

**PHS Parent Council**

**21 April 2022**

Virtual Meeting held on Microsoft Teams

**Attendees**:

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| Sarah Duncan, Chair  Susan Jarvis, Vice-Chair & Co-Lead, Teaching & Learning Working Group  Alex Corbishley, Co-Lead, Teaching & Learning Working Group  Claire Barrett, Secretary  Campbell Wilson, Headteacher | c. 24 parents attended |

**Welcome, Approval of Minutes, Update on Actions Sarah Duncan, Chair**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, the previous minutes were approved. The outstanding actions on the tracker were updated as follows:

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| Meeting Date | Action | Who | Status | Action taken/Comments |
| 2-Mar-22 | Schedule a meeting between PC & SLT to discuss parent survey results and feedback to April meeting. | SD/CW | Open | Meeting took place on 17 March and data from survey subsequently shared with SLT.  Agreement made to consider issues raised around communication and safety in SIP for 22/23.  Discussions around SIP ongoing. |
| 18-Jan-22 | Raise issue of freeze on permanent promoted posts with SBC. | SD | Open | Issue raised again during ongoing discussions around school budgets and priority given to school level decision making.  Awaiting outcome of budget allocation process and updated policy. |

**Chair’s Update Sarah Duncan, Chair**

Remaining covid restrictions had all been removed at the start of term, however SBC was asking schools to continue to encourage staff and pupils to wear masks in crowded areas. The secondary parent council chair’s group had continued their campaign on school funding after the last meeting ans were awaiting the outcome of discussions between SBC and Headteachers to determine whether they had been successful. The next Parent Council meeting would be the AGM which was due to be held virtually on Tuesday 7th June, however the Chair now had a work commitment that evening therefore asked for it to be moved to Wednesday 8th June. There were no objections to this change.

A parent had recently highlighted an opportunity to apply for a grant from their employer, ARUP, therefore Friends of PHS had bid for £5,000 towards some of the funding bids that had already been approved plus additional resources the English department had requested. The bid was successful and the charity was awarded £7,500. The charioty would consider the best use of the additional funds at their next meeting and report back at the AGM. An update on progress with all spend would be provided at the AGM.

The Chair presented a [slide on match funding](https://phsparents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Match-funding-information.pdf) – what it is and how it can help boost funds for PHS. If you work for an employer who has a match funding scheme please email [FriendsofPHS@outlook.com](mailto:FriendsofPHS@outlook.com) if you are able to help.

**Working Group Updates**

**Property Working Group** (presented by Sarah Duncan)

The Parent Council is broadly supportive of the plans for the new school, however still has some concerns. These were around sports facilities not meeting the SportScotland guidance for a school roll of 1400, accessibility for pupils with mobility issues and additional support needs, outdoor learning facilities, flood protection and the future use of the Victorian science bliock being retained. A response to the consultation had been drafted on this basis and there were no objections to this response being submitted. Mr Wilson advised he is attending a meeting on Tues 26 April with architects (for Peebles, Gala & Hawick High Schools) to discuss internal floor plans and he would update PC after this meeting. Any final views on the plans were invited to be submitted to the PC mailbox by 25 April before the response would be provided to SBC.

**Teaching & Learning Working Group** (presented by Alex Corbishley)

The working group had carried out significant activities so far this year:

* Eco group - supported the secondary chair’s group in creating a survey on food availability and packaging.
* Curricular Subjects - a resource for parents showing which subjects are available in each faculty was being drafted to support subject choice points next year.
* Learning Context - a draft handbook was being created for the Support for Learning department to share on the new school website to help parents understand the different levels of support available and how to seek help for pupils.
* STEM - a parent had completed the Young STEM Leader Tutuor Assessor training with the aim of supporting the programme next year. It was also hoped that a STEM Family Learning Day could be held in Spring/Summer 2023.
* School website – a subgroup of parents had met with Mr Noon to review plans for the new school website which would be hosted on Glow. The new format looked cleaner and easier to navigate and would be easier for teachers to update content. It was also hoped that the school calendar would be hosted more prominently. Mrs Mooney had taken over responsibility for the website and hoped to launch it at the start of the new timetable in June.
* Tracking & monitoring - a subgroup of parents had met with Mr Wilson to share feedback on the current methods, frequency and format of feedback on learner’s progress. Mr Wilson had committed to including the feedback received as part of the planning for next academic year but noted that some changes will take time therefore parents should expect a transition over a few years.
* Careers information – a series of career information evenings had taken place virtually in the autumn and Scottish Apprenticeship Week in March had been supported and promoted in collaboration with the DYW Coordinator and Pastoral team. It was hoped that an in-person careers event would be able to return in November 2022.
* University Aspirations Group – the group planned to meet with Mr Shirra-Gibb in May with a view to supporting new S6 pupils with preparations from June.
* Pupil Parliament – a meeting had been held with Mr McMordie to discuss how parents can support the new parliament and it had been agreed to provide 2 sessions on data in June and September. It was also hoped the working group could support next year’s parliament with developing a single pupil survey.
* Parent Experience survey – a meeting had been held with SLT on 17 March and it had been agreed that communication with families, feeling safe at school, the attainment gap for pupils with additional support needs and use of tutors be explored next year and discussed in the school improvement planning process.

*Action: Subgroup to meet with Mrs Mooney before the AGM to discuss the website.*

Alex also presented information on school resourcing and budgets, referencing information supplied by local authorities following FOI requests made. All presentations slides are available [here](https://phsparents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Parent-Council-Meeting-21-April-2022-SLIDES.pptx).

There was general agreement that the data shared showed Peebles High is poorly funded compared to the rest of Scotland and we should be publicising this and raising it with local councillors to ensure some concrete action. Mr Wilson stated he has felt the school is far worse off than it was 6 years ago. There are significantly fewer teachers and many more pupils. It was noted that Scottish Borders has the 2nd worst funded schools in Scotland (Renfrewshire are the worst funded), in addition any overspend is carried over into the next financial year.

Concerns were also raised about the ratio of pupils per SLT member of staff, which is far larger compared to the other SBC schools (330 pupils per SLT member at PHS v 133 at Selkirk). Mr Wilson explained that larger schools can be more efficient and PHS has a breadth of subjects compared to smaller schools, who need more money invested into their staff to compensate for that narrower curriculum, but that doesn’t fully justify the gap in these figures. However, Mr Wilson advised that in the last 3 months, precisely because of parents making these points, there has been a change in tone from the Director of Education, in terms of what we might expect in our budgets next year. Mr Wilson has a budget meeting on April 22nd which we hope will be favourable. The Chair stated we are hoping for good news at this meeting, however if that is not received, we would go public with this issue and seek wider support from the parent forum. The Chair advised she will inform parents if a plan of action is required.

**School Improvement Planning (SIP)**

Mr Wilson advised he had met with staff to share thinking around the SIP for the next year. He shared with the whole staff team parental views from the parent council survey and feedback from the staff survey. Learning & Teaching will continue to be the number one priority, however communications with parents around reporting & assessments was agreed as an additional priority. There was mutual desire among staff and parents to look at the wider issue of improving comms around learning. Further priorities were likely to be around feeling safe/nurtured and equalities. Views of parents have influenced the SIP more so than ever before and feedback from pupils would be considered in coming weeks before the plan is finalised.

**Headteacher’s Update Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher**

**Covid:** Face masks had become somewhat contentious again. National guidance had changed to masks being worn in indoor social areas in school and local guidance had changed to: “Young people should be encouraged and enabled to wear masks in school.” This means while we are no longer ‘enforcing’ the wearing of masks, we will continue to encourage young people to wear them therefore are making masks available at the main entrance and the majority of pupils are voluntarily wearing them.

**Staffing:** Justin Noon left us at the end of last term to be Headteacher at Lochside Academy in Aberdeen. Karen Mooney has secured the position of Acting DHT covering Justin’s remit until the summer and Mia Stewart was successful at competitive interview in securing the role of Acting PT English and RMPS over the same period. We are interviewing for several posts and vacancies between now and the summer.

**S6 leavers:** 22 April is the last day for our current S6. There will be a graduation ceremony at the Burgh Hall from 11:15 – 1pm. Mr Wilson had written home to S6 parents looking for their support in preventing potential ’muck up’ activity.

**SQA:**  Final preparations were underway for the SQA examination diet to start on 26 April. Venue preparation starts on Friday afternoon and Mr Wilson would be carrying out a final check at 3pm on Sunday. All candidates had been issued with a bespoke timetable (including venue and seat numbers as requested at a previous Parent Council meeting). All invigilators had been successfully trained for the year ahead and a letter to all parents of SQA candidates would be issued tomorrow.

**Open Q&A session Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher**

**Will there be visible clocks in the exam halls as this wasn't the case in the mocks?**

Yes, new clocks had been ordered and would be in place in all rooms used for exams.

**When can S1 pupils expect to hear more regards May residential**

David Changleng & Lesley Johnson had stepped in to co-lead the S1 residential following the departure of Amy Pretswell. They were putting together a presentation covering everything pupils and parents needed to know (kit list, FAQs) which would be released very soon.

**Will any DoE expeditions be run before next year?  S6 pupils haven't fully finished their silver award and their Oct expedition was cancelled.**

Caroline Wallace was taking over running of DoE but this had just started so parents were asked to be patient. Expeditions would be organized as soon as possible. Volunteer assessors would be required to support the programme in the long term and more details would be shared in due course.

**Will there be any requirement for S1s to undertake Covid LFT testing before the residential?**

Pupils will be asked to take a test but it would not be a requirement.

**When will lunchtime activities restart?**

A single lunchtime will be back in place from Monday 25 April (the start of study leave) and extra-curricular activities would be able to restart straight away, dependent on staff readiness. Activities are posted in the daily bulletin which was now available on each year group Teams channel. Parents were reminded that extra-curricular activities were run on a voluntary basis by staff.

**Cardrona bus times have been pushed back so pupils were arriving 10mins later than previously, leaving no time to interact prior to going straight into lessons. What is your view on this?**

Mr Wilson: As long as pupils are arriving on time for lessons and it is a reasonable time to get on the bus I don’t hold a strong view. As for having time with their peers prior to going into lessons, pupils do meet as they’re coming into school. We will be reintroducing registration time next year, with 10 mins at the start of every day. This was removed 13 years ago by SBC but it was hoped it’s return would improve pastoral relationships, uniform standards and attendance.

**Can you confirm if the new lunch will be organised by Houses rather as year groups? This may be an issue if pupils don't have close friends in their house.**

Everyone will have lunch at the same time but serving in the canteen will be staggered by house. Through the covid restrictions, the school had learned how to make lunch run more smoothly and this was the best way to help the canteen cope with the numbers going through. The Grab & Go system would not change with orders continuing to be available at the start of lunch for all pupils. Staff believe using houses is better than year groups, supported by pupil perception (not being served first for 2 weeks in a row) and means all young people are free to intermingle across year groups at the same time and go straight into activities, eg S6 helping S1 at activities. Young people have enjoyed the queues being quicker and better managed, giving them more time to sit down and enjoy a proper lunch.

**Will lunch be at 12.25 or 1.15pm because staggered lunches starting at 1.15pm means that the kids at the end won’t get lunch until almost 2pm**

This had not yet been decided but might depend on the timetable. The Chair did a quick poll of preference for lunch starting at 12.25 or 1.15. Results were in favour of an earlier lunch (87%) however it was noted that this was a very small sample size.

**Open Q&A session Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher**

The Chair reminded everyone tha the next meeting was the AGM and the process for electing post holders was for nominations to be submitted and considered in advance. Current post holders can be re-elected but there would be opportunities for more people to get involved as postholders. Parents were encouraged to get in touch if they’re interested in finding out more about these opportunities. Email [phspc@outlook.com](mailto:phspc@outlook.com), send a message on facebook messenger or speak to a current postholder. Mr Wilson highlighted that there was no longer a restriction on holding meetings in school. The Chair did a quick poll of preference and the majority were in favour of a virtual meeting. It was noted that the new committee would consider the format and frequency of meetings

For next academic year in June.

**The meeting closed at 8.35**

**Next meeting: AGM, 7pm on Wednesday 8 June 2022**

**Helpful Information**

**Parent Council Meeting dates 2021/22**

Tuesday 31st August 2021

Wednesday 20th October 2021

Thursday 18th November 2021

Tuesday 18th January 2022

Wednesday 2nd March 2022

Thursday 21st April 2022

Wednesday 8 June 2022 (AGM)

**Post Holders**

Chair - Sarah Duncan

Vice Chair - Susan Jarvis

Secretary - Claire Barrett

Comms - Judith Ackerman

Taskforce - Rachel Beatton

Events - Dee Hollingsbee & Elodie Seller

**Working Group leads:**

Friends of Peebles High School SCIO representative - Eric Nightingale

Teaching & Learning - Alex Corbishley & Susan Jarvis

Property - Sarah Duncan

We welcome interested parents & careers on the Parent Council as general members or working group members. We simply ask that you try to attend meetings regularly. If you would like to be an ordinary member or join a specific working group, please email your details to**:** [**phspc@outlook.com**](mailto:phspc@outlook.com)

**Website:** www.phsparents.org.uk

**Twitter:** @PHSparents @PeeblesHigh