

PORTLETHEN ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting – Tuesday 30th January 2024

portlethenacademypc@gmail.com

PRESENT

In-Person (Sign-In Sheet)

Ian Bruce (Chair), Kerry Kidd (Treasurer), Anne Hingston (co-Secretary), Isla Martin, Susan Strachan, Lesley Robertson, Joy Miller, Hannah Saum, Aghiesake Stephen,

Barry Drennan (HT), Rhona McKenzie (DH), Kirsty Campbell-Robertson (DH)

Online

Rowena Beaton (co-Secretary), Omowunmi Adeola-Omole, S.Law, Lorna.R, Pamela Tarbet, Adeola Omole, Alison Harris.

APOLOGIES

Euan Lawson (DH)

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st November 2023 were proposed by Anne Hingston and seconded by Ian Bruce.

CONSTITUTION

Anne Hingston has reviewed the constitution. It was last refreshed in November 2021 and is up-to-date. It currently states that membership should be a minimum of three persons and a maximum of 30 persons. Proposed to remove the maximum as we are unlikely to cap that amount. It was clarified that anyone who attends a Parent Council meeting would be considered a member. The 'one-week' ahead timeline regarding adding items to the agenda was suggested to be removed.

ACTION: Anne to circulate proposed changes to the parent forum for feedback.

CHAIR REPORT

Teacher Retention in Aberdeenshire: Email received from Fraserburgh Academy Parent Council. This highlighted the difficulties with poor teacher retention in the area. The Scottish Government have met with the Head of Education from Aberdeenshire and have agreed to come for a meeting with Parent Councils on this subject, and their plans to make teaching in Aberdeenshire a more attractive proposition. Portlethen PC will support this meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Kerry Kidd confirmed that the balance is **£2130.78**

Money in **£690** (£250 from Stonehaven and District Round Table, £300 from Xmas Raffle, £60 donation from Coretrax, £80 from an anonymous donation).

Money out – **£270** (thank you flowers, quiz night refund and Biology department donation towards higher human biology trip to Edinburgh Zoo) .

£400 donation has been ring-fenced for the community café.

HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

General Update/Overview

Preparation for Improvement (Inspection)

The school has been notified that there will be a school inspection w/c 19th February. This is a short model inspection and will be 3 days of 'inspection' over 4 days. Format to be issued. Preparations are underway and surveys will be issued to parents. The focus will be on two aspects - Learning, Teaching and Assessment and Raising Attainment and Achievement.

S4 Study Skills/Exam Preparations

We are inviting a company called Live 'n' Learn to help support the S4 cohort with revision (in a fun way!) and exam stress. This will be in Feb/March 2024. Their content is excellent. We are also looking at a parent/carer workshop, further details to follow.

Staffing Updates

There is a new PT of Curriculum Development - Sarah Hunt (Teacher of Art & Design) started this week, replacing Rebecca Hogg. Sarah will be working closely with Kirsty in leading Clan and the change to the S1/S2 curriculum. There will be an Art vacancy to replace Sarah.

Chemistry - Two new Chemists are joining the faculty, Karin Haig and Emma Livesy. Design & Tech and Home Economics have been re-advertised.

S1/S2 Curriculum

The school is looking to change the 'traditional' feel curriculum over the next year to a different format to encompass project-based learning, focusing on skills and experience, on a rotational basis. This is happening a lot both locally and nationally. This will also allow pupils to still gain experience in those areas where we might be short-staffed. Their timetable will be built around this so that they still gain experience in that subject ahead of S3.

Prelims and Adverse Weather

Despite the late starts due to the snow, the best endeavours were made to keep pupils' study routines the same. Aside from the first day of bad weather impacting exams, the remainder were able to continue as planned.

P7 Transition Evenings

There will be three smaller sessions rather than one big session. The first one was very well attended. There will be a further session on ASN support and then a physical tour around the school.

Fire Alarms

There were four fire alarms deliberately set off in school recently, in areas where there is no CCTV. Staff and prefect resources and time were used to catch the culprits, who have been given an exclusion. Police Scotland were also involved. The Scottish Fire and Rescue and Police will be holding a session with those responsible and we are reviewing CCTV coverage across the school working with Robertsons FM who manage our building.

Vaping

This is not a new issue for the school. The toilet layouts have changed (this has significantly reduced the vaping) and regular assemblies are being held to try and

discourage vaping. There is a supervision rota for teachers to check the toilets during lunchtimes. Vape alarms have been discussed with Robertsons but these are very costly. Discussions are being held at Head Teacher level with local authorities. Pupils have confidentiality and been telling staff if they see vaping.

High Quality Learning, Teaching and Assessment : Presentation by Kirsty Campbell-Robertson

This will give us a 'gold standard' framework and benchmark to move forward with. The pupil council have reviewed it and are keen to proceed. This is fantastic!

There are six sections within the framework; Purpose, Challenge & Support, Evidence of Learning, Assessment, Feedback and Application. This will help pupils understand why they are learning what they are learning, and learn from the feedback received what they need to improve on. It highlights that learning is not just 'memory mapping' for exams but encouraging thoughts about the learning and progress with each task. Pupils are encouraged to achieve high standards to the best of their abilities. There will also be a focus on building resilience.

Please see an attachment with the slides and a QR code for feedback.

Further discussions were had on the benefits of adding appendices with three writing styles for pupils, parents and teachers

FACULTIES AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Mr Drennan will send a reminder that all faculties and teachers should use a digital platform (as was done during COVID). This will assist with sharing class resources, revision, family learning, assignment feedback and ensuring visibility of topics covered in case of absence (ie/ recent bad weather, illness). All faculties and teachers should use a digital platform (Teams). This will be followed up after the school inspection circa 2nd March, and be in place for Term 4. This quality assurance check will help the school achieve its current goals and tie in with the High Quality Learning, Teaching and Assessment presentation given by Kirsty Campbell-Robertson. Consider reviewing the YouTube video by Meldrum Academy on how Glow interacts with Teams.

ACTION - Mr Drennan

CURRICULUM MAP

This is being worked on by Rhona McKenzie and Kirsty Campbell-Robertson. The first drafts have been received back from faculties. This should be in place for the start of Term 4.

MY MATHS SUBSCRIPTION

Unfortunately the local authority have advised 'My Maths' is no longer being used in Aberdeenshire schools, due to the password criteria not meeting Aberdeenshire Council's security standards. The Maths faculty are working hard to find an alternative (please see letter emailed to parents on the 16th February).

FUNDRAISING

Consider a sub-Fundraising group. Who can take the lead with this? Discussion required. 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. Research is to be done into grants that the school would be eligible to apply for and captured into google drive.

ACTION: Ian to advise

Dons Day Out to be arranged for Saturday 30th March - Aberdeen vs Ross County
ACTION - Kerry

Fundraising events to be considered and any ideas captured in the google drive folder.

AOB

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. Ask faculties if they will have any upcoming requests.

ACTION - Mr Drennan

Date of Next Meeting (s)

Thursday 7th March - hybrid (in-person/online)

Tuesday 23rd April - hybrid (in-person/online)

ACTION - meeting invitations to be issued (**Anne**)

The Remaining School Calendar Events for Term 3 are as below:

Senior Phase info evening is Tuesday 6th February

School closed to pupils from 8th to 14th February inclusive

S4-S6 Parents Evenings on Wednesday 21st and Tuesday 27th February (Wednesday 21st is now the following week due to the School Inspection)

End of Term 28th March

Return to School 14th April