



Mintlaw Academy
Minutes of Parent Council Meeting
November 30th 2020

Present:

L Duthie (HT), V Fowlie (chair), K Osterberg (sec), E Preston, J Mannion, M Lee, N Elrick, Cllr N Smith, Cllr A Simpson, Sharon Noble (DHT), G Oldham (DHT), G McCluskey (HT/DHT), A Hynd (DHT), E-J Whitehead (DHT)

Apologies:

L Newbould, Y Beagrie, Cllr J Ingram

1. Welcome:

VF welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of last meeting

No corrections

Propose - M Lee

Second - J Mannion

3. Chairperson's report

VF had attended two online Connect meetings. The first was a meeting for PC chairs of both primary and secondary schools with Laurence Findlay which was all about covid and encouraged PCs to continue supporting their school's efforts. The second was an informal meeting for secondary school chairs with Christine McLennan which was more to see how everyone was getting on. Most found that having online meetings had increased attendance and Inverurie academy recently had 38 people attending their meeting. VF will be attending another meeting next week about how to engage with parents/carers and increase attendance for secondary school PC meetings.

4. Treasurer's Report

Y Beagrie was unable to attend. There have been no transactions on the account. She said next time she is in Peterhead she will get a balance slip printed as they do not pro-

duce statements when there are no transactions. VF said that next year we will have to tell the council what we spend our annual payment from them on.

5. Head Teacher's Report

LD asked if the more informal nature of online meetings was promoted through Group-call, would we get more attendance? The committee thought it might.

Updates:

- Covid- The school currently has 6 cases of covid. 5 were announced via Groupcall message on Friday but at that time the 6th case, which they were aware of, was still unconfirmed. So there are currently no new cases. LD says school is working hard to ensure mitigations keep case numbers low as far as is possible. All cases have been brought into the school and, so far, there is no evidence of any spread at the school. All contacts have been identified and are now self-isolating. Currently there are over 900 pupils and staff at the school so six probably unsurprising. The school did receive a small number of calls asking why staff are not sharing individual cases. There is no intention to do this as it is important to protect the individual and their right to confidentiality. The (currently) weekly Groupcall on Fridays will update on current covid numbers overall. Because of Mintlaw's healthy staffing situation the school is able to cover staff absences. One member of staff is self-isolating as a contact of a pupil in their class, one other was voluntarily self-isolating (now back), 2 others are at home looking after their children who were contacts of positive cases in other schools and one other has a positive child. 4 staff currently off in total and working from home. LD described the children at school as "magnificent" in their reaction to the situation, mask wearing, being outside etc. The seniors are also reminding younger pupils to put their masks on. Currently there are 80 children officially self-isolating and we have 78% overall attendance.
- Christmas Activities- still going ahead with Covid precautions. Xmas jumper day on 11th Dec £1 donation to Save the Children. Second last day of term is dress up or down day with a donation of £2 and all funds are going to NHS Grampian. Extracts from these events will be recorded and shared via a 30 minute You Tube event on the last day of term. LD will share a very brief HT update as part of this. Both terms this session have been particularly challenging for staff so everyone at school looking forward to the holidays.

• G Oldham-Exam Results and Attainments

SQA Attainment – legacy measures August '20

Last session's S4 – attainment (current S5)

Initial 5+ Level 5 – 77/135 = 57%

Amended 5+ Level 5 (teacher estimates) 83/135 = 61%

Both of these percentages are best ever from S4 cohort. For 15 pupils their 4th and /or 5th N5 was either Applications of Maths and / or N5 Media (10 Applications of Maths, 4 both, 1 Media).

Last session's S5 – attainment. Current S6

Initial 3+ Level 6 – 51/154 = 33%

Amended 3+ Level 6 – 53/154 = 34%

'Ceiling' of 38% in terms of entries

Last session's S6 – attainment

Initial 5+ level 6 by end of S6 – 22%.

Amended 5+ level 6 by end of S6 – 24%

Current Session

Attainment from current (Oct '20) Working Grades

S4

5+ Level 5 = 86/142 = 61%

S5

3+ Level 6

Presentation – using target grades 56/135 sitting 3 plus level 6 = 41%

S6

Roll 154

5+ Level 6 by end of S6

Working grades A-D Oct 20 plus S5 attainment = 33/154 = 21%

S5 and S6 total 154 pupils.

M Lee asked how these figures compare within Buchan and the Shire. GO said S4 just above average and S5 and S6 just below. Figures are based on S4 figures staying on and we traditionally have a low staying on rate which does not reflect the overall achievement. Our positive destinations remain very strong with many pupils going on to other courses, apprenticeships or jobs. LD said we don't have the current figures yet – these will be updated in February. There would normally be a Buchan meeting to share attainment and achievement data annually but this is unlikely to be held this session being due to Covid. Our results at Mintlaw traditionally are the strongest of the Buchan secondaries. Cllr Smith agreed that Mintlaw stands out. Cllr Simpson agreed with Cllr Smith and congratulated the school on its hard work. She said that every year presents different challenges with pupils but the school should be proud of its achievements last session. She also said that exam results are in the public domain via League Tables which can be found, albeit with some difficulty, on council or government websites.

• E-J Whitehead- SQA

The Scottish Government has decided that there will be no Nat 5 exams for the current academic year. There is a push by Scot Gov on making a decision on whether there will be Higher and Advanced Higher exams before Christmas. The school is focusing on equity for all pupils and consistency across the school. Surveying parents there is a strong feeling that pre-lims should happen. There is no formal requirement for Nat 5 prelims but with the absence of exams parents/carers feel a formalised assessment would be beneficial. Faculty heads have formed a working group to coordinate Mintlaw's approach to prelims this year. The Christmas holidays may be extended, school will be no-

tified by the end of the week. The current S4 found lockdown home-schooling hard. Vulnerable S4 pupils or those whose parents were working were kept in school during this time demonstrating the school observed its duty of care. J Mannion asked if the extended Christmas break would be holiday or home schooling. LD said there will not be 4 weeks off only three. G McCluskey said that it was undecided at the moment but the third week may be a blended learning week. LD added that some HTs are nervous about the Shire's early return (4th January) after Hogmanay as the risk of covid infection was high due to gatherings over the holidays.

(Post the meeting there was an announcement by the Scottish Government that an extension to the planned Christmas break would not in fact take place. The school has however moved the Prelim diet to the 18th of January and on to mitigate against any potential incidence of the virus post Christmas.)

- **S Noble-VSE Validated Self Evaluation**

VSE is a process to replace in-school inspections. Schools are placed in a trio and Mintlaw is working with Peterhead and Fraserburgh. Meetings are held in three year cycles focusing on one school each year who chooses its own area of focus. The school is visited by a team from the other two schools and the host school gives presentations etc. The team then meets to discuss potential Next Steps for the host school. On the second visit, these action plans are presented to the host school and reviewed. Visit 3 is then the school showing implementation of these plans. Mintlaw has chosen Learning and Teaching, "feedback" and "pace" within lessons. Our first visit was in March and was a good initial visit. The second visit was supposed to be June but Lockdown prevented this. The schools have planned to do this virtually in February 2021 and then a feedback session in March. There are real advantages in networking with other schools and we are learning from peer initiatives and from one another.

- **G McCluskey- Virtual Parents' Events**

Maths and English evenings were held online in November for S1 pupils' families. The in-person model was kept and done virtually. There was higher attendance than for the previous in-person sessions. 50% of the English event attendees were different to that of the Maths event, showing that it wasn't attracting all the same parents. GMcC asked for input and thoughts on these evenings. J Mannion said she thought they were a good idea and that all years merited an evening of some sort as they all had different situations (P7-S1 transition, choosing subjects, Nat 5s) that were worthy of focus. K Osterberg agreed. VF said that Covid had accelerated the use of tech.

- **A Hynd- IT**

A Hynd said the boost of funding and the extra funding from the PC has been a great help for the classes. A recent meeting with Depute Heads had been held on "Bring Your Own Device" for pupils. He explained that with the roll-out of free guest wi-fi at the school pupils could log on and upload work directly to Teams whilst in their classes if they had their own devices with them. They are always looking at new ways to support staff and pupils. BYOD has been very successful. The school is leading with digital technology.

6. College courses/ apprenticeships

VF asked if these were still going ahead. S Noble said that the school had expressed concerns and made pupils aware that there was uncertainty about courses. However, a number of pupils are attending in-person on Fridays and others are online. The majority of pupils involved are attending campuses every Friday. The quality of online learning is good. Some pupils may go in February if they are not attending now. Some courses of a practical nature may not go ahead. The school will be notified by the colleges in due course and will share with pupils / parents.

7. AOCB

M Lee asked which is our Facebook page as there seemed to be several and people are heading to the wrong page. VF explained that it is the Parent Council one not the PTA one which is no longer running. VF will speak to Diane about closing the old page down. M Lee asked about P.E.F. (Pupil Equity Fund) payments. LD said that they have been allocated later than usual and came in just after the school holidays. Normally there is a caveat that they should not be spent on IT as this would come from a different fund, however this year that caveat is not in place. Therefore the school has put in a bid for laptops for all staff who do not have one so if home learning occurs again, all are able to participate. Numeracy was a previous area of focus and the fund was spent on 1 day a week in-class support until the end of this fiscal year. Staff are all onboard for the PEF to be spent on laptops. Unfortunately, the funding announcement came between PC meetings with a prompt return date so the school was unable to discuss with the PC before this meeting. A Hynd explained the increased ICT would be very helpful as it prevented juggling of laptops between staff and pupils which he had previously experienced.

There were no other items

8. Date of next meeting

February 2021 TBD

VF closed the meeting at 1925.