

## **PORTLETHEN ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting – Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023**

#### **PRESENT**

Ian Bruce (Chair), Kerry Kidd (Treasurer), Rowena Beaton (co-Secretary), Isla Martin, Susan Strachan, Lesley Robertson, Joy Miller, Sonia Mendies, Agnieszka Stephen, Chris Johnson, Omowunmi Adeola-Omole (11 parents)

Barry Drennan (HT) Euan Lawson (DH) Jennifer Law (DH) Kirsty Campbell-Robertson (DH) (4 staff)

#### **APOLOGIES**

Anne Hingston

#### **WELCOME**

Ian Bruce introduced himself as the new Chair.

#### **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the previous meeting held on September 13th 2023 were proposed by Kerry Kidd and seconded by Rowena Beaton. The last meeting was held by Fiona Lindsay in absence of an official Chair. This position has now been taken onboard by Ian Bruce. The two main points from the last meeting have been resolved: 1) New Chair 2) New email address created to allow for google drive interaction.

**portlethenacademypc@gmail.com**

#### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

Previous minutes being uploaded to the Academy website – constitution is to be reviewed to ensure that it aligns.

**ACTION:** Anne/Ian.

Minutes to be reviewed and approved as soon as possible post meeting and uploaded as a 'draft' file to the website. They can then be formally accepted at the next committee meeting.

The Constitution states that a minimum of three persons, and a maximum of 30 persons, must attend to represent the 'parent body'.

Should there be a separate fundraising email account or captured within the main parent council email? Folders have been set up within the google drive to capture fundraising activities.

**ACTION:** Ian to advise.

Bring sign in sheet to next meeting.

#### **CHAIR REPORT**

Ian Bruce's first meeting as Chair.

#### **New Chair – Comments**

Google drive to be set up with email and sharing documents (**Action Closed**)

Ian thanked Fiona Lindsay for keeping it ticking over until the new Chair was officially sourced.

Discussed with attendees why we were there, all agreed it was to support the parent council. The meeting agenda is to be tailored to the purpose of the parent council.

Parent council should be a strategic core body who works on behalf of the wider parent forum. There are less survey responses coming in from parents and carers so need a new way to get feedback and continue to raise crucial funds.

The Head Teachers report should look back 6 weeks (or since the last parent council meeting) and ahead to the next 6 weeks.

Ian will base his report on the actions arising from the minutes.

Look at having specialties from the school doing 15 mins talks on what they are working on ie/ exam results, health and well being etc.

Strategic focus for each meeting ie/ just happened or away to happen? Can we be given tangible actions from the school management team?

Education acronyms sheet required 😊

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Kerry Kidd confirmed that the balance is £1710.78

Money in £238.80 from Dons Day Out.

Money in £40 from an anonymous donor.

Money out – Need to arrange returns for 8 x Quiz Team entries. Cancelled due to low uptake.

Cheque issues for buying school ties £935.00

£150 ring fenced for community café.

Mr Hill from the Biology Dept would like to take 16 pupils from Higher Human Biology Edinburgh Zoo on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Quotes received for a coach are in the region of £1178. Received donation of £400 from school enrichment fund therefore total cost per pupil is £14.40. Mr Hill would like to bring this cost down further for the pupils. If the parent council donates £238 the cost is brought down to £10pp. Ian Bruce knows the owner of Central Coaches so could possibly get a discount. £238 donation agreed by meeting attendees.

**ACTION** - Kerry to contact James Hill to arrange

NOTE - Cairngorms NP Authority has a school travel grant.

If pupils are travelling to the Cairngorms they will donate towards the cost of their travel.

### **APPOINTMENT OF OFFICE BEARERS**

Ian Bruce is the new Chair

Rowena Beaton and Anne Hingston are new co-Secretary.

## **HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

### **General Update/Overview**

A busy few weeks with some great things happening across the school.

Sadly, the Preloved Uniform wasn't a success, it would be helpful to look into why this was the case.

**ACTION** : Anne to discuss/survey with the Parent Forum.

Lawrence Finlay has written a large article which has been published nationally regarding the struggle to recruit teachers locally.

**Curriculum Design Day.** We recently had 100 visitors into the school to focus on reviewing our S1-S3 curriculum to become in line with national expectations. There is work to be done in the lower part of the school, more details to follow.

**DYW Partnerships/Community Engagement Events.** We have been working closely with ASDA and other community partners to raise the profile of what we are doing in the Academy with DYW. There will shortly be an opportunity for members of our Parent Council to join our Partnership Board.

**Fundraising Events.** Senior Pupils are organising Christmas events including lunchtime activities. They would love to use the school ceilidh band and bring back ceilidhs. The Christmas Concert is being held on the 13th December.

**S4 Study Skills/Exam Preparations.** We are inviting a company called Live n Learn to help support the S4 cohort with exam concerns. This will be in Feb/March 2024. Their content is excellent. We are also looking at a parent/carer workshop, further details to follow.

### **Preparation for Improvement (Inspection)**

We know that an inspection will be due soon. We are working hard to be prepared across all PTs/Faculties and holding assemblies with pupils. Further information will follow. We are having Quality Assurance and Local Officer visits. The school is in a good place and getting organised ahead of being given a date.

### **Staffing Updates**

Chemistry interviews happening shortly to fill two positions (Miss Moreland who has moved to Westhill and Miss Pierpoint who has moved into ASL).

Maths vacancy will be going live soon and supply interviews have taken place.

Design & Technology, one Faculty PT and one Teacher have been recruited but this isn't sufficient to fulfil our curriculum. Have advertised four times and are now reworking the S1/S2 curriculum to avoid impact on the senior phase pupils whose subjects are already underway.

DHT, Craig Cowie will be working with the Foundation Apprenticeship 3 days a week and doing DHT the remaining 2 days a week. We will shortly be interviewing for a 0.6 DHT permanent position.

### **Merits/Recognising Success - Parent's Section/Website?**

Survey completed with only 65-70 parent/carer participation so quite inconclusive. Some good examples shared from recent inspections so Barry Drennan will investigate this in more detail and continue to move forwards.

### **Emotional Health Week/Anti-Bullying Policy Refresh**

As a school we are working on refreshing our Anti-Bullying Policy with involvement from all pupils, staff and parents/carers. Mrs Law (DHT Pupil Support) is leading on this with support from the Health and Wellbeing and Equalities and Diversity Leadership Groups. Pupil Leadership Groups and more. A consultation will follow for a parent/carer focus group. We are keen to make this really clear and visible for everyone in our school community. Mrs Law will be in touch to gather some support for this group and to sense check future drafts of the policy and plans. This will be led through during Emotional Health Week (wb 4th Dec) and beyond

A parent focus group would be helpful whilst the school collates the information. Do we have any volunteers? Fiona Lindsay will pass her experience and recommendations to Jennifer Law (DH)

### **Extra-Curricular Clubs/Activities**

This will be reviewed, updated and uploaded onto the school website under the Wider Curriculum tab.

### **Duke of Edinburgh Awards/Alternatives for S4-S6**

We are delighted to bring this back and there is a real buzz with the group. Main kit to buy will be rucksacks and sleeping bags. Thanks to the staff group leading on this. More information to follow.

S4 – A session post prelims has been proposed that will help pupils deal with revision and exam stress (see above under Head Teachers Report for more information).

There is discussion for a ski trip in 2025 for S4/5/6.

### **Parents' Portal (online)**

A reminder that all Parents/Carers need to have signed up to the Parents' Portal to access school reports. Portlethen Academy has the lowest percentage sign up in Aberdeenshire. The office staff are happy to assist parents/carers with setting this up.

### **Fundraising**

Quiz night unfortunately cancelled due to low uptake

Pre-loved clothing had no takers. Look into reasons for this, better scheduled for the end of Term 3 once children have grown out of their current clothes, rather than near the start of term. The Larder doesn't have space to store it unfortunately.

Anne Moon night - survey to be done to gauge interest and BYOB/ refreshments ideas and possibility for end of Term 3.

**ACTION** - Anne to issue survey

Future raffle - Natasha Greer, Adore Hair & Beauty offered to donate a voucher. Has this been collected?

Research into grants we can apply for and capture in the spreadsheet (filed in google drive).

**ACTION** - Consider a sub-Fundraising group who can take the lead with this. Discuss at the next parent council meeting.

Christmas Concert. Kerry asked Jo from Expressive Arts if we can do ice/creams teas/coffees (if the department is not doing it in house). **(Action Closed)**- Confirmed our assistance is not required as HE department will be doing refreshments.

Parent Council to be aware of any upcoming financial requests so that any suitable fundraising grants can be tailored to meet these (if feasible). Even if looking 12-24 months ahead.

### **AOB**

Easy Fundraising set up - looking at ideas on getting this out to more parents/community to use. Chris Johnston suggested Facebook forums to advertise this and future events.

If parent council are aware of any issues or have items that would like to be brought up at the meeting, ensure that Mr Drennan is aware of these in advance.

Anne Hingston will review the constitution to ensure that it is accurate, up to date and meets the needs of the parent council. Information will be shared in google drive.

Question raised regarding how medical needs will be met on GOOSE. Information still to be given going forward from trip organisers.

Parents Connect group. Ian will need to attend. Christine McLellan will need his details. When is the next meeting?

Mr Drennan has sent the list of Kahoot questions to Fiona Lindsay for the rescheduled event (if going ahead).

An issue was raised with Xpressions. Mr Drennan advised that due to the number of pupils in the school and low uptake with the Xpressions app, the main communication will continue to be via email.

Parent Council WhatsApp Group - set up and add those who wish to join.

**ACTION** - Anne

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The school calendar will be reviewed and the date for the next meeting set early next term. Days of meeting might need to be rotated to accommodate new office bearers due to commitments. Consider alternating days to see if that encourages parents to join. This meeting was held on a Tuesday (rather than the usual Wednesday), and it was fantastic to see new faces.

Proposed dates for next meeting either w/c 15<sup>th</sup> January or w/c 22<sup>nd</sup> January.

**ACTION** - date to be decided before end of term and meeting invitation issued.

### **School Calendar Events for Term 3 as below:**

Prelims Start on 15<sup>th</sup> January

S3 subject choice info evening is Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January

Senior Phase info evening is Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February  
School closed to pupils from 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> February inclusive  
S4-S6 Parents Evenings on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February  
End of Term 28<sup>th</sup> March