



Balforn High School Parent Council

Minutes of EGM and meeting held online on Tuesday 14 January 2024 at 6.30pm.

Attendees:

A Winther (Vice Chair), F Gallagher (Secretary), E Bannatyne (HT), C Appelquist (DHT), P Slavin (DHT), D Braid (DHT), R McQuater (Treasurer), J MacKay, L Armstrong, T Knowles (Head Prefect), R Youens (Head Prefect), A MacKay (Head Prefect), G Johnstone (Head Prefect), H Smith, D Toal, M Christie, L Hadley-Stove, K Goodier

Anne welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Anne explained that Fiona Galloway has had to stand down from the position of Chair. She thanked Fiona for her dedication and exceptional amount of hard work over the last 4 years for the Parent Council.

Anne explained that the Parent Council is therefore short of members and that parts of the constitution is out of date.

EGM Business

1. Election of new chair

Fiona Gallagher nominated Anne Winther as the new Chair of the Balforn Parent Council. This nomination was seconded by Jackie MacKay. Anne is therefore elected to the post of Chair.

2. Election of new members

Lynne Armstrong was nominated as an elected member of the Balforn Parent Council by Jackie MacKay. This nomination was seconded by Elaine Bannatyne.

Debbie Toal was nominated as an elected member of the Balforn Parent Council by Rob McQuater. This nomination was seconded by Elaine Bannatyne.

3. Changes to constitution

The proposed changes to the constitution were sent to parents via email prior to the meeting. In summary, the proposed revisions are:

- Changes to language - SMT (Senior Management Team) revised to SLT (Senior Leadership Team)

- Composition of parent council – currently minimum of 14, change to a minimum of 8 (includes HT, Head Prefects and school staff)
- All co-opted members will be charity trustees
- There should always be 5 x committee members at every meeting – outwith bi-monthly meetings. This should include 3 x members, 1 x HT and 1 x Head Prefect
- The bank account requires two signatures or online approval from two people
Action - to be set up
- Future changes to the constitution must be made at an AGM or EGM

A show of hands confirmed approval of these changes – 11 attendees supported the revised constitution.

This concluded all EGM business.

Parent Council Meeting

Prelims Update - Phil Slavin, Depute Head Teacher (DHT)

Prelims have been compressed this year to 11 days. This is of benefit to teaching and learning. In the past, prelims at BHS have run for 16 school days. Mr Slavin will be looking for feedback from parents post the prelim exams via a Google form. He outlined that the school may consider running S4 prelims in December and S5/6 prelims in January in the future.

The following queries were raised:

Q – how would splitting the prelims between December and January impact S5/6 pupils taking N5 exams?

A – smaller exams may be taken in December with S4 pupils

Q – is the length of exams considered when planning the prelims?

A – acknowledged that some are not ideal, but the timings are set by the SQA for the main exams

Q – when would pupils revise if their prelims are in December?

A – explained that the school would look at the model used during Standard Grades where courses are taught over 2 years therefore pupils would be ready to sit in December

Q – a parent raised concerns that the current model means pupils lose their Christmas holidays

A – Mr Slavin agreed

Mr Slavin praised the parent invigilators who have done a great job in the past supporting exams. He extended his thanks to these parents.

Changes to School Day Proposal - David Braid, DHT

Mr Braid gave an update on the proposed changes to the school day. Feedback from the transport providers and Stirling Council is that the changes would be costly before Aug 2026 as the transport contracts are not due for renewal until then. The school will request

support from the Parent Council before Aug 2026 to again consider the proposal. Current school timings cause issues with late coming and form class is generally viewed by pupils as a time they can take it easy before the school day begins. Mr Braid will continue to talk to the Council, parents and pupils re changes.

The following question was raised:

Q – can the school day be changed based on the current hours?

A – the impact on teacher's teaching time and contact time would mean losing 27 teaching periods, which is equivalent to losing 1 member of teaching staff and would narrow the curriculum on offer. It is therefore not an option.

Course Choice Meetings – David Braid, DHT

January course choice meetings to take place. These have been delayed in case subjects need to be pulled due to the cut to a member of teaching staff from the Extended Leadership Team (ELT). The process for choosing courses will be explained to parents at the meeting and pupils at assemblies.

UCAS deadline - David Braid, DHT

26 January 2025 – young people can still make changes after that date

Head Teacher's Report – Elaine Bannatyne, Head Teacher (HT) (See Attached)

Highlights since the last meeting

- Christmas concert
- Festive activities – Jazz Band played in Killearn and at the Christmas concert
- Social dance practice
- Christmas dances
- Inter-house competition to design a Christmas door in each form class

Notable wider achievements

- Rotary Young Musician of the Year
- S5 Business pupils attended Challenge Weekend through the Rotary Club
- Debating competition
- S6 barista class – visited coffee bean roasters
- Men's mental health awareness – Movember. Raised awareness of prostate cancer

Sports Council

The pupil led Sports Council discussed and have suggested the following improvements to PE at Balfron HS:

- More games for smaller sports – volleyball and basketball
- Promote para and disability sport
- Pupils leave PE in kit and S4 PE pupils arriving on a Tuesday in kit

Mobile phone policy implementation

- 1 week into implementation of the new policy
- Staff meeting last week – staff were surveyed about new policy – see presentation

- Senior management team checking in classes that policy is being implemented
- Changes are taking less time to administer than anticipated
- The policy will be reviewed around the Feb holiday

Uniform update

- In the winter months uniform standards slip
- There has been an increase in non-school uniform items including hoodies and non-black shoes
- Parents will be surveyed re future changes to the uniform policy

A parent raised that the theatre has been cold during prelim exams. Ms Bannatyne suggested pupils wear a plain black jumper to keep warm. In exams pupils should not wear a hoodie as no pockets allowed as per the SQA rules.

Calendar

See attached HT report for upcoming dates.

Changes to Pupil Support Structure - Claire Appelquist, DHT

- Dr Burns is new to the Pupil Support team
- Previously PTs were each responsible for stage 2 pupils in their own house and the 4th teacher was responsible for all stage 3 and 4 pupils. However there has been a considerable increase in those pupils on stage 3 and 4 at Balfron HS.
- Pupils on stage 2, 3 and 4 are now split between all five teachers. Dr Burns is responsible for specific form classes. Each PT has a total of 9 form classes – see attached
- L1 – Mrs Fisher
- L2 – Mrs Johnstone
- All parents have been notified by letter to confirm who their child's PT Pupil Support is.

Wellbeing Survey - Claire Appelquist, DHT

- 20 item questionnaire will be completed by S1, S2 and S3 pupils over the next three months.
- They will be asked to give their views about themselves and their emotions
- S1s were surveyed after their Auchengillan trip at the end of September
- Pupils are sign posted as to where to go for support, including family
- See examples of responses on the attached

Attendance update - Claire Appelquist, DHT

- See presentation attached for examples of the impact of low attendance on a pupil's attainment and outcomes.
- Attendance has been a special focus at BHS since Aug 2024
- Monthly team meetings are used to scrutinise attendance data
- Information has been sent to parents about the importance of good attendance
- Form Class Leaders are working with pupils in form class to help improve attendance
- Letters are emailed home to parents of those pupils with attendance below 90%
- The school are actively engaging with parents and pupils with very low attendance with support strategies put in place

- Attendance statistics for the 24/225 session have improved on the previous year – see attached
- Overall attendance is still lower than pre-covid levels. The schools aim to get back to this.

Treasures Report – Rob McQuater

- Virgin Money Grant has all been used for STEM support in school
- An award was made to school to support trips - £500 (Dec 2024)
- Christmas Concert - £100 raised

Current balance in bank account - £1,055

STEM on track funding

- Parent Council funded £3780 on a loan basis for STEM on track project
- £950 has been repaid to date
- It was hoped that £2800 would be refunded through grant applications
- Adam MacKay (Head Prefect) is working with the School Resource Officer to try to get grant money into school

Submission of accounts to OSCR

The accounts have previously been submitted but have still to be shared with parents.

Action – this should be done via the padlet or school website.

Fundraising Update

The committee are currently running the Parent Council and are looking for a fundraising committee to be set up to help drive fundraising forward. Additional fundraising events are required to provide the level of support that the Parent Council would like to give the school financially. The Parent Council are therefore requesting fundraising support from the Balfour parent body.

500 Club Update – Katie Goodier

- Apologies that it has not been started again yet this year.
- 6 draws traditionally take place throughout the year.
- It is planned that an email will be sent to parents to galvanise interest and to encourage parents to buy numbers.
- Looking to simplify the 500 Club process.

A parent queried the viability of the 500 Club as it has never sold 500 tickets and questioned whether it a valuable fundraising tool? An alternative was suggested in the form of a School Lottery with tickets priced at £1 with an option to set up direct debits for monthly tickets. Prizes are based on the number of tickets sold. Agreement that this will be considered as an option.

AOB

Silver & Gold Duke of Edinburgh Update

- Only Bronze DofE being offered by school for just now.

- External providers are being used by parents in order for pupils to take part in the Silver and Gold awards.
- Gold fundraising event is taking place.

Christmas Fair

Q - Do parents know that they can attend? Not many parents were at the event in December.

Action – Ms Bannatyne will pass on this feedback.

Orchestra & Music funding

A parent raised that there is a possibility that Stirling Council will no longer be supporting music tuition as per the cost saving proposals outlined in the Big Conversation Survey.

Ms Bannatyne outlined that leaders and staff have had the opportunity to share their views through the Big Conversation staff survey.

Big Conversation Survey

Q - Can the survey be shared with parents?

Action – Ms Bannatyne to share via email

Q – Can the young person's version of the survey be shared with pupils?

Action – Ms Bannatyne to investigate

There was further discussion around the cuts proposed by Stirling Council for the 2025/26 financial year including those impacting schools and education. Ms Bannatyne explained that the school is not part of the decision-making process in terms of cuts to Council funding.

Purpose of Parent Council

It was raised that Parents don't know what the Parent Council's purpose is. Could more information be included in the Parent Council emails?

Balfron Clothing Co Update

A special thank you to Robyn Youens (Head Prefect) for her help with the pre-loved clothing stock. There are a huge number of items in stock. A volunteer is needed to coordinate the second hand sale of pre-loved uniform planned for the uniform evening in June. It is felt that parents are automatically buying new clothes rather than accessing the second hand stock. The sale at previous uniform evenings has been very successful.

It was suggested that the Facebook page could be used to promote availability of stock but also acknowledged that this involves a lot of work.

Action – volunteer required

Confirmation of Parent Council meeting dates:

- Tuesday 4 March 2025 (in-person)
- Tuesday 6 May 2025 – AGM (in-person)

Anne thanked everyone for attending the meeting.