

**Gairloch High School Parent Council Meeting
Tuesday 8th September 2020 (following AGM)**

Minutes

Present: Wim Chalmet, Julie Brady, Fiona McKenzie, Deborah Leigh-Williams, Emma Smith, Debbie Dillon, Adrian Telfer, Lucy Griffin Vanessa Quinn, Ian Davis, Angela Rae, Lucy Cairney, Maria Leslie, Kate MacRae, Maisie Baptist, Lucy Hildrey, Chris Hildrey, Bob Mackenzie

Apologies: Stuart Smith, Gerry & Christine Baptist, Stuart Caddell, Kienan Hewitson

1 Review of previous minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved (Vanessa Quinn proposed and Emma Smith seconded).

2 Matters arising from previous meeting

Will be covered during the meeting, particularly through the Head Teachers report.

3 Pupil Report

The Parent Council were introduced to Maisie Baptist and Lucy Hildrey, School Captains. Kienan Hewitson sent his apologies for the meeting.

Maisie explained the steps that are in place to protect spread of COVID-19 including the one-way system, appropriate use of masks, staggered breaks and use of hand sanitizer. Lucy advised that they are a small group of prefects currently but that house captains will now be appointed. There will be leaders for charity events e.g. jeans for genes. Mentors from S5/S6 are working with S1 mentees.

As school captains they hope to have a greater voice in the community and attend community council meetings. Important to tell the community what is going on in school as well as the school being aware of what is going on in the community.

4 Head Teacher's Report

Mr Chalmet thanked Maisie and Lucy and acknowledged that the first time is a bit of a nerve wracking experience! The school captain's manifestos were included in the recent newsletter and is well worth reading.

There have been so many changes over the last year and things seem to still be changing on an almost daily basis.

Mr Chalmet welcomed Kate MacRae, parent of a new S1 pupil.

Particular note was made regarding the effort made for the various fund raising events and particularly to Julie Brady and Debbie Dillon.

Overstaffing led to a curriculum review around January.

The pace of information and change is immense and Mr Chalmet is trying to keep parents as up to date as possible. Parental support is very much appreciated. Some suggestions have been made and are welcome to be implemented or at least discussed.

"Highland Council prioritises infection control above thermal discomfort" was quoted from a letter just received. This needs to be fully discussed by Staff but may lead to jackets being allowed in class. Heating is controlled centrally in Inverness.

Staffing – Miss Velt has now left so staffing level now fully reduced to 1.3 requirement. Dr Brindle has been replaced by Mrs Caddell for English and there are currently 4 PSAs in place.

Exams – prior to the welcomed U turn on the exam results the school was totally in line with the previous year without changes. GHS is comparable with other schools in Highland with GHS rating high versus others. The review following the changes is awaited. New certificates have started to be received by pupils. It was a strange end to S6 school life with the abrupt start of lockdown.

The curriculum review has led to the implementation of some new courses e.g. Higher environmental science, NPA level 6 (Higher level) Fitness and Leadership. These have been taken up by a good number of pupils. There will also be an award in mental health & wellbeing, mentoring and leadership. A gap still exists in Social Sciences. The virtual course in modern studies did not materialise. Virtual courses are getting into place but at a slower pace, partly due to the later return of colleges and university.

Julie Brady has now been appointed as Lecturer in hospitality. There has been a change in lecturer in psychology. Mr Caddell is still working on the implementation of the virtual subjects, including Psychology and mentors have been appointed in school for these pupils. Work Experience – pupils are not allowed to go outside school currently and the HC is working through risk assessments. This is unlikely to be resolved much before 2 weeks time. There is now Trade Union agreement on working time and this will be discussed at the in-service days next week. A couple of PC members to be invited to a working group on how School Improvement Planning: monitoring & tracking, reporting and parent evenings will work. Pupils will also be asked.

Q&A:

Q: Deborah Leigh-Williams asked about relaxation of school uniform to provide warmer clothes. A: Specifics will come out following review.

Q: VQ reminded of spreadsheet format for monitoring & tracking accessible to parents A: This is still being developed but probably needs speeding up. Noted that this is, however, a significant piece of work.

Q: Ian Davis commented on PSA numbers. PSA time will be less available due to additional support needs having gone up this year for category 3 & 4 needs. Is there anything the PC can do to help? A: This will be a significantly different year. Anything the PC can do would be appreciated and it would make a massive difference. VQ to circulate the date of the virtual Highland Parent Council Meeting.

Q: Angela Rae asked about the policy on PE? A: PE is restricted to outdoors only with very limited equipment. Music and Drama are also interesting. Pupils can now use their own musical instruments but Drama is restricted as projection of voice is not allowed currently. Expectations that things will gradually relax.

Q: Kate – Transition activities e.g. Loch Eil had been missed and wondered if there would be any plans to do anything similar when possible. A: Miss Smith explained that there is usually the Cairngorm Trip in May if it is possible. This also impacts on the S2s who did their fund raising for their trip which was cancelled. Could be a combined year group trip.

Q: VQ asked about the DOE – How will this be approached? A: DOE limit their activities to avoid between end October and Easter but there is lots of information available for this who have signed up.

Q: Maria Leslie expressed concern over the transparency over the communication in Health & Wellbeing course (PSHE) and that the model used by Ullapool High School on their website was much more informative A: Mr Chalmet had sent communication to Mrs Leslie and agreed it would be helpful to add this to the website. The Ullapool model will be looked at and Miss Smith explained that a link could be provided under both the Parent and Subjects headings on the website.

5 Fundraising

Regrettably, it was accepted that this really was not feasible at this stage. A Christmas Fayre seems highly unlikely. All to give thought to what may be possible under current restrictions.

6 Contributing towards and enhancement of our children's school experience

Work on the outdoor spaces in school has to be shelved for now as no visitors are permitted in school. In addition, minibuses are not allowed to be used currently.

7 Any Other Business

None

8 Date of next meeting – 3 November 7 pm (Virtual)