
Peebles High School

Parent Council

**MAY 2020
E-NEWSLETTER**



Note from the chair



Subgroups updates



Moving forward

Note from the Parent Council Chair

Dear Parents and Carers,

We write in the hope that this finds you all well and safe. We know so many of you are coping with being furloughed, unemployed, being a key worker, owning a local business or trying to work from home with young children. So endeavouring to work from home whilst being professionals, teacher and parent all at once is not easy! We also know so many of you are dealing with family illness as a result of Covid 19 and our hearts go out to all of you. So many parents/carers have done some amazing work in their communities as key workers or with food deliveries, medicines, the list goes on. Thank you for everything you are doing to keep our lovely community going.

Further to our groupcall email after lockdown, we would like to thank all the parents, carers and PC members for their proactive offers of help and support during these unprecedented times. We have missed only ONE face to face PC meeting as a result of the lockdown or the fire this session and it was in April. (Although we have had so many more meetings this session than planned for all the wrong reasons !). However, as promised, in our groupcall we have again been working very hard in partnership with the school and the authority to do the best we can for learning, as we did during the fire.

Our grateful thanks go to our school and all staff. To once again you find yourselves required urgently to respond to these circumstances after only just returning to the school in February is incredible. We cannot thank teachers and staff enough. You have rapidly responded to the loss of access to our school again, cancellation of vital exams and adapting to online learning. Thank you so much again.

Thank you too, to SBC, who have been such a positive partner through this time supporting learning via hubs and vital access to healthcare, food and services for everyone. We are so grateful to have access to technology for home learning, it has never been so vital.

Please find in the next few pages, a summary from our active post holders in the PC who in the last week have been collating an update of their activities on your behalf over the last month in absence of our April meeting.

At the end of this e-bulletin is a reminder of how to get in touch and keep up to date with the PC.

Note from the Parent Council Chair cont.

Communication

Throughout this crisis, as with the fire, we have been responding to individual requests for support from parents and carers coming through email, Facebook, Twitter or phone calls.

It has been incredibly busy. The main themes of these requests have been as follows:

- Online learning across all year groups (and concern around loss of practical learning)
- Requests for more “live” learning sessions/ assemblies/fun versus academic
- Volume of online learning (some parents wanting more, some less)
- Technical issues (early on) with online learning including access to YouTube on Ipads
- Support for students with additional learning needs
- Exam cancellation and SQA allowances for the fire
- Online testing for seniors (volume, frequency, consistency, evidence gathering etc across curricular areas)
- Estimate grades and support for us from the SQA and school (how we can ensure that PHS remains on track to its predicted best ever year attainment figures given our challenges gathering evidence due to the fire?)
- Process used in school to estimate grades and decision makers in school
- Support for school leavers
- Wellbeing for students
- Increase communication to parents from school
- Return to school plans and dealing with Political issues of safety, social distancing to students and staff
- Rebate for school trips
- When is the school year starting (May./June?) and what will be the timetable?
- The ongoing consultation for the new rebuild of the school
- Support for S3 students entering the senior phase of learning
- Concern for the ART facilities on an ongoing basis

How have we responded?

Exams and estimates

- Almost daily conversations with Mr Wilson (thank you for your patience!). Writing reports of “what’s hot” from parents via our communication platforms for school to respond to. Generating regular detailed reports in response to all SQA /SBC publications and school processes on exams, evidence gathering and estimate grades to assure fair outcomes for our families. This has including input from parents working in other education sectors e.g. universities as to how they too are responding to loss of exams and awarding degrees. We have also networked with schools in other authorities. Grateful thanks to the small SQA subgroup of parents for all their input.

All year groups

- Producing daily updates on our Facebook and Twitter platforms (as well as posting these as live feeds on our new website so parents do not have to join social media). Uploading online learning resources onto our website from anywhere we can access these, including various “how to guides” and Show my homework. Grateful thanks to our communication officer and new website administrator.
- Writing to the authority to improve Art facilities which are still to be upgraded since the fire and hoping they are ready for any return that might be possible for students. Thank you to the parents that have championed the needs of the Art team.
- Keeping involved with the ongoing consultation for the school rebuild. Thanks so much to the buildings sub group who have worked so effectively with SBC’s PHS liaison officer.

Note from the Parent Council Chair cont.

How the School have responded

Grateful thanks to Mr Wilson and wider staff for the “you said/ we did” responses from school as follows:

- An increase in communication from school to parents and carers, this has been very welcome as it has covered a range of topics. We appreciate the kindness and care in Mr Wilson’s communications. This also has included telephone calls from teachers to students in need of personal 1:1 contact time, thank you.
- “Do no harm” agreement for online testing towards exam grades for senior students, this was agreed with SBC and school whilst in lockdown.
- Input into the process for using data as evidence to teachers for students’ predicted grades. I.e. we asked, if we could use data showing uplift in performance from prelims to final exam in previous academic years. This was to show evidence of improvement in student outcomes from the prelims to the exam diet. Our prelims were just after Xmas and students underperformed c.f. to previous years. This data has been made available to teachers. Thank you.
- Request for teachers to have access to all evidence of work from students that may be locked in the school since lockdown, this was done.
- Support for good notice of timings of testing. Thank you for responding to that.
- Support for additional needs students for testing and online learning.
- Online survey - a quality assurance audit for online learning per curricular area (results to be published).
- Ongoing communication with us about the SQA.
- Thank you for coming to us for input about wellbeing, SQA, timetables for May, senior student leadership etc. that was to go out via online assemblies.
- Agreement to do more live lessons every week to support human contact with teachers for all.
- We continue to support school by posting communications daily on all our platforms
- We have produced, in partnership with Mr Wilson, a letter of reference for all senior students to use as evidence and mitigation of their experience of the fire, as well as Covid 19, during their exam years for use in future applications.
- We have produced a letter with Mr Wilson for ALL centres of learning to ask for extra consideration for all our senior students applying for places and awaiting offers either through conditionals or via clearing.
- Support to Mr Wilson to produce the 6th year videos to students from staff as a goodbye, our grateful thanks to parent Mr McD. for that help!
- We continue to help school with updating the school website.
- Completion of the school rebuild consultation (see separate update)
- Gaining permission to have YouTube on Ipads.
- We will continue to work on your behalf on any issues that impact learning in partnership with school on an ongoing basis. Keep in touch!

Subgroups updates

School rebuild consultation

- SBC recently ran an online consultation to seek views from the wider school community on what works well in the current school, what doesn't work well and the longer term vision for the site. The consultation closed on 30th April and there were 239 responses with a good cross section of respondents. The SBC Project Team also had a video consultation with some of our S1, S2 and S6 pupils to ensure their views were captured at this stage and all pupils will have seen the presentation that was shared as part of the assembly last week.
- The general themes raised were very similar to those the Parent Council recently highlighted in our Vision document which is great news for the project as it demonstrates community support for the project. The Project Team are now considering the detailed responses and learning required from the current pandemic to consider next steps in the project which we will share with parents and carers as soon as possible.

Fundraising

- This has been an incredible year of fundraising not just as a result of the fire but also for the amazing Opportunity Auction and raffle too which raised over **£10,000**. Thank you for all your generosity.
- We would also like to take this moment to formally thank the **PHS Recovery Ball Team**. For the incredible hard work of Ross and Mark (and helpers) and everyone at Peebles Hydro for all their endless generosity to raise **£13,310** for the school!!
(Please note this does not appear in our year end accounts as they will be paid directly from Ross and Mark to the school.)
- After the fire we donated a lot of items to the school and we still have monies to transfer but we are truly frustrated that we are not in school and putting all this money to good work in our classrooms.

PHS Lottery

- During the lockdown the PHS lottery continues as normal. **Our next lottery draw will be on Monday 8th June 2020. There will be a first prize of £100, second prize of £50 and Third prize of £25.**
- Thank you to all of those who take part in the PHS Lottery: all the funds raised are used to help support our young people within the School.
- If you are interested in joining the PHS lottery then please email admin@peebleslottery.org.uk. The cost is £6 per quarter for one ticket

Subgroups updates cont.

Accounts

Our accounts are yet to be independently examined but as a top line we have cash reserves in excess £33,000, which includes over £21,000 of fire fund donations to put to good use on our return.

Thank you to our lottery, fundraising team and our PC treasurer for all your endless effort and good works- it's quite magnificent what you have achieved.

High Level Summary of PC Results Year Ended 31 March 2020

		£	£
Cash Balances B/fwd	01/04/19		10,984
<u>Receipts</u>			
Fire Fund Donations		28,892	
Lottery Tickets Sold		5,557	
Addams Family Concert- Profit		461	
Other Misc		589	
		<u>35,499</u>	
<u>Payments</u>			
PHS Donations		12,123	
Lottery Prizes (net of declined prizes)		400	
Other Misc		408	
		<u>12,931</u>	
Surplus for the year			<u>22,568</u>
Cash Balances C/fwd	31/03/20		<u><u>33,552</u></u>

Excluded from the above is the Income received on behalf of PHS (£4,476) and subsequently reimbursed to PHS for the Promise Auction, as the event wasn't owned by the PC.

Registered Charity Status

- During the current academic year members of the PC have met to discuss the opportunities and benefits of gaining charitable status, which has culminated in a decision to submit an application to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).
- Our proposal is to form a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) under the name "Friends of Peebles High School (SCIO)" and six members of the PC have already volunteered to serve as founder trustees.
- The application is scheduled to be submitted this month and if approved the charity will sit and work alongside the PC, opening up opportunities to apply for:
 - Access to national and local funding pots earmarked for good causes who operate as registered charities.
 - Participation in matched funding initiatives offered by Private Sector organisations, when their employees perform charitable activities.
 - Gift Aid on future eligible donations.

Looking forward

Thank you so much to our active PC post holders, PC members and wider parent forum members who have worked tirelessly all session in the most trying of times. We hope to hold our AGM as planned in June which is **not a normal business session** but rather a briefing on all work for the year, however, given the circumstances we will be deferring post holder appointments until into the new session when we can hold an open meeting for all possible attendees. If we cannot meet in person in June, we may use on line conferencing to close down the 2019/2020 session.

Meantime, here is a reminder as to how to stay in touch:

- **Our website-** <https://phsparents.org.uk/>
(Note this has a feed of our social media communication for you to view if you are currently not on social media, however, it might be useful to sign up if you can)
- **Email:** phspc@outlook.com
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/PHS-Parents-255657164466690/>
- **Twitter:** @PHSparents

Keep safe and well and until “ we meet again”

Best wishes

The PHS Parent Council

STAY IN TOUCH

CONNECT WITH US



PHS Parents



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