

Prestwick Academy Parent Council

Minutes of 'Zoom' Annual General Meeting – Monday 10 May 2021

In attendance (virtually):

Gordon Bone (Head Teacher); Margaret Catterall (Deputy Head Teacher), Alastair McIntyre (Chair), Jerry Ferguson (Vice Chair), Andrea Hammond, Anne-Marie Tierney, Euan Terras, Jill Wright, Fiona Hainey, Fiona Khaliq, Karen Menzies, Harry Boyce, Steven Fentie, Sarah Kerr, Caroline Lyon, Monique Morrison, Paula O'Shay, Dilip Mishra, Jillian McIntyre, Emma Boughen, Councillor Hugh Hunter

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 Sharon Graham, Joan Brockie and Councillor Toner .

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The draft Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 March 2021 had been circulated by email in advance. Their acceptance was proposed by Fiona Khaliq and seconded by Andrea Hammond.

4. Report from Chair

Alastair reported that he and two other members of the Parent Council had taken part in the interview process for the new headmaster. There had been a number of very good applicants for the post and the panel had been pleased to appoint Ms Elaine Harrigan, at present Head Teacher at Girvan Academy to the post. In response to a question Alastair confirmed that there had been seven applicants of whom one had subsequently withdrawn and four had been interviewed.

5. Head Teacher's Report

Mr Bone reported that since her appointment Ms Harrigan had been in the school a few times and would attend the June meeting of the Parent Council, which might be held in person if the rules allowed.

The SQA meeting had been attended by fewer parents than had been hoped however a powerpoint with a voice over was available on the website. SQA's plans for the appeals process are still unknown.

In relation to staffing, 2 members of staff will be on maternity leave and are now working from home. There will be new temporary teachers of Chemistry and English from next session.

There will be a new permanent Pupil Support post to which Susan Weir has been appointed. An offer of appointment was made in respect of the vacant Home Economics post but the offer was not accepted and the post will be advertised again. The school is also advertising for a permanent post in Computing and Business and interviewing for an acting Principal Teacher of Biology due to a forthcoming maternity leave. Three new teachers have joined and 1 teacher is leaving.

Turning to P7 transition it appeared that it would not be possible to hold a Parents' Evening for new S1 pupils. The primaries will be coming to the school on 11th and 14th June. Mrs Hughes has been meeting with P7s.

On 9 June it is hoped the school will receive the Rights Respecting Schools Silver Award in an online accreditation visit.

The Parents/Carers survey closes this week, and there will be another survey on digital learning this week.

Timetables will change on 9th June for S1-S3 with the new S5/S6 starting on Tuesday 15th June 2021.

6. Pupil Support – Mrs Margaret Catterall

Mrs Catterall gave a presentation on Pupil Support. Priority 2 in the School Improvement Plan relates to supporting young people's health and wellbeing. The increase in the school roll has led to an increase in the number of students requiring support. 85 of the new S1 intake. There is a range of different needs of which the most common is dyslexia.

There are a number of areas to be considered as part of 'getting it right for every child.' eg refusal to attend, the number of part-time timetables requested, the attainment of care-experienced young people, attendance rates and exclusions.

The school is investigating what is being done elsewhere and considering the best use of staffing. There were 31 candidates for the new pupil support post and the school were delighted to appoint Susan Weir, while Mrs Hughes will take on the role of Principal Teacher of Guidance with responsibility for S1 transition.

The school is also reviewing accommodation. It is keen to have a Sensory room for autistic students, and retain the nurture room. This is a lot of work but the school is working strongly

with its partners, and building on the positive results of COVID such as learning and inclusion workers based in the school.

Mr Bone and Mrs Catterall have also discussed the possibility of a school-based social worker. A similar process is taking place in Belmont at the moment.

Mr Bone confirmed that the school is very aware of the need for work in mental health, and has invested a lot of work on the issue.

A parent commented that activities and clubs bring the students together and felt that there was a bit of a lack of that, even before COVID. Mr Bone agreed that such activities are very important.

A parent commented that it now looked as if the school is being used as part of the support network even when issues are not school-related. Mrs Catterall agreed – even GPs are referring young people with mental health issues to the school rather than CAHMS.

7. AOB

A parent asked what the present situation is with regard to S4 option choices following the telephone interviews. Mrs Catterall advised that the telephone interview would be submitted as the options choice.

A parent suggested that the school needs to get back to activities which gives pupils support and confidence. Mr Bone replied that it is hoped that such activities can recommence after the summer.

A parent asked if there are any plans to do anything to mark those leaving S6. Mr Bone explained that the school is not allowed to have an awards ceremony - the progress in dealing with the pandemic determines what can and can't be done. Another pupil suggested an online awards ceremony.

8. Close

There being no further business Alastair thanked everyone for attending online. The next and final meeting for the session would be on 14 June 2021. The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.