

**PHS Parent Council**

**17 January 2023**

**Teams meeting**

**Attendees**

Sarah Duncan, Chair, Parent Council c. 38 parents joined online

Susan Jarvis, Vice Chair

Ellie Johnstone, Vice Chair

Claire Barrett, Secretary

Dee Hollingsbee, Events Coordinator

Elodie Sellar, Events Coordinator

Tristan Compton, Property Working Group

Eric Nightingale, Friends of PHS SCIO representative

Max Volino - Taskforce Coordinator

Campbell Wilson, Headteacher

Karen Mooney, Depute Head Teacher Learning & Teaching

**Minutes**

**Welcome, previous minutes and actions Sarah Duncan**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone of upcoming dates of PC meetings. We will be looking for new postholders from June, please get in touch to find out more [phspc@outlook.com](mailto:phspc@outlook.com)

Update to outstanding actions:

* Removal of food trucks and single lunchtime - a meeting with the catering manager is being scheduled soon and we will feedback to PC.
* Exam results - Mr Wilson to arrange parent info session on exam results from 2022 after February break so that full data will be available.

**Chair’s Update Sarah Duncan**

Supporting School Improvement

* School review action plan in place and progress being made already
* Follow up review due in March with parent focus groups and survey expected to be repeated to seek feedback on improvements
* Timetable of study spaces made available from November 2022 and discussions taking place to facilitate restoring library next academic year
* Uniform Review Group have drafted a revised policy and sought feedback from parent, staff and pupils with results to be analysed & collated so that recommendations can be made to Mr Wilson in March.
* 271 parents responded and high level results were as follows:

**Proposed S1-5 Uniform**

* Polo shirt vs shirt & tie – 89% happy with giving a choice, comments against reflect either desire for smarter look or more comfort required
* Black shoes/trainers – 86% happy with maintaining current policy, comments against reflect either desire for smarter look or more choice required
* Allowing black hoodies - 84% happy with adapting current policy, comments against consider hoodies to be too casual for uniform
* Leadership tie was supported by 77% and 45% would be interested in a sew/iron on badge

**Proposal for separate S6 uniform**

* 74% support promoting wearing a shirt & specific S6 tie but 60% don’t support different policy for shoes
* Comments against both highlight desire to maintain choice/comfort and avoid additional expense

**Funding Allocations Eric Nightingale**

The following bids for funding had been received by Friends of Peebles High School. Anything over £1,000 requires Parent Council approval.

Request was made to install new CCTV system across the school (Cost unknown)

Recommendation: Not to be taken forward at this time, review of current CCTV to be undertaken

Expressive Arts - Request made for styluses for using Procreate software on iPads in art lessons (£1,985, 45 items)

Recommendation: Fund 25 styluses to create 2 full class sets at a cost of £1,103

Parent Council agreed to the recommendation to fund styluses at a cost of £1,103.

**New Building Subgroup**

Sarah Duncan has been leading this group since 2020 but as Sarah will be stepping down at the end of this session, it was propose that Tristan Compton become lead for the group. Tristan was proposed by Sarah Duncan and seconded by Susan Jarvis. Tristan provided an update on the New Building Project.

The group’s role is to collate parent views and represent them in efforts to secure the best outcome for the school. The group has had a very busy period since the last meeting which was dominated by this subject as SBC/architects presented an update on the project. The group was aiming to meet with Lesley Munro (Service Director Young People Engagement and Inclusion) and John Curry (Director of Infrastructure & Environment) in the next month and in the meantime will focus on things where they believe a real difference can be made. The group has developed a [position statement](https://phsparents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/New-Build-Position-Statement-January-2023.pdf) and sought feedback on it from the wider Parent Council.

The group has been:

* Organising – Refreshing membership & purpose
* Listening – Parent views but also pupils, teachers and wider community
* Engaging – SBC Project Team, Community Councils, Primary Parent Councils, Tweeddale Councillors, SBC Directors, MSPs
* Communicating – BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Online, Radio Borders, Peeblesshire News
* Developing – Our Position, Our Understanding

Main concerns of the group, based on collated views:

* Lack of real consultation
* Inadequate assembly and performance facilities
* Open layout and impact on acoustics
* Capacity of building
* Timeline pressures

Next steps:

* Continue to work with SBC Councillors and project team on design improvements
* SBC have committed to publishing plans online in January
* Consultation events expected in early February
* Meeting SBC Directors
* Subgroup visits to other schools
* Continue community & media engagement

**Anyone wishing to join the group, ask questions or provide feedback, should contact:** [**newbuilding@phsparents.org.uk**](mailto:newbuilding@phsparents.org.uk)

The Chair invited discussion/questions on the position statement or project:

*Have there been discussions around air filtration eg HEPA?*

Not sure what’s proposed but will find out, intention is for building to effectively be ‘sealed’ for energy efficiency reasons.

*Having been involved in a new hospital build I understand how frustrating the process can be. I agree a space that is large enough for plays and assemblies with a stage is essential. I am also against things being too open plan which can be noisy and difficult especially if you have any neurodiversity issues.*

*I’m a member of the St Ronans Primary School Parent Partnership and this topic has been discussed at our last meetings.  We have also started to reach out to councillors etc.  Are you happy for us to do this still or should we discuss this with you later?*

Please pass thanks on to the St Ronans Parent Partnership. Yes, please do still engage councillors yourselves as the more people get in touch with them the more action they will take. Hopefully plans will be published soon and you can feedback more at that stage.

*The dining area in the current school is simply not adequate for numbers of pupils. What provisions are being planned for the new dining area? In short my daughter takes a packed lunch to school but has nowhere other than outside to eat it which is not acceptable.*

We’ve had lots of conversation about dining, number of separate areas, formal and informal. It’s on our radar, but no longer a major concern as there will be more space than we currently have and there is still scope for a food van to return.

*Another point for consideration is that if a smaller dining capacity requires staggered lunch breaks, this will affect extra-curricular activities, several of which run through lunch as all year groups can meet together. It will create noise while classes are taking place.*

The design is predicated on NOT having staggered lunch times, architects have confirmed that acoustics would not work if any breaks are staggered.

*Will there be a decent library?*

Yes, combination of open library space with books and workspaces that can accommodate at least a full class and an adjacent closed room for quiet reading for about 20 people.

*I am in the Property Group and aware that we are focussing very much on the new building.  When we try to discuss the state of the current building we don't seem to get very far.*

Yes, aware there are separate efforts dealing with the current building. The PHS Taskforce has been tasked with cosmetic improvements of current school (at school level) and Parent Council have raised concerns around some health and safety issues with SBC.

*Thank you Tristan for all your good work, achieving so much in a short space of time. I believe it is essential to communicate to SBC/planner/architects that at present there appears to be a major exposure/risk of wasting public money. If they simply plough ahead with a sub-optimal solution, the retrospective cost of putting it right could be enormous (in common with many other projects of this nature). SBC need to acknowledge that risk and their responses should be carefully documented.*

**PHS Taskforce Max Volino**

Max advised that he now has a list of 14 people (Whatsapp & email groups set up) on the Taskforce and aim this session is to help with improving general fabric of the school. Did a walkaround in October and identified issues, it is mainly a lick of paint around most areas of the school. We are waiting for permission from SBC to undertake these tasks but no progress as yet which is very frustrating. Mr Wilson advised he was meeting the Clerk of Works very soon and would chase this up. Next opportunity is February break when school is closed to pupils for over a week and Easter break for two weeks. If you wish to register to join the taskforce please register through a [form on our website](https://forms.office.com/r/8u54NfrsQ1).

The Chair invited discussion/questions on the taskforce update.

*Is there a quick fix for the cold Atrium?*

Mr Wilson acknowledged that the Atrium can be freezing at this time of year, however noted that some young people are still choosing to study there. The area has been looked at in the past and no solutions have been offered.

*Is there a possibility of young people taking ownership of this decorating work?*

The Chair advised that once we have permission for volunteers to do the work, we would discuss involving young people as well as parents and wider community members.

*Would the clerk of works be involved in sorting out the 'carpeting'?*

Mr Wilson advised this was also on the agenda to discuss with the Clerk of Works.

**Action: Mr Wilson to raise with Clerk of Works permission for volunteers to undertake cosmetic refurbishment tasks and discuss solution for the millennium wing carpet.**

**Equalities Group Lorraine Murray**

The equalities group was in the process of reviewing the respect policy and had access to the results of the recent pupil survey on bullying to inform this. Due to finalise this work in March.

**Showbie pilot Karen Mooney**

Depute Head Karen Mooney joined the meeting to discuss the rollout of Showbie, which was to be used as a tool for parental engagement. A summary of her presentation is provided.

**What is Showbie and why do we need it?**

Showbie is an app similar to MS Teams which allows assignments to be set, pupils to complete work, online discussions, get feedback on work and collaborate. Main benefit is portfolio aspect.

**Why do we need Showbie?**

If pilots are successful, Showbie could become our single platform for profiling progress in learning and sharing each pupil’s strengths and next steps across the curriculum with parents. All key documentation relating to pupil’s learning would be reported in one place.

**Self evaluation**

A key area of the school improvement plan is our reporting procedure to parents. Showbie provides a user-friendly online platform for pupils, parents and teachers allowing us to address the issue of the variety of apps and approaches in use. Parents will already be familiar with it prior to pupils joining PHS as all primary schools are using the app already and the pupil’s portfolio will transfer to high school which will support a better transition process. Allows collation of info about strengths and next steps in different subjects and recording of achievements in extra-curricular activities and life outside of school in one place.

**What does Showbie look like from parents’ perspective?**

Parents sign up via app or browser though a code issued by school. Code will be unique to your child/rens portfolio and will show work from all of their classes. Pupils, teachers and parents can upload work, comments, feedback and you can lock it so parents can access and pupils don’t have option to remove/change it. Information is clearly presented and you can set alerts to notify when new work is added to portfolio so you get rolling feedback. Different depts will use it in different ways, eg. PE dept could upload film of individual gymnastics performances and teachers can record and upload audio comments.

**What progress has been made toward using Showbie in PHS?**

All staff have received training and Mrs Wilson (Geography) is leading the pilot with a staff working group who will provide recommendations for further rollout, eg number of year groups using it next session. SBC Inspire Team supported technical set up for staff and almost all pupils in S1 and S2. Some staff have piloted the use of Showbie to support in class teaching and learning. Potential to use alongside and enhance our current reporting processes.

**Next steps**

Sign up for all S3 pupils will be completed this month and will pilot distribution of S1 reports via Showbie and a subject upload to accompany this at start of February. Feedback will be sought from pupils, parents and staff on this process. Further staff training to depts to support specific requirements will take place before expanding parental access for other year groups. If S1 trial is successful then will plan to move distribution of reports to Showbie. Agree action plan for use of Showbie to support ongoing reporting in 2022/23. Mrs Mooney will also be reaching out to parents for volunteers to engage in feedback on the pilot.

*It seems like yet another app – if you can do it all on Teams what is the need?*

Showbie will not be a substitute for Teams which will remain the main platform for sharing updates with pupils, providing teaching resources and in class learning. It will be the new platform to collate learning in one place for pupils and parents to see and contribute.

*Mrs Mooney noted that parents were hoping for improvements to the quality and depth of information on progress shared not just streamlining the platform used.*

**Headteacher Update Campbell Wilson**

**New Depute Head Teachers (DHTs):** We were successful in appointing two new DHTs who have both taken up their posts, Karen Mooney (former Principal Teacher for English) takes responsibility for Learning and Teaching and Alasdair Reid has responsibility for Curriculum which includes Parental Engagement and Family Learning. Alasdair joins from Wester Hailes in Edinburgh and was invited to introduce himself*.*

**Other Staffing:**

* Megan McIver joined Maths replacing Martin Russell who left in October
* Jenny Roper has joined Art to cover Mrs Whitehead’s maternity leave

**Prelims:** We have had a positive start to the prelim diet. This afternoon, I met with the Chief Invigilator (Tom Hardie), Jeremy Lee (new SQA coordinator), Juliet George and Kathryn Ramage (PT Support for Learning and responsible for Additional Assessment Arrangements) to review the first two days of prelims and look ahead to the rest of the diet. Discussions have taken place around start times (time was added on for those late due to snow delaying buses), layout of the LRC for AAA and handover of SQA remit to Jeremy Lee.

**Study spaces during prelims:** All seniors have been made aware of the timetable of available study rooms for the duration of the diet. I am pleased to be able to staff this with the supervision of our new IT Technician/senior study supervisor, Kevin Smith. Most young people are continuing to choose the canteen as their preferred study area but the silent rooms are being used every period so far (Monday / Tuesday).

**Social Events and Burns Supper:** Our Christmas Dances in the run up to the holidays were very well attended and young people from all year groups are to be commended for their conduct and spirit. Given the long absence of these events for our kids, I was apprehensive about both the desire of young people to attend and them being ’out of practice’ in terms of appropriate behaviour at big social occasions with their peers. They were excellent. Next Thursday our S6 and staff Burns Supper will be hosted at Peebles Hydro and around 100 S6 students have signed up and must pay the £20 ticket price via Parent Pay. I am confident it will be a great night. I would appreciate some feedback on the use of Parent Pay for these events going forward. *(The Chair ran an online poll and Parent Pay was the preferred option for payment for these events from those in the meeting)*

**School Improvement:** No doubt the findings of the SBC review of our school has prompted a massive acceleration of our School Improvement Plan and, while it is encouraging that many of their recommendations were already being addressed in our plan for the year, the timeframe within which they expect to see evidence of progress is very challenging. Having a full compliment of DHTs for the first time since June 2021 is going to make the ambition of the Action Plan infinitely more achievable.

**Honing our Vision:** Please come along to one, two or all three of our online school vision discussions next week. Links will be highlighted in a letter to all families this week and your input will really help us to hone the finer detail of our ambition to be Intellectually Enriching, Physically Empowering and Emotionally Nurturing: Mente Manu Corde.

**Open Q&A**

*Whilst supportive of teachers’ strikes for fairer pay & conditions, I am keen to know how we ensure that the pupils’ learning will not suffer. Last week’s strike left my S3 & S6 children with no specific set work - fine once but not if another 10+ are planned?*

CW: I recognise this is a really difficult topic and staff are equally concerned about pupils’ learning, however it would be against their union advice to post work on strike days.

*When can we expect S3 reports to aid course selection?*

KM: All S3 reports should be issued this week

*Is the £20 ticket price for the Burns Supper covered out of the Opportunity Pot for any pupils who would struggle to pay this?*

CW: Yes, the opportunity pot money would support that and pupils have been made aware of this.

*What are the plans going forward for quiet study space?*

CW: It’s easier to provide classrooms during study leave as there are more rooms available, however when pupils return full time there will continue to be quiet rooms available throughout the week but this won’t be supervised and won’t be every period. We will continue to review and maximise opportunities to the best of our abilities.

*Can the library space all be quiet study space from June?*

CW: I can’t promise that until the course choices have been submitted and a timetable created. There is potential to use the viewing gallery of large games hall as a PE Classroom, double glazing it, to allow the new portacabin to be a maths classroom.

*Can you confirm what is happening regarding the SBC review report? Clarification on progress?*

CW: Action plan has an action next to each recommendation and next steps identified on the report. The majority of actions were already in the school improvement plan.

SD: I will be discussing with Mr Wilson how to share more information on the actions and progress with the parent forum. Current plan is to use the March meeting to review the plans so I will be pulling together a summary document so we can reflect on progress and start thinking ahead to next year*.*

*How are staff feeling after the review? They’ve had a very pressurised few years and now action points from this report.*

CW: We met with unions recently and the focus was on staff welfare. Strikes mean loss of income on top of the cost of living crisis and being a teacher at PHS the last 3 years hasn’t always been rewarding so we do need to boost staff morale.

*There used to be the clothes swap shop which had clothing including dresses and formal wear for events - is the likely to be available?*

KM: Yes, we have a stock of dresses still in school from pre-Covid.

*Are there any further plans to improve the toilet facilities within school? My daughter feels unsafe using the toilets within school and says that raising the walls of the cubicles has achieved nothing. Unsanitary, blocked, toilets pulled from the floor, groups of pupils intimidating. She purposely avoids using toilet all day, this is unhealthy. What can be done? (Other parents made comments agreeing)*

CW: It is an issue, we recognise it. Staff check toilets regularly throughout the day – particularly senior boys as they have been caught vaping several times, It has been several weeks since anyone found doing that so there have been improvements but it saddens me to hear about pupils avoiding using toilets during the day. We can’t supervise them during social times all the time, and pupils wouldn’t want that, but we can’t have groups intimidating others so we acknowledge your frustration. We’re in a better position that last term when we had a spate of fire alarms, two of which were set off in toilets in portacabins. Blocked toilets and locks are fixed as soon as reported, however there are repeat incidents.

Chair: Mrs Moretta was at our last meeting discussing behaviour and I’d ask everyone to please remind our young people to report issues to a trusted adult at school so that they can follow up. Staff can’t be everywhere therefore giving names to a teacher is the only way for action to be taken, particularly as we believe there are a small number of repeat offenders.

*Are toilets locked between break and lunch ?*

CW: Atrium toilets were locked briefly last week when there was a blockage and young people had to be kept out for safety reasons but there are sufficient toilets elsewhere in the school.

*Re the new building – input is needed from school and teachers, talking to other schools built in recent years they have had dedicated time given to leadership team. There will be a million decisions to be made about furniture, timetabling etc. Have you had additional time/budget set aside?*

CW: No additional budget has been allocated nor have I requested it as yet. We have been operating with 3 DHTs for almost 2 years and are now back up to full capacity of 4 DHTs. However, if would of course appreciate additional resources to support the project and transition to the new building.

*Tweed Reads have put forward a proposal for a quiet reading spot in the courtyard garden, utilising a small temporary building from another school but awaiting decision on that.*

CW: It’s on my agenda for the Clerk of Works meeting and Health & Safety regarding the fire implications. Thereafter I’ll go back to the Tweed Reads pupils and update them on return from study leave.

**Action: Mr Wilson to find out status on temporary Tweed Reads building for atrium courtyard. Feedback to Tweed Reads.**

*Lost property - I was digging through the mountain of lost property  recently for an item my son had lost (while at the sports hall for an after-school club) and noticed a lot of items with name tags. I'm on the taskforce and I wondered if we could do anything to assist in trying to get items back to pupils/families?*

KM: Will look into this and come back to you.

*Can pupils with readers/scribes have separate rooms for exams?*

CW: We’re not able to give separate rooms for all readers and scribes. We are soundproofing as best we can, using sounding boards between one reader and another, but it is a challenge. PHS has never provided separate rooms but this will be fed back to the team for consideration.

**The meeting closed at 9pm**

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**Helpful Info/Reminders**

**Parent Council Meeting Dates for 2022/23**

Tuesday 17 January 2023 - virtual

Wednesday 1 March 2023 – in person

Thursday 27 April 2023 - virtual

Tuesday 6 June 2023 (AGM) – in person

**Post Holders**

Chair - Sarah Duncan

Vice Chairs - Susan Jarvis  & Ellie Johnstone

Secretary - Claire Barrett

Communications Officer - Judith Ackerman

Equalities Lead - Lorraine Murray

Event Coordinators - Dee Hollingsbee & Elodie Seller

Friends of Peebles High School SCIO representative - Eric Nightingale

Property Lead – Tristan Compton

Taskforce Coordinator - Max Volino

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)

Any parent or carer interested in supporting the Friends of PHS charity with running fundraising activities should get in touch at [**FriendsofPHS@outlook.com**](mailto:FriendsofPHS@outlook.com)

**Website: phsparents.org.uk** (includes live feed for Twitter)

**Facebook: PHS Parents –** can contact us via Messenger

**Twitter:** **@PHSparents @PeeblesHigh**