

Prestwick Academy Parent Council

Minutes of 'Zoom' Annual General Meeting – Monday 8 March 2021

In attendance (virtually):

Gordon Bone (Head Teacher); Anita Hall (Deputy Head Teacher), Alastair McIntyre (Chair), Jerry Ferguson (Vice Chair), Andrea Hammond, Anne-Marie Tierney, Jill Wright, Sharon Graham, Sheona Johnston, Fiona Khaliq, Karen Wilson, Michelle Hunter, Harry Boyes, Lynn Cooper, Steven Fentie, Liz Brady, Christine Thomson, Gemma Wallbanks, Sarah Kerr, Heather McLeod, Linda Kerr, Euan Duncan, Fiona Heron, Liz Cairns, Pamela Paterson, Joan Brockie, Caroline Lyon, Alison Wilson, Monique Morrison, Councillor Helen Moonie, Councillor Margaret Toner

1. Introduction

Alastair McIntyre welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Parent Council.

2. Attendance and apologies

Those attending were noted. Apologies were noted from Fiona Baird and Euan Terras .

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The draft Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th January 2021 had been circulated by email in advance. Their acceptance was proposed by Andrea Hammond and seconded by Fiona Khaliq.

4. Report from Chair

Alastair reported that meetings of Parent Council Chairs had been held on 19 January and 9 February discussing the approaches of schools to home learning and the importance of each school responding to its own needs. It was clear that the pace of learning has been slower this year, but in response to a query it was felt that any form of repeat year would be a logistical nightmare. The local authority would therefore be putting round a survey for parents' views on online learning.

Alastair also reported that later in the week he would be circulating a survey on next year's proposed holiday dates.

5. Head Teacher's Report

Mr Bone reported that the phased return for senior pupils is going well. The school roll continues to grow. There will be 1255 pupils next year and 235 in the new S1, which will make Prestwick the biggest school in South Ayrshire. In relation to staffing Home Economics will have a full complement from August 2021. The forthcoming Head Teacher's vacancy will be advertised nationally. A P7 transition plan is being developed with the primaries.

SQA work is ongoing as they are still making changes to their Alternative Certification Model. Principal Teachers have provided estimated dates for the completion of courses. It is hoped to arrange with the SQA an information night for seniors' parents with help from Mrs A Millar DHT with responsibility for SQA certification.

Reporting on re-opening, from August 10th to December 22nd there were only 4 positive cases which resulted in 108 students requiring to self-isolate. Since the festive break no student or staff member had tested positive. Going forward testing kits for S4 to S6 will be rolled out, ideally for the last week in March.

6. Timetable – Mrs Anita Hall

Mrs Hall gave a presentation on the proposed timetable, with the aid of a Powerpoint. The aim is for every student in S4 to S6 to be seen every week for each of 6 subjects. This would amount to 12 hours of face-to-face learning, up to 6 sessions of 2 hours each.

Concern was expressed about S3 students who are also starting to prepare for Nat5s. It is impossible at the moment to have them in every day. The intention is to provide S3 with 7 hours of face-to-face schooling, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday concentrating on maths, literacy and health and wellbeing. Half of students would be in mornings and half afternoons. It was noted that there were transport considerations, particularly from Monkton and Symington.

S1s would be in for a half day on Tuesdays and S2s for a half day on Mondays. This was admittedly low but the school cannot provide any more given the need to teach in groups of 10 to accommodate social distancing. What was previously a class of 30 now requires 3 classes of 10 and 3 teachers. Mrs Hall stressed that this situation will be for only two and a half weeks. S1 and S2 will cover a range of subjects, changing week to week. The school will continue to accommodate the Hub.

A parent asked when pupils would know what sections they would be in, so they would know when they would be at school. Mrs Hall advised that this would be as soon as possible. The aim is to message parents by 11th March. A guide is being drafted for parents and carers.

A parent asked if social distancing would be required from 19 April. Mr Bone advised that it is anticipated that the need for social distancing would be removed once all pupils return after Easter, but everyone from S1 to S6 would require to wear facemasks.

For S4 to S6 the school is working on an Easter School programme over a range of subjects, online and face to face.

A parent asked about school buses. Bus passes would be offered for travel at lunchtime, and taxis for rural areas.

Mr Bone replied to a parent to confirm that there will be P7 transition activities but not over Easter, and stressed that everything is dependent on suppression of the virus.

7. Close

There being no further business Alastair thanked everyone for attending online. He again pointed out the continuing vacancy for a Secretary. The next meeting would be on 10 May 2021. The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.