

Minute of Meeting of Whalsay Parent Council

Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 5.30pm in the Primary School

Present: Zoe Williamson – Chair
Margaret Leask – Vice Chair
Julie Reid – Treasurer
Anita Sparrow - Clerk
Gina Sandison
Debbie Murray
Maria Kay
Marie Polson
Amanda Williamson
June Thomson

Staff: Helen Kerr
Pauline Irvine
Lynsey Irvine
Elizabeth Patterson
Denise Johnson

Apologies: Caroline Shearer
Susan Pearson
Louise Laurenson

Welcome

Zoe welcomed everyone to the meeting. As it was Helen's first meeting, and to help with familiarisation, everyone introduced themselves and stated what class they represent.

Minute of Last Meeting

There were amendments to the minutes of the meetings held on 29 November 2022 and 21 February 2023. These will be revised and presented to the next meeting.

Matters Arising

Snow Rota

Zoe wondered if school staff had considered her suggestion of ceasing the snow rota and communicating via the parent council class groups. It was agreed that, as of now, Helen would contact Zoe and Margaret and one of them would post on the parent council whatsapp group. Class reps would then pass on the information through their class group. It was further agreed that if anyone still wishes to get a phone call that will be put in place. Anita will compile a list of anyone still to get a phone call and pass this on to the school.

It was noted that some people are not in the class groups. Zoe will discuss this with Marie after the meeting.

Sports Day Merchandise

Gina advised that they will be looking at this through October and will provide an update to a future meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Brian has handed over most stuff to Julie. Due to his being away fishing, it has not been possible for a full handover. It was noted we currently have a balance of £5102.31. Zoe and Julie should be made signatories for the bank account.

Head Teacher's Report

Staffing

Helen Kerr has now started her secondment as Headteacher which will continue until January 6th. The permanent post has yet to be advertised.

Charlotte Hutchison has started as P5/6 teacher.

Natalie Constable has started as Science teacher.

We still have a music vacancy, although Nick Stevenson is covering S1 and 2 classes and Maree Simpson is in for primary,

Nursery

Staff have been working with the pupils to give them more ownership of the Floorbook. This is where much of their learning is captured through photos and pupil comments. The Floorbook is readily available in the nursery for the pupils to look at/add to and for parents/carers to see.

The pupils have shown an interest in the emergency services this term so Gemma Jamieson visited to speak about the role of a nurse and last week the group walked to the Fire Station to see the fire engine and learn about the role of a fireperson; thank you to both. We are keen to continue developing links with our parent group and the community based on the children's interests where possible.

Primary

Primary 1 started full days last week and everybody has settled back to school well.

Friday Fun

Activities this term includes Drawing group, Lego/Construction, Hamma Beads, gardening, Darts and Nursery. We also have a group from the secondary down to support pupils and after October, they will be working on the Christmas Enterprise group. Christmas Fair and parents invited to Friday Fun Friday 1st December

Pupil voice

Pupil council has met – looking to fundraise for goalposts, JRSO's have been selected by last year's JRSO.

Christmas

As a staff, we have decided that the Primary concert format will alternate between a show and singing concert, this year will be a singing concert. Pupils will still have the opportunity

to 'dress up' in a theme. Christmas concert will be afternoon of the Thursday 14th December and morning of the Friday 15th.

Party

We are planning to have a primary party during the day in the last week of term, this will be an opportunity for the P7s to lead games, dances etc. We would be looking to submit a bid to the parent council for juice and crisps.

Secondary

Notable events this term:

S2 John Muir Day

S2 have completed their first outdoor day, which was coasteering. The next one will be a wild ramble and is scheduled for Thursday November 16th.

Wider Achievement

For Terms 1 and 2, we have 4 groups of Wider Achievement activities. We have a sports group, screen-printing and sketch-booking, primary helpers and S4 are planning their Christmas Party,

YPI

This will resume this year with S3, and will be delivered by Laurie Anne Carr with S3. This will be properly launched in term 2.

Class Rep Questions/Issues

Nursery

Debbie asked if there are any trips planned and if there is any funding to cover trips or if they would need to fundraise. Lynsey advised that there is nothing planned so far. It would be term 3 or 4 before any trips would be likely.

Primary 1

Marie praised how well the transition from nursery to P1 had gone. The meeting with Lynsey had really reassured parents.

Primary 2

It was confirmed that parent council minutes would be added to the relevant section on the school website more timeously.

Some parents have not been getting parent council voting forms. Pauline will check this with school office staff.

Primary 6

Gina said that some parents are not being able to access class blogs. They are getting an 'access denied' message. Pauline will look at the permissions to ensure everyone has access.

Gina asked if in the years there is no bikeability, could some general bike information be given to pupils. Pauline advised that everyone has done level 1, apart from the primary 1-3. Level 2 will be done by primary 6 and 7.

Primary 7

Julie asked if the strikes planned for the week commencing 25 September would affect Whalsay school. It was noted that it may affect the nursery but management would be keen for the Primary and Secondary to remain open.

Julie asked if sign language could be taught to pupils. They get French once a week, but some parents felt that BSL may be more important. Helen suggested it could maybe be part of wider achievement.

Secondary 1

A link to the parent council section of the website will be sent out via parent council class groups. This will ensure parents have access to minutes.

Secondary 2

Zoe raised concerns around parking at the secondary. Perhaps due to the number of pupils being picked up by car instead of going on the bus, there are considerably more cars dropping off and picking up pupils. There are not enough parking spaces available, causing cars to wait on the Crudens road and before Debbie and Ingrid's houses. People visiting the history group adds to the congestion. A car would appear to have been abandoned opposite the multi court. Does that area belong to the school? Helen will look into the parking situation to see if more spaces can be created and will find out the situation with the abandoned car.

School Trip

Zoe asked if a proper school trip could be arranged. This would ideally be out of the UK. Prior to covid there were trips every second year. There was discussion about what classes would go and if fundraising could help. Denise said that in previous years the Christmas card money had gone towards school trips. Helen advised that cost should not prevent anyone going. Staff will discuss this.

Teacher Representatives

Helen has a rota underway for this.

Head Teacher Recruitment

Samantha Flaws advised Anita that she has done the paperwork to begin the process of recruiting a permanent head teacher. Anita, Margaret and Amanda are the only people from the parent council who have done recruitment training. Zoe may be interested in doing this training.

Recruitment of a music teacher is also being looked at.

Tesco Strong Starts Grant

At the moment grants are being aimed at healthy eating projects within schools. If there was any project the school has in mind this grant may be available.

Pauline advised they may be applying for a grant from the windmill fund. An evaluation form must first be done for the grant the parent council got for the poly crub. Anita and Julie will liaise about this and get it completed.

Funding Requests

A funding request was approved for S1-3 pupils to attend the Diane Arbus exhibition at the Shetland Museum. Approximate cost is £200.

A funding request was approved to help cover costs of food and decorations for the secondary Christmas party. £140.

AOCB

Parent Volunteers

Pauline will be sending out a letter asking for parent volunteers to come in on Fridays to help with Friday fun or wider achievements. The type of things it could involve are arts and crafts, sports, card games, board games, model yachts etc. It would be a 6 week block. Class reps should get a discussion going in their groups to hopefully encourage parents to volunteer.

Literacy Event

An informal event will be held in term 2, after school. This will show how spelling is taught in school. This was in the school improvement plan. Suggestions will be made on what parents and pupils could be doing at home, ideas for reading etc. Pauline is looking for parents to form part of a working group. They would meet once or twice before the event and perhaps help with teas and coffees on the day. A letter will be issued from the school asking for volunteers.

School Facebook Page

Pauline wondered how people would feel about opening up the school facebook page to a wider audience. It was agreed that parents should be asked through a poll.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on 14 November 2023 at 5.30pm in the primary school.