

**Gairloch High School Parent Council Meeting
Tuesday 10th November 2020**

Minutes

Present: Wim Chalmet, Julie Brady, Fiona McKenzie, Deborah Leigh-Williams, Emma Smith, Debbie Dillon, Vanessa Quinn, Ian Davis, Lucy Cairney, Lucy Hildrey, Kienan Hewitson, Stuart Caddell, Bob McKenzie, Chris Hildrey

Apologies: Pamela Urquhart, Kate Macrae, Angela Rae, Maisie Baptist

1 Review of previous minutes

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

2 Matters arising from previous meeting

Will be covered during the meeting, particularly through the Head Teachers report. Vanessa Quinn updated the PC on the Highland Parent Council meeting which she had attended. There had been a lot of discussion around free school meals which had been a problem in some areas. There had been an issue in Wick where a group of Parents had stepped in to provide meals. We are not aware of any issue in our area. It was also noted that very little of the Scottish Government funding had been allocated to schools. The staffing formula is still in play, however, additional teachers are to be recruited (more information in HT update).

Wim Chalmet also updated on the previous query regarding content for PSHE. This is now available under both the Parent and Subject headings on the school website. Mrs Leonard can also be contacted for further information. Mr Chalmet had also looked to the Ullapool High School website but could not find information here. He did, however, find detail in an Ullapool school handbook from a couple of years back and plans to include this information in our own handbook details for Gairloch High School when it is updated.

3 Pupil Report

Kienan updated the PC on a recent Pupil Voice Meeting. Pupils had raised the use of hoodies and suggested that these would be warmer in the current conditions. They had recommended strict plain black, navy or grey with only a very small logo allowed. This has been endorsed by the school and the PC felt this was a sensible step. There has also been a request for charging of chromebooks (in case of emergencies) in school and a suggestion was made to allocate a specific area and time for this e.g. Miss Smith's room at lunch time.

Lucy confirmed that there will be no school dance this year at Christmas ☹️. It was confirmed that something would be arranged just as soon as guidance will permit. In the meantime it is hoped that an indoor rowing competition and the Krypton Factor may still be possible. Pupils have also expressed that they do not want to be outside all the time in the cold and bad weather during break and lunchtime and had asked if they could stay in specific indoor areas. It has been agreed that they could stay in the canteen area but not in other rooms.

4 Head Teacher's Report

Mr Chalmet thanked Kienan and Lucy for their update. He noted that a hoodie with a logo could be an option, however, recognised that the purchase of one may be an issue for some families so was happy for plain ones to be used.

- 1) Update on Guidance – We are very fortunate to be in Level 1. New guidance has been issued and this includes an important statement – “Balance between heat of the room and comfort of learning”. Windows are now shut at the start of the day and then will be opened at 20 minute intervals. Thermometers have been installed in every classroom to allow monitoring of room temperature. There has been new guidance on PE allowing some indoor PE with a lot of restrictions. Mrs Hildrey has been working on this with the qualification class now able to have indoor PE when appropriate. There are still issues with projecting voice in Drama and Mrs Leonard is continuing to look at this. One possible option may be to use outdoor areas using a gazebo/parasol type of approach. Music has progressed a fair bit with music lessons starting again; Music tutors who are now back in building for bagpipes using digital chanters. Options for singing are also being pursued. Risk assessments are regularly updated and always available on school website.
- 2) Staffing – Additional money for a remote area like ours is small and has to cover all the schools in our area (primary and secondary). The resource extends to 1 day per week and Mrs Caddell has been recruited to cover this for the High School with a coordinating & coaching focus of recovery curriculum. PSA resource has also been able to be increased to 10h focus on pupils needing extra support. This arrangement will be in place till May/June 2021. Evaluation is undertaken every 4 weeks. A separate counselling budget is available and there is apparently more of this to come. This is ring-fenced and again has to cover all the school’s P6 and P7 pupils as well as the High School. A qualified external counsellor must be used but this is expensive. Hoping that this can be facilitated by 1 December for a 16 month period using the Scottish Counselling Service.
- 3) School Improvement Plan/Priorities 2020-2023 – The focus for this year needs to be on the Recovery Plan but looking also to the future. Mr Chalmet shared details of the Priorities for 2020-2023 which have been consulted with staff and PC representatives (Vanessa and Chris) can be viewed attached to these minutes. Chris Hildrey raised a query as to the P7 missed transition this year and plans for next year. Monitoring was undertaken and the normal SNSA testing checks in numeracy and literacy will be done giving a coordinated approach to identifying areas for catch up for the new S1.



- 4) Reporting & Parental Engagement Sessions – The new Tracking & Monitoring process has been launched following lockdown when previous process was put on hold. A small working group looked at this and input has been greatly appreciated. There is a Report A and a Report B on the tracking & monitoring dashboard which has now been provided to senior phase parents and will be issued to other year groups in due course. There has been positive feedback so far and the system seems to be going well. It was also well received by teachers. Invites have gone out to parents/carers of senior phase pupils with a link to allow them to book virtual appointments. This will allow virtual discussions with teachers and over a couple of days or so rather than on a single evening, giving more flexibility. This will be used for all pupils, starting with senior phase pupils using a system endorsed and security checked by Highland Council. The staff portal contains guidance and information for staff and the main school website TMR page is now live containing user guides and video tutorials for parents/carers.
- 5) SQA – Stuart Caddell is the SQA coordinator. There is normally a whole calendar of dates at this stage but this year, so far, only 2. National 5 exams are cancelled. Requirements for evidence are to be provided by 19 November. The focus is on quality not quantity and the requirements for each subject may be different. It has also been recommended that schools speak to each other, sharing thoughts. Assessment plans will then be put in place. Higher and Advanced Higher still to continue as normal with prelims in January. Exams start on 10 May which is earlier than expected but this could well change. Miss Smith added that there had also been small tweaks to the curriculum content for certain subjects to address there is less time this year and also to give time to go over things covered through the lockdown period.

5 Fundraising

Regrettably, it was again accepted that this really was not feasible at this stage. VQ raised that there had been some talk of a silent auction for some items that had been donated? These items are being held currently by the school with an aim to do something April/May time currently. Julie Brady updated the PC on money spent out to support the school with masks (£260 - 50% funded with Gairloch Hotel providing the other 50%), Fleecees (11 fleecees now provided to children needing this support) and a request was put in by the school for support to purchase parasols as shelter in bad weather. School to advise when this money is needed.

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

The work on the outdoor garden spaces at the back of the school undertaken by Fiona McKenzie & GALE through lockdown was recognised. This has made a huge difference and has been welcomed, particularly, as the S1 SMART have benefited from having this available at a time that they are unable to go far afield. Thank you very much!

7 Any Other Business

Some queries raised by a parent were discussed:

Possibility of sending out an invite email directed to all parents that there are x vacancies asking for any interested parents to join the PC group – If this relates to jobs at school then the school can only advertise for teaching posts and PSA. These and other roles linked to the High School, are promoted wherever they can be through social media. Anyone looking for work would access myjobscotland. In relation to PC – a data form is circulated to all parents every year asking for whether they are willing to be contacted by the PC. Also, prior to the AGM, the Chair sends a note out via the school to explain the role of the PC and urge parents to join in whatever capacity they feel able. This is usually included in the school newsletter too.

Textbooks; age of, plan to replace, funding options to do this – Mr Chalmet explained that this was very dependent on the subject. If a textbook is still valid it does not really matter how old it is. If a teacher views that textbook out of date and needs replaced then there is a departmental budget. This can be boosted by the school if necessary or the PC could be approached for help. Miss Smith confirmed that teachers are aware to this issue and noted that there are now many on-line resource options available.

PC run exchange of school uniforms/textbooks every year – Whilst this is a good idea it is difficult to do at this time and also would take people to run it. It was noted that the school office holds a great deal of uniform which can be utilized by anyone. One member of the PC said she used local social media when she had excess uniform and this had worked very well. This could also be an option for textbooks/past papers when some pupils may prefer a hard copy.

PC request results from Highland Council parent survey about distance learning delivered during lockdown during March-July 2020 – this survey was never undertaken for feedback to parents but was to allow Highland to be compared to National areas and not within an ASG. Answers were not split out by primary/secondary but key messages have been taken out.

Examples include: connectivity which was an issue for some families – we now have 6 network wifi outlets which have been placed with 6 families for a whole year to provide reassurance. A full timetable was also implemented following the survey and pupil feedback with face to face teaching. Learning resources were also distributed during the recent 2 week isolation period when necessary. Our pupils and school have contributed to the authority guidelines at the self-isolation period in September, to support other schools in Highland Council area.

Communication expectations of parents and families following a student suspected of or student confirmed to have the COVID virus? – There are 2 ways of looking at this query. If it is what communication is expected from a parent, there is actually no legal obligation for a parent to inform the school, however, we all feel there is a moral obligation due to the significant impact the non-communication could have on individuals and, indeed, the whole community. If it is in terms of communication to parents – Highland Protection Team govern what is required in terms of what communication (and to who) takes place. Mr Chalmet emphasized – If a child is ill – keep them at home!

8 Date of next meeting – Monday 18th January 2021 - 7 pm