

PEEBLES HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL/PTA



Parent Council Meeting
Wednesday 16th May at 7pm
in the meeting room in the New Sports Facility

MINUTES

Present

Paul Fagan, Margaret Hogg, Glenda Barton, Tommy Davidson, Vanessa Rice, Michael Pryor, Eric Nightingale, Kirstin Worsley, Justin Noon, Ross McLaren, Vivienne Leckie, Susan Bell

Scottish Borders Council:- Donna Manson, Michelle Strong & Anne Theresa Lawrie

Apologies

Lisa Houston, Lorna Boak, Ruth Docherty, Sarah Keen, Lorraine Sykes, Kate Whalley

1. Approval of minutes Given
2. School Estates Consultation

Review of the process

Margaret prepared a summary of the findings from the review carried out by Donna Manson for SBC. The key outcomes are that the condition of the building is graded B (performing adequately but showing minor deterioration) and the suitability of the building is graded B (performing well with minor problems). Capacity is projected to reach about 95 % over the next 4 years.

The SBC aim is for all schools to be graded A within the next 10 years by either replacing or substantially improving schools. Each school will require its own strategic plan. Further consultation will now take place with stakeholder groups to address concerns and design a concept for the future to give the best outcome for children and the community. There will be an options analysis and further analysis of roll projections. A progress report will go to the council in October '18.

Margaret had asked for some feedback from the parent council on the process and this was summarised by Vanessa as follows. It was felt that from the start it was unclear if this was to be a race for the school to be selected or if the decision would purely be taken on the basis of greatest need. There was also a need for greater communication with parents but this was prohibited and led to tensions building with SBC and with the wider parent body eventually. However, the exercise has allowed the school to be evaluated and there has been confirmation that improvements will be made. It has sharpened our focus on the school core values and the emphasis to be placed on achieving an outstanding school. Going forward we need to work on the communication channels with SBC and the parents/community.

Next Steps

Donna Manson presented a document on the response to the comments arising from the consultation. Donna also discussed both the medium and long term plans for the school. Firstly, a letter will be going out to assure parents that the catchment area shall remain the same and that there are no plans to open a second school in the area. There is capacity at the High School to accommodate the current primary populations and SBC will continue to monitor the rolls to ensure that provision will meet demand.

In the medium term, SBC must take reasonable and practicable steps to make all areas accessible for pupils with disabilities or limited mobility and a review will take place in June to see what can be put in place over the summer holidays. Funding has also been set aside to improve security within the school which has numerous entry points. There were many comments regarding the corridors and journey times around the school and a review will take place to identify how circulation and journey times can be improved.

During this financial year, SBC hope to make improvements to the energy efficiency of the school and improve the school environment. Certain windows are to be replaced and the heaters and boilers reviewed. They will be considering whether the catering offer can be expanded and made quicker. A plan is also in place to improve the school toilets.

It has become apparent that a 'master plan' is needed for Peebles which covers housing (and the impact on the school roll), a possible new bridge, and the predicted population age for the area going forward. Working successfully with the community will be key to developing a 10 year plan for the school and the PC were asked to consider how they can engage with local residents to help with this.

SBC members then left.

3. Rector's Update

School Inspection Review

A verbal report has been given by Michelle Strong to Paul on this event which took place in March. The Authority can see that the school is moving very much in the right direction and that stakeholders value the school and praise the positive ethos and academic challenge particularly in the senior phase. There is work to do around the quality improvement process, being more strategic in how our data collection influences improvement planning and the level of challenge experienced by some in the BGE. They felt the leadership capacity of the school was improving and that PTs were more involved in leading whole school initiatives than ever before. They challenged the SMT to both sustain this progress and involve the middle leadership team more in the strategic development of the school. The increasing breath and relevance of the educational offer was praised as was excellent results of 5 at level 6 (Higher) in S5 (34%) and 5 at level 6 from all leavers 52.6%. They praised the multiple interventions in place and high expectations we have for our young people.

School Improvement Plan

The National Priorities are:

-Improvement in attainment, particularly in numeracy and literacy

- Closing the attainment gap
- Improvement in health and well-being
- Improvement in employability skills and positive leaver destinations

Additional SBC Priorities are:

- Curriculum pathways
- Inclusion/Restorative Practice
- Mental Health
- Partnerships

The emerging PHS Priorities are:

- curriculum
- leadership development
- school estate
- STEM
- Numeracy/Literacy Developments
- Learning and Teaching Priorities

To assist with the Improvement Planning process there have been a significant number of consultations with Parents, Pupil, Staff and Partners. Several themes are emerging that are hoped can be incorporated into the 2018 plan. A major theme for session 2018-19 is that work needs to be done on improving communication.

The 'Growing in Confidence' workshops held last term were a tremendous success and praised highly by the parents who attended. The group are currently due to meet and discuss phase 2. Training will also be given to all 6th year pupils to help them identify signs of mental health issues. Following on from the theme of prevention, Glenda spoke about the need to review the school calendar to see if we can do anything to help dampen down the peaks of stress that can occur when groups of activities arise at the same time.

Staffing update/STEM coordinator

Iona Minto joined the meeting to talk about her new role as STEM coordinator.

This new opportunity to promote the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

subjects has been well received by the relevant teachers at the high school and she hopes to meet with all the Primary Head Teachers next. She would like to introduce a Family Learning evening which could take place between the P7 pupils first tour of the High School in February and their visits in June. It will be very much a co-ordinating role which will also involve opportunities for some of the senior pupils to gain experience in leadership. There are plenty of activities throughout the academic year to engage in national competitions and help raise awareness of STEM. Glenda commented that it may also be possible to draw on the expertise of parents who would be willing to support this initiative (as they successfully did for a West Linton primary event).

Update on Campbell

Campbell continues to make good progress and Paul is in frequent contact with him.

4. Matters Arising:

LGBT guidelines carried forward

Dept Bids There is a current freeze on spending, so unfortunately the laptops remain un-purchased.

BYOD Connection issues have hopefully been resolved by a new patch which allows those with windows 7/8/10 to connect. Next academic year they may open the wi-fi to years S1-3 also.

Localities Bid We hope to speak with Sarah when this reopens.

External Sign New sign in place.

Acoustic Curtains Now in the hands of the school to decide how to proceed. A recent inspection suggested material strips hanging from the ceiling as an alternative which would maintain the level of light in the CDT corridor.

School dinners The new machine is now installed and operational.

5. Prefect Selection Process

A note was handed out on the process. Any comments to be fed back to Paul by the end of May. The intention is to appoint 32 prefects again next year. We currently have around 150 6th year pupils.

6. Parents Evening Booking System

The timing of the access to the online booking system has been changed to 7pm away from the 9am access. Although there still seems to be insufficient slots available, going forward it may be possible to introduce two evenings.

7. Parents Groups Updates

Show my Homework – Glenda and Justin have been discussing the ‘show my homework’ access. Pupils frequently receive feedback from their teachers on their progress and it would be beneficial to parents if they could have their own access to a new page dedicated to their child.

Wiki-spaces - The maths wiki-spaces site will be closing from July onwards, however all the excellent information contained there-in has been transferred over to Glow.

8. AOB

Kirsten & Vivienne have requested that the lottery forms be included with the welcome pack distributed to the P7 pupils. Paul will investigate if these packs have already been made up and if forms could still be passed to the Primaries.

A new PTA chair and communications officer will be required at the next meeting (AGM).

Vivienne has asked Paul to consider allowing black trainers as appropriate footwear. Although these often have logos stitched into them, is it any worse than the Ugg boots & Dr Martins which are currently allowed? Paul to consider and will get back to the parent council.

Thank you to Anna Leckie, Alexandra Crichton, Caitlin Glass and Millie Jones who donated a cheque for £56.79 to PHS200 from profits raised from the Enterprise Fair.

Our next meeting & AGM will be Tuesday 12th June at 7pm in the New Sports Facility.