

**Gairloch High School Parent Council Meeting  
Extraordinary Virtual Meeting  
Thursday 18<sup>st</sup> June 2020 at 7pm**

**Minutes**

Present: Wim Chalmet, Stuart Caddell, Vanessa Quinn, Julie Brady, Fiona McKenzie, Deborah Leigh, Emma Smith, Debbie Dillon, Bob McKenzie, Angela Rae, Pam Urquart, Lucy Cairney, Ian Davis, Derek McLeod  
Ashley Quinn (Part Meeting)

Apologies: Chris Hildrey, Christine Baptist

**1 Welcome and Introduction from Vanessa Quinn**

Vanessa welcomed everyone to this, first, virtual meeting and updated the PC on some recent meetings she had attended. The first was with Paul Senior, Chief Executive Officer, Highland Council Partnership (Education & Care). He is new in role and has come to the Highlands from a role in London. So, whilst his experience will have included large numbers of pupils, the remote issues affecting us in the West Highlands will be new to him.

Vanessa also attended a Q&A session with John Swinney, Scottish Minister for Education.

Ashley Quinn updated the PC on a meeting she had attended, again with John Swinney, where pupil representatives were asked what they thought of on-line school. Ashley had fed back that Registration was good at GHS and teachers were marking work undertaken. It was felt that there could be more face to face virtual contact with teachers but this will vary with year groups. There was general feedback from pupils about nervousness about return to school, mental health type issues, distancing at school etc.

**2 Wim Chalmet presented the draft proposed plan for return to school**

Mr Chalmet pointed out (and all agreed) that we are very lucky in our community and school community. Teachers are also juggling their own families and jobs in this difficult time and are not immune to the pressures around us at present.

We are fortunate, for once, in the respect that we have a small number of pupils in a big school building which allows the necessary safety requirements to be put in place. Our teachers are also engaged and supportive with the plans moving forward.

Staff are now coming into school and organising their rooms assuming 2m distancing and other current requirements. This may also change before August.

A few slides are attached to explain the plan proposed which allow between 60-75% attendance, depending on which day of the week you are looking at. The Scottish Government aspiration is 50%. In the first instance school will be a half day only. A staggered approach is explained over the first 3 weeks in the slides after which, it is hoped that upscale would be possible for 100% attendance. However, if necessary, the Week 3 format would be sustainable on an ongoing basis if limitations still exist.

However, a big issue holding the plan is Transport. Bus capacity is sometimes 20% and as most of our pupils are bussed in, this is a huge problem. Parents have been approached to see if they are prepared and able to drop and pick up their child from school and it should be noted that this all needs to be coordinated with the Primary School too. Stuart Caddell is trying to work through this and provided an update. Feedback from parents has been limited and started to fizzle out since the request went out. The issue needs to be raised again. Derek McLeod offered to lobby Norma Young and the PC will contact Nicky Grant. The consequence of not resolving the Transport issue is that the return to school plan would be significantly affected in terms of the time pupils will be able to be in school.

It was noted that this plan is currently only a proposal and subject to significant change. A critical step next week will be scrutiny from the Scottish Government (Education Authority). Following this, more information should be able to be disseminated to the wider Parent Forum.

Questions were raised from the PC and addressed by Mr Chalmet and Mr Caddell, particularly around transport.

### **3 Staffing & Recruitment**

Wim Chalmet explained that there had been a recruitment freeze meaning that the Art post had not been advertised. Dr. Brindle will also retire in August. The adverts for Art and English have now been released internally and posts are expected to be filled before 1 July 2020. These are now fixed term contracts rather than permanent posts at this time. It was also confirmed that Julie Brady had been appointed as the Hospitality Teacher, which is excellent news. Julie went above and beyond to provide a Hospitality course last year when the previous arrangement fell into pieces. It should be noted that this is a UHI post rather than school.

### **4 Date of next Meeting**

It was agreed that there would be benefit in holding a further PC meeting next week as feedback should then be available following the Scottish Government review. The PC were asked to think about the plan presented and bring questions and suggestions to the PC meeting next week. The meeting will be virtual and held Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7 pm. Further details will be provided prior to the meeting.