



MEETING OF THE PARENT COUNCIL

MONDAY 6 OCTOBER 2025 AT 7P.M.

MINUTES

1 Opening prayer

DW led the PC in the opening prayer.

2 Welcome and apologies

DW welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies noted.

3 Minutes

Minutes of last meeting moved and approved, without any adjustments.

4 Update of actions:

General update

DW provided a general update, confirming the intention of the OB to create an 'action log' for next meeting. The log is to be a 'living document', providing a record of all actions taken, ongoing, and completed by the PC.

Outstanding actions:

Friends of St Ninians

DW noted hope is that 'FoSN' will be back up and running soon. Noted that various parents had already expressed an interest in becoming involved, and that Mr Cumming leading on this for the school.

School communications

'PC INSTAGRAM' - DW drew the PC's attention to the newly created PC account.

Noted:

- 95 'sign ups' to date, even before this new way of communicating with the PC was 'advertised'.
- the 'insta' account was created, following the schools move from 'X', and to ensure PC in line with school.

- PC still has a 'Facebook' page.

'Newsletter' – DW advised PC that a newsletter would be prepared and circulated to the wider parent body, flagging the work of the PC, in advance of the next meeting.

Eastwood Park Leisure

DW confirmed that arrangements made for the Director of Education, Mark Ratter, to attend the November meeting to update the PC on progress of the works. In particular, the timeline for construction; the traffic management plan; and the anticipated community benefits.

Noted that the works would clearly cause some disruption for the school. DW confirmed intention is for Mr Ratter to attend the first part of the November meeting to provide an update and to answer any questions. To help with managing time, and to ensure all points are covered, suggested it might be helpful if council members/parents could flag any particular points/questions they would like the Council to raise with Mr Ratter and Mr Rennick in advance, through the usual PC mechanisms. There will be an opportunity to ask questions on the night.

SG consultations/new legislation

CW provided brief update on the 'actions' relating to upcoming legislation:

(i) Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill

Noted that this Bill was still at Stage One and seemed unlikely to progress significantly before the Scottish parliamentary elections next May. Will continue to monitor but seems likely that due to pressure of other business this Bill will 'fall'.

(ii) Children (Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty) (Scotland) Bill

Noted that this Bill was also at Stage One but had been the subject of two previous consultations. Some discussion of responses provided to the most recent consultation on the Bill, with the response from 'For Women Scotland' response flagged as being of note; as it highlights the potential legal difficulties with the current draft of the Bill in a succinct and easily understandable way.

Some discussion amongst the group re: the consultation process to date, and its efficacy. Concerns raised with regards to the timing of the most recent consultation process (over the school holidays), making it difficult for schools and parent councils to respond as fulsomely as they might have liked.

Further noted that the provisions of the Bill, if enacted as drafted, would have a disproportionate administrative and financial impact on Catholic schools where religious education is not provided in one dedicated class but woven through the curriculum. In real terms, the provisions would be difficult to give practical effect to in a Catholic school.

ACTION POINT: Agreed that the progress of this Bill should continue to be monitored, and updates provided to the Council, as appropriate.

5 Office Holder's report

[Parent Equalities Forum held on 17 September 2025 \(Paper 3, attached\)](#)

DW provided an update on the meeting of the Forum he attended, along with Anne Marie, on 17th September. Noted that the forum was not well attended but was intended by the Council to serve as the 'consultation' stage of ERC's prospective equalities framework and strategy, that is to begin in 2026.

DW drew the group's attention to Paper 3; proposing that members take time to review the included materials prior to more fulsome discussion of ERC's proposals for an updated framework/strategy at the November meeting. Noted that although the PC did provide a response to the current framework/strategy, the consultation process before this was implemented was sub-optimal.

ERC have confirmed they would be happy to receive feedback from Parent Council's on the current/prospective framework, prior to the draft framework/strategy for 2026-29 being finalised and laid before the Education Committee for approval in February 2026.

To assist the PC with their consideration of the strategy/framework and any feedback the PC may wish to provide, DW invited Mr Gallagher to present to the group on how the current framework/strategy is implemented in St Ninians.

[Presentation by Mr Gallagher- implementation of current strategy](#)

Mr Gallagher provided a detailed presentation (slides available upon request) highlighting the following:

1. GTCS definition of social justice – “*Social justice is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities now and in the future*”
2. The three ‘pillars’ of social justice and ERC’s strategy are:

- **Redistribution**

Focus on financial challenges pupils and their families may face, and mitigations that can be put in place to ensure there are no financial barriers for young people.

- **Recognition**

Focus on pupil’s experience in a classroom; how the curriculum is designed; and the variety of curriculum on offer.

Includes consideration of teacher training and professional development.

- **Representation**

Focus on recruitment and retention, and the relationships teachers/SMT/ the school have with parents/learners.

3. Mr Gallagher, the HT and the SMT believe the school is very strong in each ‘pillar’ and that this provides a strong footing on which to implement the strategy/framework in a way that is appropriate, and in accordance with the gospel values and Catholic moral teaching.
4. Mr Gallagher noted that whilst there is an increasing amount of legislation and associated guidance ‘imposed’ on schools, in reality this has little impact on the schools day to day and that, in his experience, ERC are generally very supportive of the faith-based approach to the implementation of the current ERC Social Justice strategy/framework that is taken by St Ninians.
5. Mr Gallagher flagged the ‘CHARTER FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS’ as the most succinct guidance document for catholic schools, and the guidance used almost exclusively at St Ninians. This document provides guidance to teachers on implementing legislation, and its main focus is ‘social justice’.
6. Mr Gallagher provided various examples of how ‘social justice’ and the aims of the current strategy/framework were implemented at St Ninians. These included:

- FAITH LIFE – permeates through every single aspect of the school. Gospel Values visible, underpinning social justice in St Ninians. These are promoted at assemblies, and in teachers and the SMT's dealings with young people. Most effective tool, in attaining social justice, was using faith life and gospel values.
- CARITAS GROUP –S6 pupils run by Ms Reid. Thriving, whole culture is charity, giving, selflessness.
- ‘One St Ninians’ GROUP – group of staff and pupils activities and initiatives. Social justice/equality at the forefront of what the group does. Directed by pupils and aimed at raising awareness of everyone’s story. Build up picture of ethnically diverse school, bounds everyone together.
- LAUDATE SI – recycling of blazers, part of wider project to reduce the cost of the school day.
- INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM – Teachers always looking for ways to ensure that all pupils see themselves in the curriculum. Example given of biology class, and physiology module. Focus on movement – previously didn’t include anything on disabilities/ where movement might be impaired. Curriculum is updated to include reference to protected characteristics, but not ‘shoehorned’ in – only where relevant and appropriate.
As a catholic school, the gospel values are woven through the curriculum wherever possible.
- CHARTER FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS – Mr Gallagher reiterated his passionate belief that the guidance set out in the Charter was the right way to teach. Morals/ethics we (the teachers) want to pass on. It is an obligation for teachers. Professional standards set that out. Social justice is important.

DW thanked Mr Gallagher for this input and invited questions from the group.

In response to a question from **CW** re: what amendments, if any, the school would like to see in the updated strategy/framework, Mr Gallagher noted that it might be helpful to make it explicit in the framework that denominational schools would seek to implement the strategy in their own particular way, and in accordance with their faith and beliefs. Mr Gallagher noted however that taking this approach hadn’t been an issue to date for St Ninians, and that he and the SMT thought this was something already understood, and supported, by ERC.

JS suggested that, in advance of the next meeting, views/input be sought from Fr Matthew Carlin at Paisley Diocese. Fr Carlin has done a lot of work/research in this space and would likely have some helpful views to share with regards to how Catholic education should engage with the framework/strategy.

DMcL – commented that it might be helpful to acknowledge the contribution of the clergy to reinforcing the gospel message on social justice. Linked back to previous discussion re: ‘opt out’ Bill. Important to bolster faith life/ opportunities to get involved throughout a pupils time at the school; to avoid ‘Caritas’ etc. being ‘last chance saloon’.

There followed a general discussion of Caritas, and other opportunities throughout school for pupils to participate in social justice work/ life of the school generally. Mr O’Neill pointing out that ‘Caritas’ really just a reflection of all that happened in years leading up to that point. 6TH year an opportunity to look back and reflect.

Mr Cumming noting that a group of pupils was out that evening at a meeting to become eucharistic ministers.

Mo – thanked Mr Gallagher for input and commented she found that to be a helpful way to proceed – i.e. setting out the issue in a paper/presentation so that PC has time to consider and reflect on a response, in advance of more substantive discussions next time.

ACTION POINT: Council to consider materials included in Paper 3, and Mr Gallagher’s presentation, in advance of more fulsome discussion of potential PC response to/input on strategy at November meeting.

[Parent Council Chair’s meeting of 24 September 2025 \(Paper 4, attached\)](#)

DW provided brief summary of meeting.

Little of note for secondary PC’s, and St Ninians only PC from a secondary school represented.

PVG primary focus of discussions at the meeting, and DW noted this has limited relevance to St Ninians, given structure of school events.

The Council’s work on a new PIE strategy brought to the PC’s attention. Appears, however, more work to be done on that, following on from discussions at the Chairs meeting of 24 September.

ACTION POINT: Council to consider materials provided, prior to more fulsome discussion/consideration of possible response at future meeting.

[Diocesan of Paisley Education Meeting held on 22 September](#)

Noted that two members of the PC in attendance at this meeting: the Vice Chair, AM and CMcL.

AM notes from the meeting provided at Paper 5.

CMcL flagged one particular point of potential interest to the PC – the development of a 'confirmation' app. This was developed after a 'trend' was noticed whereby fewer children were being presented for confirmation. This was the first attempt at 'app-based' learning for a sacrament, and has proved to be popular, and successful.

There followed some discussion of both the app, and the reduced number of children wishing to be confirmed.

CW suggested that this was something St Ninians could look at -i.e. whether any pupils who had missed confirmation at P6/7 may, now that they were a bit older and more mature, wish to be prepared for the sacrament in secondary.

Mr O'Neil noted this wasn't something on his radar, but he would note and take away to have a think about what the school might be able to do.

Mr Cumming commented that children had been confirmed in St Ninians in 2020/21 following Covid and the 'lockdown' that had meant they weren't able to receive it in primary school.

JS commented that there were increasing numbers of young people looking for faith/return to their faith who may now be interested in being confirmed.

ACTION POINT: Children who missed confirmation in primary school; HT to explore whether interest in/scope to be prepared for confirmation at St Ninians.

6 Head Teacher's Report:

Exam timetable/ SQA Appeals

SQA has now published exam timetable.

Disappointed that exams coming hot on heels of Easter holidays, which is not ideal. Pupils back in school on Tuesday, meaning for some pupils, they will only get to go and see their teacher once, before exams start.

Wed 22 April – SPANISH exams – affecting approx. 40 young people.

Sixth year 'last day' in Holy Week. Will need to consider how best to manage.

DW – possible to adjust exam timetable?

HT – Perhaps, quite a bit of discussion. Potentially detrimental to one of SG's big objectives- closing the attainment gap.

SQA appeals came in. Success rate very small – 7% ish. Science based subjects more like 0.5%.

EASTER SCHOOL Plan this year is to reduce to one week. More concentrated and money used to pay for easter school directed into supported study. Letters to parents going out soon, explaining plans.

COST OF SCHOOL DAY/TRIPS Work ongoing to ensure everyone gets an opportunity to go on at least one school trip, and to make these as affordable as possible. Learnings from recent trips re: how to pack more in to a shorter timeframe, thereby increasing value.

Noted that many trips are heavily oversubscribed.

OTHER MATTERS OF NOTE:

- Mrs McBride, the HT of St Cadoc's Primary is retiring. Retiral mass in school. St Ninians to provide the music.
- 4G pitch back on –good addition.
- 'Restart a a heart'. Last Wednesday online restart a heart day. Led by paramedics. Would be helpful to have every young person trained in that.
- DAY OF PRAYER FOR PEACE – tomorrow
- Throughout the month of October doing the Rosary and learning on the Rosary in RE.
- National music prelims finished.
- Information evenings for DoE and UCAS applications due this week.
- First year maths night held in school, with very positive feedback.
- '**La Sallian'projects**. Interviews now completed, with pupils from both 5th and 6th year have indicated a desire to take part.
- PISA assessments have taken place
- French government sponsored languages/sustainability conference – fully funded – interview process – 6 young people successful. Excellent opportunity.

Mr Cumming advising that a number of depts. will run supported study. Dates/ formal programmes will be sent out after October school week.

7 Parents Questions

'ACHIEVE'

HT provided update on previous parent question re: ACHIEVE.

Following on from the parent question, looked into what the app was, how it worked. Secured a free trial in school for month after which decision was made to subscribe to the platform. Plan is to make it available to all departments in the school

Mr Gallagher – most useful in STEM subjects. Achieve is a self-contained course that pupils can work on independently, particularly those who are not/cannot attend school, for whatever reason. Resourced for them to be able to work through curriculum. Helpful to all pupils, and has been a really positive suggestion.

HT – cost is 35p per pupil. Surprised I didn't know about it. Will take some time to have a look to see how it can be integrated.

Mr Gallagher – kids can access it at the moment. Once fully integrated, teachers can assign homework etc./pupils can assign themselves work.

Learn/assess/evaluate. Can test yourself. Really useful. Only offering at the moment that is quite sparse is at Adv Higher.

JS – who produces the material?

Mr Gallagher – forerunner was 'Scholar'. 'ACHIEVE' appears to be more aligned to SQA, so better than 'Scholar'.

HT – plan is to send a letter to parents to flag it as available as a resource. Reservations about promoting on PC Instagram at the moment, as staff haven't been through it all and not a resource we control. Can't vouch for quality, although early indications are that its very good.

8 **AOCB**

- Day of Prayer for Peace (Paper 6)
- Use of AI in school – to be added to 'ACTION LONG' as standing agenda item/action.

9 **Closing Prayer**

10 **Meeting ends: 8.35pm Next meeting: Monday 10 November at 7p.m.**