

Prestwick Academy Parent Council

Meeting – Monday 14 January 2019

In attendance:

Mark Anderson, Acting Head Teacher; Jamie Anderson, School Captain; Abby Harkness and Hannah O’Dowd, Anti Bullying Ambassadors and School Vice Captains;

Alastair McIntyre (Chair), Euan Terras (Secretary), Alison McNeil (Treasurer), Jacqueline Risk, Andrea Hammond, Fiona Baird, Gillian Maxwell, Jill Wright, Nicola Anderson, Harry Boyce, Euan Duncan, Councillors Helen Moonie, Margaret Toner and Ian Cochrane (Prestwick Ward).

Apologies:

Jane Shute (Minute Secretary), Jerry Ferguson, Jadyn Walker (School Captain)

Introduction

Mr McIntyre welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the New Year. Mr Terras agreed to take the Minutes of the meeting in the absence of the Minute Secretary.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 November 2018, which had been circulated by email in advance of the meeting, were read and approved.

Report from Chair

The Chair reported on the many activities taking place in the school during November/December since the last meeting. The Chair and the Secretary had attended a meeting of Parent Council Chairs held by South Ayrshire Council on 28 November 2018 where the topics for discussion included a presentation about an exam resource SCOLAR and the planned ICT upgrade throughout all schools in South Ayrshire, an update by Depute Chief Executive Douglas Hutchison on the forthcoming budget and likely cut to the education budgets, the national problem of teacher shortages and the issue of musical tuition fees.

Head Teacher’s Report

Mr Acting Head Teacher Mark Anderson circulated a summary of various events taking place within the school. The summary is attached to these Minutes. He advised that the question of staffing was an issue which was constantly changing and he was pleased to report that he now has a fully staffed SLT and Guidance Team.

In relation to upcoming events, he mentioned that the school was piloting a new structure involving pupils choosing their options. Instead of holding parents’ information evenings which took place prior to pupils having their options interview, the parents would be invited to the interview itself which would allow more opportunity to discuss the options between staff, pupils and parents.

It was also requested that as many parents as possible provide feedback on the new reporting format.

School Captain's Report

Jamie Anderson, School Captain, gave a report on various events which had recently taken part in the school which included the filming of a documentary "Nurturing Lunch" where numerous members of staff and pupils were interviewed by the film crew, the Christmas Concert, The Prestwick Rotary Club Concert at St Nicholas Church, the Christmas Activities day, & Children in Need day. He also commented about the ongoing Prelim Timetable and the pupils who would be helping out at Parent Nights.

Education Budget 2019

It was reported that South Ayrshire Council had not yet published any proposals for their budget for the forthcoming year and so the meeting was discussing this subject "blind". The Councillors present commented however that cuts were inevitable and that many difficult decisions would have to be made. Cllr Moonie indicated that due to the severity of the cuts likely to be made, communities would need to look at different ways of approaching funding and she highlighted the Councils' External Funding Newsletter which provided a great deal of resources on grant funding opportunities. She strongly recommended that organisations such as Parent Councils had regard to these alternative sources for fundraising opportunities, rather than relying on the Council.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The two School Vice Captains attending the meeting reported that they had both been part of a group of 13 pupils who underwent training through the Diana Award Scheme and are now Anti-Bullying Ambassadors within the school. This is to encourage a more welcoming and caring ethos to the school. The group were among the first in Scotland to undergo this training and as well as aiming to prevent bullying behaviour and harassment, they also hope to raise awareness of bullying behaviour, and to support staff, pupils, parents and carers and to help provide a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for all young people in the school. They are aiming to run a campaign of events and activities including a Dress Down Day to raise money for a mental health charity, launching a lunch group and holding an LGBT Plus colour run. There is a new page on the school website dedicated to anti-bullying and also features on the daily bulletin. They have a dedicated email to help pupils make contact who otherwise would feel reluctant to do so.

AOCB

A question was asked regarding a new homework app which is being looked at by the school. The Acting Head Teacher mentioned that funding is an issue with this and that it required to be looked into in further detail as the subscription involved a 2-3 year commitment. An update will be given at the next meeting.

School Website

Concern was raised about the lack of user-friendliness of the school website and the fact that it was now showing its age. It was pointed out that the website did however contain a huge amount of good material and resources and to re-design this would involve a huge amount of work.

Bank Account

The Treasurer reported to the meeting that the Parent Council's bank account has had an approximate balance of £50 at credit for the last 4-5 years. There have been no transactions on the account during this time as all the fundraising events are handled through the school. The Treasurer suggested the bank account be closed and the balance transferred to the school as there was no longer any need to keep the account running. This was approved by the meeting. There could be an issue identifying the signatories on the account as they are no longer parents at the school. The Treasurer agreed to make enquiries.

Close

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.30pm with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

The next meeting will include an invitation to the Prestwick cluster primary schools and will be on 11 March 2019