

Prestwick Academy Parent Council

Minutes of 'Zoom' Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 18th January 2022

In attendance (virtually): Alastair McIntyre (Chair), Ms Elaine Harrigan (Head Teacher), Jill Wright (Secretary), Mrs Anne Miller (DHT), Jerry Ferguson, Fiona Heron, Caroline Lyon, Pamela Paterson, Sharon Graham, Councillor Hugh Hunter, Andrea Hammond, Joan Brockie, Helen Strainger, Steven Fentie, Christine Thomson, Pauline Ferguson, Emma Boughen

1. Introduction

Alastair McIntyre welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Parent Council and explained the purpose is to discuss matters of general interest and any specific issues should be raised with the school.

2. Attendance and apologies

Those attending were noted. There were no apologies

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The draft Minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 8th of November 2021 had been circulated by email in advance. Their acceptance was proposed by Jerry Ferguson and seconded by Euan Terras.

4. Report from the Chair

Alastair highlighted the Parents Guide to Parent Councils Handbook which had been prepared by South Ayrshire Council with input from Euan Terras.

Alastair had attended the Remembrance Service on Remembrance Sunday on behalf of the parent council along with the school captains.

On the 23rd of November Alastair attended the Parent Council Chairs meeting. This included a Covid update from the Quality Improvement Officer, Scott Mulholland. At this point cases were rising, and schools were working on monitoring the situation. There was an SQA qualifications update from Gavin Pitt. At this point SQA stated exams will run from the 26th of April until the 1st of June 2022. Douglas Hutchison provided the meeting with a service update and reported this would be his last meeting. The next Parent Council Chairs meeting will be in a few weeks and Alastair asked if anyone wanted to raise anything to let him know.

5. Parents Guide to Parent Councils Handbook

Euan Terras explained 4 or 5 parent council chairs had work together to write the handbook. Susan Bell, the representative for South Ayrshire from the National Parent Forum and Euan, the Parent representative from South Ayrshire, all had input. The document has been emailed to parent council members and explains the workings of the group e.g. AGM's, the Structure etc. Euan encouraged members to share the handbook with others who would be interested and asked if it could be published on the school website.

A parent asked a question relating to virtual meetings and how the Zoom account the parent council use is paid for. Alastair explained it is his account. It was suggested the parent council should think about opening an account going forward.

Alastair thanked Euan for his contribution

6. Head Teacher's Report

Staffing

The following staff have recently been appointed and in the process of recruitment:

Mrs Katie Grant – PT English

Mr Callum Johnson – PT Music

Mr Gordon Shaw – Teacher of English – started post on 6 January

Ms Gillian Murray – 0.5FTE Teacher of Computing – started post on 6 January

Recruitment continues this session with the following posts:

School assistants x 2 posts

Clerical x 2 posts

Absence – we continue to experience staff absence for a number of reasons and classes are being rotated and combined as appropriate. We are also using management time of both Principal Teachers, Guidance Teacher and the Senior Leadership team to cover, as well as sourcing supply staff. These are the current steps that are being taken prior to the need for online learning from home.

COVID-19 Update

We continue with existing mitigations in place and continue to monitor the rate of COVID absence for young people across the school. A reminder that in the first instance young people should access work on teams and communicate with their class teacher. Should their class teacher not be available, contact should be made with their Guidance Teacher in the first instance.

SQA Update

We continue with a diet of SQA prelims during January, following on from the December diet. Plans are in place to allow young people to catch up on any prelims missed.

In relation to senior phase qualifications we are working with 3 scenarios:

Scenario 1

It is still the clear intention for the 2022 SQA exams to take place in April – June. Exams will only be cancelled by the Scottish Government if public health advice restricts physical gatherings at the time of the exams. This is known as Scenario 1

Scenario 2

SQA are actively monitoring levels of disruption across the country, including levels of learner and staff absence. If significant levels of disruption continue, we will soon move to what has been referred to by SQA as Scenario 2. This means supporting learners with their final revision in the immediate run-up to the exams. In this scenario, revision support, for example guidance on topics, will be provided to help learners maximise their exam performance and reduce exam stress.

There will not be any further changes to courses or course assessments, over and above those already in place through the existing modifications. If there is a move to Scenario 2, revision support will be issued by SQA in March for most courses, to allow as much time as possible for learning and teaching. The type of revision support will differ across courses, depending on the assessment approach and the modifications made at the start of the session.

Scenario 3

This means the evidence gathered through normal in-year assessment will be used to determine learners' estimates to form the basis of their provisional results. Information around estimate grades has been made available via the SQA's refreshed estimates guidance document.

Parents' Evenings

The first online parents' evening took place on Monday 17th January for young people in S4. In general the system worked well, however, there were some challenges with technology in relation to sound for a few appointments. Feedback will be sought from parents re: their experience. We will continue online until advised otherwise. The remaining planned events are:

- Tuesday 1st February – S3
- Monday 21st February – S5/6
- Tuesday 15th March – S2
- Monday 25th April – S1

Pupil Leadership Team

Representative across year groups have formed our pupil leadership team for session 2021/22. The team will meet this week with a focus on 3 areas:

Tuesday 18 January	Promoting Positive Relationships
Wednesday 19 January	Learning and Teaching
Thursday 20 January	School and Community

You people will be given the opportunity to represent their peers to share views and contribute to improvement planning.

Personal Support Time

The HEART group have adjusted the format of our personal support to bring in 'check-in' time for young people at the start and end of the week. This will give personal support teachers the opportunity to further develop positive relationships with young people and give young people the opportunity to seek support if necessary. This week the mental health ambassadors have been delivering input to young people via personal support time in relation study time and also input on the brain and how it works in relation to our emotions, memory and relationships. A mental health week will take place on w/c 7 February with inputs and updates for young people, staff and information for parents/carers.

Options

The options process is now underway with Mr Ross working on the options booklet and options timeline for young people. Further information will be provided.

Ski Trip

Unfortunately, the Ski trip has been held over for another year due to COVID restrictions. I am aware that there have been some issues in relation to the refund process and I am currently looking into this with Mrs Sinclair.

A parent asked what happens if a pupil tests positive and they can't present for an exam? It was explained this would be treated as an exceptional circumstance by the SQA as happens every year. The school would suggest a grade and send evidence to the SQA, who would decide.

7. Online Parents Evenings – Mrs Miller Deputy Head Teacher

The first Prestwick Academy online parents evening was held on the 17th of January for S4 parents. 55% of parents booked appointments. This number is lower than would normally be expected, pre covid 70%-80% would attend. Speaking to colleagues in South Ayrshire, others had found the first online event was significantly lower with numbers growing at subsequent events. Surveys will be sent out next week to understand why and if any of these barriers can be removed. Of the 55% of appointments 90% of those parents turned up. The school will try to find out what the issues were for the other 10%. There were a small number of technical issues in the school which the IT technician will investigate.

A parent who had attended the parents evening reported she found it successful.

As the SQA representative for the school Mrs Miller took the opportunity to update the Parent council. She was delighted the prelims went ahead, particularly in the school hall. The current S6 are the only year group which has experience of exam conditions. Mrs Miller feels this is an important process to go through.

There were no questions and Alastair reminded members they could email or contact the school.

Alastair thanked Mrs Miller for her presentation.

8. AOB

A parent asked the situation re ski trip refunds? Mrs Harrigan explained there had been issues around the online payment system and the office supervisor will investigate.

A parent asked when extra-curricular activities will recommence e.g. school show? Mrs Harrigan explained the school is still working very much under restrictions. Mr Johnstone, the new PT of music will look at this when he takes up his post. Digital concerts maybe an option.

A parent asked the current position re careers advise? Mrs Harrigan stated young people should contact their guidance teacher to make an appointment with the school careers adviser.

Councillor Hunter commented Carers Day will be in April 2022

A parent asked when staff absence has particularly disrupted learning what measures can be put in place? Mrs Harrigan stated new staff were in place in the English department including a new PT starting in 2 weeks. Core skills will be focused on particularly those needed for S4 exams. Mrs Harrigan said she will look at why no homework is being given out.

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9. Close

There being no further business Alastair thanked everyone for attending online. The next meeting will be the second Monday in March 2022. The meeting closed at 8.00pm.