

Minute of Whalsay Parent Council AGM held on 19 June 2025

Present: Zoe Williamson – Chair
Margaret Leask – Vice Chair
Alison Shearer
Julie Anderson
Tanya Arthur
Eilidh Eunson
Marie Polson
Louise Laurenson

Staff: Niall Healy

Apologies: Caroline Manson
Debbie Murray
Valerie Anderson
Leona Sandison
Caroline Watt

Welcome

Zoe Welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minute of Last Meeting

The minute of the AGM held on 27 August 2024 was approved by Julie and seconded by Margaret.

Chair's Report

Thank you to all the outgoing class reps for all their hard work. Also thank you to the new class reps for joining the parent council

Special thanks to Niall, personally I think he has made a huge impact on the school for the better and hear nothing but good reports from both parents & children.

It has also been super to work with the rest of the staff team, and feel the school and the PC has made such a big step forward together and have a far better rapport now as ever before. We've had great fun doing fundraising events together such as the rnli fish & chips, V.E Day teas.

Anita sent you all the link with information about what the parent council is, so hopefully you had a chance to read it. The Parent Council aim to meet once a term, if for any reason you can't make it, we ask that you get another parent to attend to be rep for your class so that all classes are represented. Class reps should have a group set up on whatsapp, messenger

or facebook, that includes a parent or carer of each pupil. This will enable quick and easy communication.

The role of the Parent Council is to support the school in its work. Represent the views of the parents and carers, and encourage links between school, parents, carers, pupils, pre-school groups and the wider community. Individual staff members, families and bairns cannot be discussed at Parent Council meetings. Concerns at this level must be taken to the school.

The Parent Council funds are looking very good at the moment. money from the bingo night, rni fundraiser, cauliflower cards, christmas concert raffle. It could be helpful to keep notes from fundraising events detailing what worked well, how much was raised etc.

Regarding the house team t-shirts, Alison raised concern about the price of them, with others agreeing they are expensive. There was discussion around those who receive free school meals receiving a free or discounted t-shirt. In addition it was noted that sometimes it's those who don't fall in to this category that can actually struggle more financially, as they are expected to pay for most things themselves. It was noted that the t-shirts are very good quality and will last and can be handed down. Further ideas about this can be discussed at a future meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Julie advised that on 31 March we had £4515.29. There will be roughly £1000 to come off that total. Leaving us around about £3500.

Head Teacher's Report

Staffing updates:

Business Management

Mrs. Kari Hamilton is the preferred candidate for the position of Business Management teacher. This post will initially be a 1 day a week teaching post with Kari continuing with her duties as ASN teacher in Secondary also.

Physical Education

Ms. Chloe Cheyne will be joining the staff team from August as Probationer teacher of P.E. Ms. Cheyne will be teaching classes in both Primary and Secondary and will be supported by Mrs. Natalie Constable as a mentor. Niall to provide further assistance for Sports teams, Interhouse events, Sports days etc

Art/RME

Ms. Carr is currently returning to work on a phased basis with a view to being back in permanently from August.

Senior Practitioner – Nursery

Interviews taking place this week. We have a preferred candidate with updates to follow in due course.

Early Years worker

Closing date has just passed and interviews are lined up for next week.

YPI – Youth Philanthropy Initiative

Our school finals for the YPI programme which highlights important social causes locally and nationally were held on Wednesday 7th May with groups of pupils having engaged with and developed their understanding of the Fisherman's Mission, Alzheimer Scotland, The Whalsay Heritage Centre and Shoard.

The winning prize of a £3,000 charity donation was awarded to Brooke Robertson and Carrie Liphthorpe who represented Shoard.

Winning pupils also attended the National finals in Perth which showcased young people's work from across Scotland.

Sports updates

Sports Day for Nursery, Primary and Secondary pupils was held on Monday 9th June. A day of great excitement, community engagement and healthy competition. Thank you to all teachers who contributed to running the heats and preliminary events in PE classes in the weeks leading up to Sports Day, to Mrs. Irvine for compiling all the scores and results and to all the pupils who helped with setting out equipment and helping with different races. Sports Day featured the house coloured t-shirts with the updated school logo and added hugely to a great day. Congratulations to Tirrick on taking the overall prize.

Further sporting success has followed for our school with our participation in the County Sports event. Congratulations to our pupils who brought home an impressive haul of medals back to Whalsay.

Wider Achievement/Friday fun

We have trialled a different model of delivery this term with a greater amount of collaboration and mixing of Primary and Secondary pupils. The concept is to provide leadership opportunities for our senior pupils with guidance and mentoring from the lead teacher. Additionally, to give pupils a wider learning experience than what is part of regular curriculum learning.

Bridges project

In Term 4, we have collaborated with Youth services to provide a learning opportunity for some pupils in Secondary who are potentially considering engaging with Bridges services more formally as part of their post 16 journey. My thanks to Ryan Jamieson and David Simpson for leading the project and working with Ms. Irvine. It has been of great benefit to the pupils' confidence and skills development.

VE day

We celebrated VE day last month with a real focus on the link between how worldwide events impacted our local community. Thank you to organisers and those who visited from the wider community.

African drumming

Thanks to Joy Duncan for leading a great showcase of African drumming in the Primary. Another very well supported initiative which supports our curriculum delivery.

School Improvement Priorities

For next Academic Year, we are going to have a focus on:

1) Developing the Rights Respecting Schools initiative – Developing our Personal and Social Education learning as part of our Health and Wellbeing curriculum. Both steps are aimed at encouraging a happy and healthy school environment and ethos where there are warm and nurturing relationships between members of the school community.

2) Parental Engagement – Delivering workshops to develop parental understanding of how our curriculum is delivered and how we can work together to support our young people.

Review and consultation about Homework allocations in both Primary and Secondary will be a part of this focus. Additionally, Roselyn Fraser will be offering after school sessions on Friday afternoons for parents and pupils to learn together. These sessions will be a mix of cooking and baking, arts and crafts, practical skills and sports activities.

3) Differentiation – As a staff group, we will be focused on how best to support pupils with varying learning needs and different types of learners. We will be collaborating with outside agencies such as Psychology services to develop our knowledge, understanding and approaches to supporting pupils at different ages and stages.

Election of Office Bearers

Alison Shearer was elected as Chair, nominated by Louise and seconded by Tanya.

Margaret Leask was re-elected as Vice Chair, nominated by Eilidh and seconded by Andrea.

Julie Reid will remain as Treasurer.

Anita Sparrow will remain as Clerk.

The fundraising team are Leona Sandison, Tanya Arthur and Zoe Williamson.

Funding Request

A funding request from Natalie for physics/science equipment totalling £588.97 was approved.

Zoe asked why the parent council is asked to fund so much now and more funding doesn't come from the Education Department. Niall explained that he has looked at the science equipment at the school and it is very out of date. The funding request is for long term equipment.

AOCB

Alison said that her girls go to dancing at Vidlin. It is a resource that is on our door step and could be made use of by the school. She will find out more about the cost, as it is quite expensive for individuals, but a group cost could be different. At the moment she caters for P1-4. This could be looked at as part of wider achievement.

Marie wondered if parents could be involved in the traditional dancing lessons when they are on, usually towards the end of the year.

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be agreed once the new school year commences.