

WHALSAY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting

Thursday 30th April 2026 at 5.30pm in Whalsay Primary School

Present: Alison Shearer – Chair
Leona Sandison – Secretary
Valerie Anderson
Tanya Arthur
Debbie Murray
Eilidh Eunson
Caroline Manson
Andrea Huntley
Louise Laurenson
Zoe Williamson

In Attendance: Ashley Mair – S3 pupil
Lara Thomson – S3 pupil

Staff: Niall Healy
Kari Hamilton

Apologies: Caroline Watt
Margaret Leask
Anita Sparrow

Welcome

Alison welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Ashley and Lara for attending to give feedback from their enterprise project.

Apologies

There were apologies from Caroline, Margaret and Anita. Leona has now taken over the role of Secretary from Anita. Thanks to Anita for her work during the previous few years.

Secondary Enterprise Group

Ashley and Lara (S3 Business Management pupils) attended the meeting to give a presentation on how their recent enterprise project had gone. They did a Dragons Den style pitch to some Parent Council members earlier this year and received a loan from the Parent Council to get the project started.

The project consisted of producing and selling various items, including Whalsay Postcards and books with stories from the Whalsay Heritage Centre. Ashley said they faced various challenges, including poor weather on the day of their sale, but adapted their plans for this. Lara said they learned new skills and were delighted to raise £948 at their sale.

The Heritage Centre books were very popular so they ordered more of these and donated £150 worth to the Heritage Centre.

They also returned their loan to the Parent Council and have donated £100 from their profits as a thank you.

Niall thanked pupils and staff for their hard work with this project and said it was great to see pupils, staff and Parent Council working together on this.

Parent Council members agree and Alison thanked the pupils for their kind donation.

Ashley and Lara left the meeting.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

There are a few changes to be made to these minutes. Leona will do this and send to PC members soon.

Matters Arising

School Lunch – Debbie and Zoe volunteered to go for a school lunch and this will be arranged soon.

P1 Gate – This has been reported to Building Services. Niall will follow this up.

Marimba funding – Kirsten O'Dwyer is looking into cheaper options for this.

Treasurer's Report

At the last meeting we had £5136.32. Total expenses since then have been £341.76 so the current total now is £4794.56. There is also £500 in the bank account which is funding that Kirsten O'Dwyer received from the Community Council Participatory Budget event – this is not included in the Parent Council funds.

Head Teacher Report – 30.4.26

Staffing updates

Nursery teacher – Mrs. Lynsey Irvine will continue to cover the Nursery teaching vacancy until the summer break. We will then have a further round of recruitment.

Maths – Ms. Eileen Macgregor will be retiring at the end of the current Academic Year. The recruitment process for a replacement teacher is underway with interviews taking place this week.

ASN/Business Secondary – The role of Mrs. Kari Hamilton will be extending in the Secondary school from August with increased hours for both Business Management and the teaching and coordination of Additional Support Needs. Hours and contract to be finalised once the ASN audit results are released.

YPI – S3's. Our YPI finals will be held on Tuesday 5th May. The charities being supported this year include Dogs Against Drugs, CLAN, Macmillan and RNMDSF.

Modules – Our S3 pupils are coming towards the end of completing their Modules for the Kings trust. The King's Trust offers **SCQF level 4** qualifications focused on Personal Development and Employability (PDE). Pupils have completed units in Communication, Presentation, Teamwork and Health and Wellbeing. This is a program that has been coordinated by our Youth worker Sadie Simpson with support and input from Ms. Wilson.

Nursery visit – We had Lauren Smith, Education Support Officer within the Local Authority visit our Nursery last week to support our Quality Assurance processes. A very positive visit with a number of areas of progress recognised with some areas for improvement

S4 National exams – Currently ongoing. Biology paper today. We wish all our S4 pupils well. A Year book is being put together by staff at the moment and will be presented to the leavers in due course to mark their journey through Whalsay School.

Qualifications Scotland verification – We had a visiting inspector on Monday 27th April to look at pupils work and assessments in Design and Manufacture. Looked at work samples and pupil assessments. All areas observed were deemed fully acceptable.

Community worker – Leah Colyer is now our link Community worker and is organising the upcoming Family Learning days. The purpose of these days is to continue providing opportunities for families to come into school and take part in different learning activities – arts and crafts, cooking, sports etc.

School self-evaluation and School Improvement

In the coming weeks, we will be coordinating a number of different activities related to school improvement. Consultation with all stakeholders is important for school improvement and we will be looking to gather the views of pupils, parents and staff to help drive standards into next school year.

Meta Skills

The development of meta skills is soon to become a whole school focus and driver for improvement. Meta skills are nationally recognised by Skills Development Scotland and can be developed across the full school age range and into adult life. Examples of meta skills include adaptability, leadership, creativity, communication and curiosity.

Music festival

Pupils from P3 – P7 were drumming in their class groups and achieved gold certificates. Sincere thanks to Joy Duncan.

Fiddle group performed and achieved a silver award.

We had pupils who won the duet trophy on the piano.

Open afternoon in Primary – Staff felt that it was a really positive event. Appreciate all the parental support.

Book Week – Lots of whole school collaboration – Secondary pupils read to Nursery and Primary. A big effort made to promote a vital area of the curriculum.

Class Rep Questions/Issues

Play Sessions - There was positive feedback about the play sessions which have been introduced to Primary on Fridays. Pupils are enjoying these and are keen to discuss what they've been up to with parents. Also good to see them mixing with other classes.

African Drumming - There was also praise for Joy Duncan for the recent drumming showcase. Due to the disruption to the ferries then a lot of parents couldn't make it to the Music Festival at Mareel so were pleased to be able to see the pupils perform at the school.

Blue Bollard – Parents have enquired whether this can be removed at the Primary as it has resulted in a lot of damage to cars. Niall said this was already being looked into.

Mud Kitchen – Alison thanked Lynsey Irvine for the mud kitchen in P1/2 and said pupils were enjoying this.

Dancing – Alison would also like to thank Chloe Cheyney and Kirsten O'Dwyer for the after school dancing as pupils are really enjoying this.

Funding Request

P3/4 trip to Windfarms – It was agreed to fund this trip. Leona will look into how to access funding from the Shetland Community Benefit Fund for future projects.

A.O.C.B

New Reps – A discussion was held on how to vote on new reps to the Parent Council. It was agreed to ask for volunteers from the year groups and if this is unsuccessful then we will go back to the voting system used in previous years. New reps are required for Nursery (pre-school), P2, P5 and S3.

Homework Survey – The Homework Policy has not yet been finalised but is due to be soon.

Secondary Access – Kari asked if it was possible to get a gate on the pedestrian access at the main entrance to the Secondary. A lot of younger children have been using the multicourt recently and this would prevent them from running out the exit onto the main road. Niall will look into this.

Date of next meeting

The A.G.M. will be held on Thursday 11th June at 5.30pm.