

# Stromness Academy Parent Council

## Minutes of Meeting

### Thursday 27 April 2017



**Present:** Kate Carmichael (Chair), Ian Berstan (Acting Headteacher), Deb Stead (Teacher Rep), Fiona Laing, Linda Hall, Joe Horrocks, Jane Beckwith, Cllr Harvey Johnston, Barbara Scollay (Minute Clerk)

**Apologies:** Emma Taylor (Headteacher), Rosemary McLaughlin, Rob Crichton, Cllr Rachael King, Kate Thompson, James Wylie, Helen Wailoo

Unfortunately PC Joanna Murray had been called to work on 27 April and so was no longer available to present her talk on internet safety for parents. Kate C and Ian to discuss inviting Joanna back to present this at an upcoming school information meeting.

**Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting:** the minutes of 19 January 2017 were proposed by Joe Horrocks and seconded by Fiona Laing after correction of a job title in the School update (Support for Learning *Assistant* to Support for Learning *Teacher*).

#### **Matters arising:**

- STEM committee revival – a national strategy is due to be published in August and it is hoped that the group will be reformed later in the year.
- The outcome of the vote on the wearing of school uniforms put forward by the Pupil Council was a resounding no.
- Duke of Edinburgh – an event has held two weeks with presentation of certificates and some certificates were also issued today to pupils who were unable to attend the earlier session. A number of staff are in training and more will be over the next few months. DoE groups will restart in August. Pupils are able to go from bronze to gold with extra work and support. A request was made for information to be issued to parents and Ian will arrange for this one details are confirmed.

#### **School Review**

The initial findings have been compiled and information will be issued to managers and the group involved, then will be shared with the PC and wider parental group.

#### **Update following the PC Chairs and Headteachers meeting**

##### National 5

There will be a change in the way National 5 qualifications are examined with immediate effect for the 2017-18 year. Major changes are that internal examinations have been removed (although pupils could go through these to gain credit for units achieved); exams have increased in length and a number of subjects that did not previously have written exams will now do so. Changes will be extended to Highers in 2018-19, and Advanced Highers in 2019-20. Changes to National 4 qualifications will then be considered. The aim is to reduce the burden of the number of assessments on pupils and staff and the school is considering holding an information evening in September to explain the changes to parents.

##### Funding the attainment gap

SA has an allocation of £10,800 for 2017-18 from the Pupil Equity Fund, which is part of the Scottish Governments agenda to improve learning in less affluent areas. Ian is attending a meeting next week to discuss how best to utilise the funding across Orkney. The questions are what is the gap, and how the money can be used to raise attainment. Literacy is a possible point for improvement, with pupils reading less and from a smaller range of materials; the Accelerated Reading programme may help. The Fresh Start programme is already running and caters to improve reading, spelling and comprehension and provides some excellent results. It is important to note that it is not advised to use the funding on staffing but other than this there are few restrictions.

### Community learning and development

Kerry Spence had asked for PC members thoughts on any specific training or information that PC's would like, and it was agreed that Ian should invite Kerry to attend the next PC meeting occurring after the summer.

### **Treasurer's update**

The recent quiz raised £390 and the raffle at the spring concert raised £183, giving a current balance of £911.03 in the bank account. A donation of £500 could be made to the school, and the PC have previously helped fund drumsticks for the new school pipe band and after school transport. A suggestion was raised from a PC member that some decoration of the concrete corridor walls would brighten the areas and make them seem more welcoming. It was agreed to ask the Pupil Council and staff for any small project ideas and discuss their feedback at the next meeting.

### **Fundraising**

Joe has obtained a licence for the PC under the Gambling Act 2005 from the council costing £40 for the first year, and £20 for annual renewals (due 27 February 2017). The documentation will be kept on the school premises for safe keeping. The aim is to launch the prize draw in September and make the draw at the school's Spring Concert. Ideas for specific fundraising targets should be sent to Joe – one suggested was furniture for the quad area. Some ideas for prizes were noted.

### **School day and dinner times**

The school is moving to a single lunch time and the next session has been designed on this basis. The school hours were consulted on but there are restrictions due to existing bus contracts etc so a change to this is not possible now. From June onwards registration classes will be reinstated four days per week and this enables more regular assemblies to take place.

The quad will be opened up for use as additional space at lunchtime and pupils will be able to eat outside. Linking in with fundraising, the PC requested that Ian obtain a plan of the space and its dimensions, and PC members will investigate what items companies may be able to supply.

### **Parents available to attend staff interviews**

The shortleat and interview process for the Depute Headteacher post will require representation from the PC and members were asked to consider whether they would be available and let Kate C know. Shortleat starts at 2pm on Friday 5 May, with interviews from 9am on Friday 26 May.

### **School update**

Various vacancies were noted: maternity cover for the PT of Home Economics; Depute Headteacher; PT of Chemistry; Teacher of Chemistry and PT of Computing.

The School Facebook page is actively being used and past pupil profiles have been posted to promote career paths. Subject choices have taken place and the timetable is being constructed. Pupils were involved in hustings with the West Mainland candidates for the Local Government election. Island Charm were very successful in the local Young Enterprise competition, winning several awards, and progress to the Scottish Finals in Glasgow in June.

The On Track to Succeed team endured a rocky boat journey and managed to present to over 100 people on little sleep the following afternoon. There was no overall winner but parts of all the team's ideas will be utilised, and the pupil's confidence shone at the event.

The Spring Concert was well attended and the Stromness Academy Players recently participated in the SCDA One-Act Play Festival, with repeat performances in Stromness and Hoy, and won the trophy for 'best moment in theatre'. There have been volleyball and football activities including trips south and the school is glad to support and encourage participation in sports. S2 pupils participated in the BBC News Report Day.

Inter-house competitions have been taking place with a week-long dodgeball competition showing good participation. A house assembly takes place tomorrow. Parents of new S1's will be welcomed at a parent's evening on Thursday 22 June and this year the new pupils will come to school on what will be their usual school bus and will follow as close to a real timetable as possible to give them the full experience. PC reps are needed on 22 June to speak to parents about the PC and encourage new members; Kate C will email the group.

Exams start next week with 1 May a Bank Holiday and 19 May an In-Service day. The new format and timing of the parent's evenings have received excellent feedback. An online option to book slots will be available next year as a trial. The school is looking for feedback on its intervention letters and one parent who had received one was able to take some action and found it useful. The school is trying all avenues to communicate with parents via twitter, text, Facebook and emails.

**AOCB**

None.

**Date of Next Meeting**

~~School Review Meeting Thursday, 1 June 2017 at 7pm in the Upper Library~~ subsequently cancelled.

AGM/Meeting – Thursday, 29 June 2017 at 7pm in the Upper Library