does not have voting rights unless these are given by the parent council."

No other amendments were made. Everyone agreed on the constitution with amendments.

Proposed by V Fowlie and seconded by P McClean.

The updated constitution to be put on the school website. KO will organise this.

There followed a discussion on whether the PTA was a sub group or independent of the PC. No one seemed to be sure. It was asked what they were doing and on what are they spending the money. It was also discussed whether the PTA should send a report to the PC. VF to look into this.

VF closed the EGM at 7.20 pm.