

Prestwick Academy Parent Council

Minutes of 'Zoom' Annual General Meeting – Monday 9th November 2020

In attendance (virtually):

Gordon Bone (Head Teacher); Margaret Catterall (Deputy Head Teacher), Alastair McIntyre (Chair), Jerry Ferguson (Vice Chair), Fiona Baird (Treasurer), Emma Boughen, Fiona Hainey, Fiona Heron, Euan Terras, Robert Hammond, Anne-Marie Tierney, Euan Duncan, Jill Wright, Karen Menzies, Sharon Graham, Monique Morrison, Fiona Khaliq, Joan Brockie, Jacqueline Risk, Dilip Mishra (Parents) Hugh Hunter (Councillor) Rosie Anderson and Natalie Lockhart (School Captains)

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 Caroline Lyon and Andrea Hammond

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The draft Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th September 2020 had been circulated by email in advance. Their acceptance was proposed by Monique Morrison and seconded by Andrea Hammond.

4. Report from Chair

Alastair reported that there had been no meetings of the Parent Council Chairs since the last meeting. The next meeting would be held on 11 November. A survey on the proposed Christmas holiday changes had been circulated over the weekend. The majority of parents had favoured Option 2, closing on 22 December and relocating a days holiday from 6 January to return on 5 January. Mr Bone reported that the majority of staff preferred Option 1, moving the in-service day from 22 February to 23 December. The report on the response to COVID survey had also been circulated.

5. Head Teacher's Report & COVID19 Discussions

Mr Bone reported firstly on staffing. A new Geography teacher has been appointed and will start on 14 December. There had been only one application for the HE vacancy, which was not suitable so the post would be re-advertised.

Many school activities are now running. School captains Rosie and Natalie are joining us for this meeting. The Mock Court is underway, as are the S1 and S2 cross-country events. Mrs McCaig, PT Biology is running the Merit System and will talk on this at the next meeting.

SQA – a parent information letter was sent to parents of S4 - S6 pupils today with a quick overview. An exam timetable for prelims was issued last week. The school still does not have key dates for Highers or for grades to be submitted. On Thursday there will be issues an information booklet with a breakdown of the Prelim timetable and a Zoom information meeting next week. The school is waiting for quality assurance procedures but it is anticipated there will be 2 diets of Prelims, provisionally a second round in March with assessments for Nat 5s a little later.

In relation to the survey there were 285 responses which represents 23% of parents, a healthy return. Mr Bone commented that in August a letter to parents had been reported in the media before being released by the school. It was not known how this had happened. There were no questions from parents in relation to the survey.

Mask wearing is very high in the stairwells and crush areas. Mr Anderson is putting together a staff/pupil consultancy group, and Mr Bone and Mr Anderson have gone through the risk assessment to see if any further mitigation is required. Mr Bone is delighted with how things have been going as it has been very challenging, but there is no room for complacency.

A question was asked on whether study leave had been considered. Mr Bone replied that the expectation is that there will be no study leave but he would check with his colleagues. The public health situation will be considered again in February. The SQA co-ordinator has some new course work booklets. Some courses are being front-loaded but there has been a delay in information coming from SQA, who have been getting information from stakeholders.

6. School Captains' Reports

Rosie and Natalie presented the School Captains' Report.

The HEART group have been working on climate change and with the mental health ambassadors, looking at using the school website for pupils to reach out.

Rosie told the meeting about the informational videos prepared by the captains. They have been making videos covering what doors to come in, how to pre-order lunch, the new merit system and the new COVID cleaning system including how to wipe down and sanitise surfaces. This approach has been welcomed by pupils.

Natalie told the meeting about the virtual assemblies, covering issues which would normally be covered in full assemblies including Black Lives Matter and the anti-bullying ambassadors. The assemblies have had positive feedback from pupils and have proved a great way to spread the message.

Rosie reported that last month she and Campbell had a virtual meeting with other school captains and Douglas Hutchison, Depute Chief Executive and Director of People and Scott

Mulholland, Quality Improvement Manager South Ayrshire Council on the cancellation of exams and other matters which went very well.

7. COVID Recovery Teachers

Mrs Catterall gave a presentation on COVID recovery teachers. The school has been assigned 1.6 extra teachers for literacy, numeracy and mental well-being. This comprises 1 new member of staff and additional part-time staff amounting to 8 extra days' teaching.

The focus has been on S2 and S3. The Principal Teachers of English and Maths have identified pupils who had not engaged during lockdown and the part-time staff have tackled that working 1-to-1 or in small groups.

The new member of staff is an art specialist, supporting health and mental well-being. Mrs Catterall has identified pupils with issues and the teacher works with them 2 at a time in double periods, linking with class teachers to see what work needs to be done. Mrs Catterall is pleased with progress in numeracy. Literacy is still to be assessed but she sees big improvements. 29 young people are being supported at the moment.

8. Other Business

A question was asked in relation to UCAS – the emphasis is being placed on the pupil's personal statement and reference. Has the school given much assistance on this? Mrs Catterall replied that each house team would support its own pupils no UCAS applications. The reference has to support the personal statement. Each pupil will get a report to complete.

A question was asked whether there are any placements in hospitals or surgeries for pupils interested in studying medicine. Mrs Catterall advised that there are no work placements at present. Mrs Hainey suggested information might be found on the Royal College of Physicians website.

9. Close

There being no further business Alastair thanked everyone for attending online. The next meeting would be on 11 January 2021. The meeting closed at 8pm.