

Burra Parent Council

Minutes of Meeting of Burra Parent Council held at Hamnavoe Primary School on Monday 9 March 2026 at 6pm.

Present: Jennifer Nicolson (Chairperson)
Denise Duncan (Vice-Chairperson)
Jo Goodier (Parent)
Ellyn Hutchison (Parent)
Jill Irvine (Parent)
Laura Johnson (Parent)
Judy Priest (Parent)
Amy Williamson (Parent)

In Attendance: Suzanne Inkster (Clerk)
Helen Robertson (Head Teacher)

Notice of Meeting

Jennifer welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies

No apologies.

Approve Minutes

Minutes of meeting held on 19 November 2025 were approved by Denise, seconded by Ellyn.

Shared Headship

Helen said that this has been very challenging because the teacher in Foula had been absent and no cover could be found. Helen has had to prepare the work and deliver the lessons to the Foula pupils online. The ELC person in Foula and instructors have been supporting where they can, which has been helpful. This ensured the school remained open. Helen added that she is thankful that we have an ASN teacher in Hamnavoe as this has meant she has not had that to deal with also. The teacher has now returned to post and things are beginning to settle once more. The Foula bairns are growing in confidence and have made friendships with the Hamnavoe bairns. The joint headship position is to be reviewed after 2 years.

School Improvement Plan

The priority of Improving enjoyment and attainment in reading is still very much a focus. The recent World Book Day event was a success and made £700 at the book fare. The school receives 40% of this for new books. Helen reported that 2/3 of what had been sent for the book fare had been sold. The school is promoting 'Enjoying Reading In Class' known as ERIC time. This is daily reading of the child's own choice. The older classes (P6/7 and some P5s) are still working on increasing their enjoyment of reading and Helen will speak to these pupils to see what reading materials they would be more interested in. A date has been set to sort out the reading materials in the library and the school will try to get any kind of reading that pupils will be interested in eg comics, online reading etc.

The school has also had a 'masked reader event', where previous members of staff would read online to the bairns and then had to reveal their identity.

Staffing

Mrs Reynolds our probationer teacher of P4/5 has left. However she has been replaced with a full time teacher for P4/5. Erica had been employed for an extra day a fortnight to support the school. Rachel Mitchell our ASN teacher has been increased to 4 days.

Helen said that they are keen to get a probationer next school year. The current role is 69 which could mean 3 classes of 20+ each. Acquiring a probationer teacher would mean the class sizes can be kept lower.

Julia Leask is on maternity and Shannon Williamson is covering for her. Judy and Ellyn are both doing LSW for 1 day a week. There is still a shortage of 5 hours a week for LSW and the school is still looking to employ a 10 hours play support worker.

Helen noted that on Fridays the school has 3 support workers instead of 5. Pupils are getting tired and dysregulated by the end of the week and it can be a very challenging day.

Support staff are moved about and are not consistently with one child. The ASN timetable is quite fluid and has to change a bit each day.

Helen said there will be an Inclusion visit by Sandra Petrie soon to look at our ASN base. 51% of our pupils at Hamnavoe have additional support needs. Nationally figures are around 50%.

There will be an ASN audit shortly. This will hopefully be done by a needs based calculation rather than based on the pupil role. This is under review. The number of LSW allocated for the school will be calculated on the number of Stage 2 and 3 pupils.

School Dinners

Jennifer said that school dinners was discussed at the biannual meeting, and appears to be a Shetland wide problem. Similar feelings exist across the schools apart from the really small schools where canteen staff go off menu. It was raised that the menu is very repetitive with the current 3 week rotation.

Helen said that she is in the dinner hall, and can see that our canteen staff make a lot of food and pupils can go up for extra helpings. There is also raw vegetables eg carrots and peppers, and fresh chopped fruit which is offered every day. Helen said a lot of older bairns that are required to pay for dinners are opting to take pack lunch instead. Helen will ask Dorothy if she can vary the dinner choice at all in the constraints she has to work within. Jennifer will write to Marlene Hunter to discuss some of the issues.

Helen said that they could try a 'bring your parents to dinner' for our new S1 parents in August, and potentially for the parents of other classes on a different day.

PVG for Helpers

Helen informed the parent council that parents helping in school will be encouraged to submit PVG applications however there is a huge backload of these to process. Once these PVG's are in place then the person can work with pupils without being supervised. Any volunteers who do not have PVG must be supervised and not alone with pupils. If anyone wants to come in to do volunteer work and would like to get their PVG done, can contact Helen and she will put them in touch with the right people.

Movie Night

There is keen interest for having a movie night, however it would be preferred that this was not during the week. Friday would be a good night to choose. It was also suggested to delay this until the nights got darker again. A provisional date of Friday 25th of September has been set. This will be 4 weeks after our family fun night (Friday 28th August). This will be added to the Agenda in August.

P7 Trips

The possibility of having P7 trip this year was discussed. The reasons an over night trip can't take place are the high level of need the pupils have and staffing the trip so that it would be safe for everyone. Mrs Robertson expressed concerns about the challenging behaviour that some pupils in this group have.

School Bus

During the snow, the school bus was unable to reach Papil because the passing places were blocked. The Council ploughs clear the road but don't go into the passing places. It was suggested that this should be passed on to the Burra and Trondra Community Council to raise with the Shetland Islands Council.

School Photos

A few parents have enquired as to whether there will be a school photo this year. Helen said these are usually every 2nd year and that there will be a photo due now at the end of this school year. Helen will contact Ben Mullay to do photos in May. Helen also mentioned that school hoodies can be ordered from Intersport.

Parent Comments

Some parents have raised concerns again around pupil behaviour in classes, adding that disruptive behaviour is making it difficult for bairns to concentrate on their learning. Some pupils feel that those causing the disruption are allowed out of the class to do activities eg bake. Helen said that these children are being removed to the base due to their complex needs, and as these needs cannot be seen, it is difficult for other pupils to understand.

Helen agreed that behaviour is a problem and added that there has been damage done in and around the school. The use of CCTV was discussed as an option to reduce vandalism/damage around the school. The police are coming to the school again to do a talk on anti social behaviour. Stuart Club is coming in to do some inclusion work.

It was agreed to keep behaviour on the agenda for our next meeting.

AOCB

Jennifer will organise the P7 leavers hoodies.

Our annual May Fundraiser Coffee Morning will be held on Saturday 16th May 2026.

Date of Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday 5th May at 6pm.**