

## PORTLETHEN ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting – Thursday 7th March 2024

portlethenacademypc@gmail.com

### PRESENT

#### In-Person

Ian Bruce (Chair), Kerry Kidd (Treasurer), Rowena Beaton (co-Secretary)  
Isla Martin, Susan Strachan, Catherine Middleton, Fiona Lindsay, Hannah Saum  
Barry Drennan (HT)

#### Online

Sheena Law, Lorna Robertson, Denise Humphreys  
Jenny Law (DH) Kirsty Campbell-Robertson (DH)

### APOLOGIES

Anne Hingston (co-Secretary)

### MINUTES AND ACTIONS OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Ian Bruce ran through the actions from the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 7th January 2024.

### CONSTITUTION

The proposed changes to the constitution have been put in place.

**ACTION** - Contact the school technician to upload the amended constitution and new parent council email address to the Portlethen Academy website (**Anne**)

### CHAIR REPORT

**Teacher Retention in Aberdeenshire:** This is a significant issue in rural schools. Concerned parents in outlying schools in Aberdeenshire have raised the issue of poor prelim exam results which they attribute to insufficient teacher numbers. Proactive measures are required at local authority level to address this issue. They are trying to arrange a meeting in Edinburgh with the Education Secretary.

**ACTION** - Discuss this at the next Aberdeenshire Head Teacher's meeting (**Mr Drennan**)  
Update: Mr Drennan has discussed this issue with Louise Moir, Head Teacher at Mackie and chair of ASHTA (Aberdeenshire Secondary Head Teacher Association) which represents our 17 schools. Louise Moir will raise this concern with the Executive Team.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Kerry Kidd confirmed that the balance is **£2274.06**

Money in **£143.28** (£63.28 from EasyFundraising and £80 from an anonymous donation).

Money out – **£0**

£400 donation has been ring-fenced for the community cafe and £20 for the renewal of the Lottery Licence.

Price needed for the school ties for the new S1 pupils (x200)

**ACTION** - Carolyne is to send the invoice/total for S1 ties to Kerry (**Carolyne/Kerry**).

## **HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

### **General Update/Overview**

An extremely busy Term 3, with the added school inspection.

### **School Inspection Feedback**

This was a short model inspection (3 days of 'inspection' over 4 days) held w/c 19th February. We will be moving forward with three aspects:

- Positive Relationships / Expectations of All refresh, incorporating anti-bullying policy/procedures, UNCRC/Children's Rights, diversity/equalities etc.
- Raising Attainment Strategy / Culture of Ambition / Aspiration / effective Tracking, Monitoring and Interventions
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment – next steps, as outlined in our 6 Aspects Framework

### **Staffing Updates**

**Chemistry** - Two new teachers Mrs Haig and Miss Livesey, have joined the Science faculty. Mrs Haig will be going on maternity leave in the summer, so we will have a live Chemistry vacancy.

**Maths/English** - Miss Coxe has taken up a BGE Literacy and Numeracy post.

**Design and Technology** - Miss Anne Walker will be starting with us in Term 4. Mr Neil Hunter, a retired teacher, is supporting Senior Phase classes.

**PT Pupil Development** - Miss Hunt has begun her position as PT of Curriculum Development. Exciting plans and vision ahead!

**Expressive Arts** - Tonya McAlister is our recently appointed Art Teacher. Mr Fitch (Music) will be leaving after the summer while Mrs Lizzie Reid (Music) will be returning from maternity leave.

**Business** - The vacancy post will be going live shortly.

### **Business Breakfast/Porty Partnership Board**

A highly successful Business Breakfast was held last month, attended by local partners and businesses. Our Developing Young Workforce contacts (DYW) are expanding which is excellent news!

We have begun to establish the Porty Partnership Board which will facilitate two-way information sharing and partnership working

### **Porty Tuck Shop/Community Cafe**

The school has funded the purchase of a new coffee cart for the Porty Tuck Shop group. Discussions have commenced with the Library team, who are our planned hosts. This initiative will lead to additional qualifications (including barista skills) being available for key, identified pupils and serve as a different avenue for community and curriculum support.

**ACTION** - There is £400 allocated for the Tuck Shop/Community Cafe group from the Parent Council. Jess Copner will advise Kerry and Tuck Shop Group on how these funds should be allocated (**Jess/Kerry**)

### **Senior Phase Qualifications/Study Supports**

As S4-S6 senior phase learners enter a very busy time, we want to ensure they have the support they need. Study support information has been shared at Parents' Evenings and in recent letters. Additionally, we offer study support during lunchtime and after-school sessions, as well as e-Sgoil Easter study sessions available. Details can be found in previous letters and communication from Mrs Campbell-Robertson. We encourage pupils to sign up and come along to the school sessions as they are a valuable initiative.

### **S4 Study Skills / Exam Prep - Live 'n' Learn Input**

Live 'n' Learn recently conducted a session with the S4 cohort focusing on Mindset for Exams. Feedback from pupils indicates that the session was well received and resources will follow via Clan. Additionally, S3 received input on skills and entrepreneurship, and we plan to further develop this in the future. Further details to follow on a parent/carer workshop.

### **Senior Phase Course Choice (S3-5)/Pathways**

Mr Cowie (DHT) and Mrs Rinchey (Faculty PT Maths) have been working hard on the timetable and course choice columns and forms for the 24/25 session. PTs Guidance have been actively supporting pathways conversations with individual pupils, which has been of great value.

### **P7 Transition - Next Steps**

The Rotary P7 quiz is scheduled for this month. An additional information evening focusing on pupil support, support for learning and the role of the Guidance Teacher will take place on Thursday 21st March. This year, the P7 transitions will take a different format with more frequent, smaller transition meetings, instead of one big session. The first meeting was very well attended. Three full transition days are planned for June. Mrs Law (DH) is coordinating all P7 transitions and organising a well-being workshop for parents to understand the differences between primary and secondary school. There will also be a school tour for parents.

### **Vaping**

The vaping situation is showing signs of improvement. We are working with other schools within our local authority to address this issue.

### **FACULTIES AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS**

Mr Drennan has sent a reminder that all faculties and teachers should use a digital platform (such as Teams or Google Classroom) as was done during COVID. This will assist in sharing class resources, facilitating revision, family learning, providing assignment feedback and ensuring the visibility of topics covered in case of absence (ie/ recent bad weather or illness). This will be in place for Term 4. This quality assurance check aligns with the school's current goals and ties 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. Consistency is crucial across all faculties.

**ACTION** - Check in with faculties to see if there has been any improvement and ensure that utilising digital platforms becomes common practice (**Mr Drennan**)

### **RESULTS OF PARENT/CARER SURVEY**

There were 37 responses collected from the recent parent/carer survey. The subsequent discussion focused on the most effective method for sharing the discussions held during parent council meetings, noting that all subject matters are documented in minutes, and will be uploaded to the website shortly.

**ACTION** - Prepare and deliver a presentation at the P7 transition meeting, providing an overview of the Parent Council's activities (**Ian**)

**ACTION** - Explore the feasibility of creating a promotional video about the Parent Council, aimed at increasing awareness and engagement among parents and carers (**Fiona**)

## **High-Quality Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

The framework comprises six sections: Purpose, Challenge & Support, Evidence of Learning, Assessment, Feedback and Application. Mrs Kirsty Campbell-Robertson aims to gather a focus group consisting of parents/carers and representatives from the Parent Council to gather feedback on her recent presentation, which was summarised in the minutes from the last meeting.

## **FUNDRAISING**

### **General**

Folders have been created within Google Drive to capture fundraising activities. A calendar of school activities will help prompt ideas for fundraising events. Looking ahead consider establishing a sub-fundraising group. Research to be done into grants that the school would be eligible to apply for and captured into Google Drive (volunteers required). This will follow in Term 4.

Mr Drennan will inform the Parent Council about any upcoming financial requests, allowing suitable fundraising grants to be tailored accordingly, even looking 12-24 months in advance.

**ACTION** - Ask faculties if they will have any upcoming requests (**Mr Drennan**)

### **Activities**

**A Quiz** has been rescheduled for the 12th June. Flyers have been created and will be distributed via email and handed out at any school events beforehand. **Fiona** is managing this.

**Raffles** are a popular fundraising activity and will be organised once every term. The next raffle will feature chocolate for prizes and will be drawn live on Friday 22nd March.

**ACTION** - plan for Spring raffle (**Kerry and Fiona**)

**A Dons Day Out** has been arranged for Saturday 13th April - Aberdeen vs Dundee. An email has been issued to parents/carers and the event has been promoted on our Facebook/Twitter pages. This is being managed by **Kerry and Fiona**.

## **PRE-LOVED CLOTHING**

Feedback is needed to assess interest. Is there a demand for pre-loved clothing? Consideration should be given to the best location for making these items available (if not in the community library). It was suggested to consider offering smaller-sized items at P7 transition evenings or distributing them to schools in the Cluster.

**ACTION:** Issue survey to parents/carers including P7 (**Anne**)

**ACTION:** Raise the initiative at Cluster levels (**Mr Drennan**)

## **DAILY BULLETIN**

Exploring methods of sharing this information among parents/carers poses technical challenges, as the document requires daily editing before it can be issued externally, and the WordPress-based website isn't easily facilitated for this purpose.

**ACTION** - Investigate how other schools share similar information and explore alternative methods of sharing. Discuss options with the school technicians. (**Mr Drennan**)

## **AOB**

### **REPORTING FOCUS GROUP**

Mr Lawson (DHT) is looking for volunteers to form a focus group. This focus group would look at the information currently being shared in school reports (ie/ tracking, monitoring and reporting), analyse its content and explore ways to make it clearer for parents/carers and pupils to understand. The session has been arranged for Wednesday 20th March at 8pm via Teams.

### **Date of Next Meeting(s)**

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

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

**ACTION** - Look at meeting dates for Term 4 - confirm Tuesday 18th June and notify parents/carers (**Anne**)

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

- P7 Transition ASN Meeting 21st March
- End of Term 28<sup>th</sup> March

### **School Calendar Events for Term 4:**

- Return to School 15th April
- Final SQA Exams 22nd April to 30th May
- May Day Holiday 6th May
- GOOSE Week 22nd to 24th May
- Senior Phase Induction 30th and 31st May
- Change of Timetable 3rd June
- P7 Transition Visits 12th to 14th June
- End of Term 5th July

### **School Calendar Events**

Barry will share the 2024/2025 calendar at the end of May (some activities will also tie in with fundraising).

### **Open Items from Previous Meetings**

- 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.
- Unfortunately, the local authority has 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 (letter emailed to parents on the 16th of February re - Corbetts).