

**PHS Parent Council**

**15 November 2023**

**Peebles High School**

**Attendees**

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| Ellie Johnstone, Chair | Claire Barrett, Secretary |
| Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher (CW) | Tristan Compton, Buildings Sub-group Lead |
|  | Gillian Moran, Events Lead |

10 parents joined the Parent Council meeting.

# Welcome, Minutes & Actions

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting,

Minutes of the previous meeting (13 September 2023) were approved and are available on the [phsparents](https://phsparents.org.uk/) website.

# Chair’s Update

**Recent School Inspection** – thanks to everyone who contributed. Largest parental response as reported by Education Scotland Inspectors. We will do our own PC survey again next year.

**Access issues for IPads** – some platforms are blocked by Inspire Learning. Chair has contacted Inspire Learning several times, waiting for response.

**Incident of inappropriate use of a mobile phone** **by a pupil** – Head has taken forward with the parents concerned. School handbook states phones stay in bags during class. Do we have to clarify expectations with children?

Mr Wilson – we will look at new mobile phone policy with the Parent Council. Eg. Berwickshire HS recently implemented new policy –phones not seen or used in the school building at all. Use outside at lunchtimes/break times. Peebles HS Social faculty has a policy – phones in a box on arrival in class and take out at end.

Action: Mr Wilson/Ellie Johnstone to form a sub group of parents and staff to look at this new mobile phone policy.

If you wish to be involved in working up the mobile phone policy, please get in touch with the Parent Council.

**Portacabin toilets not accessible at lunchtime** – why was this, are other students locking doors or by staff?

Mr Wilson – the boys portacabins toilet was locked by janitors for 4 hours for repairs. Feedback from student parliament that pupils have worked out how to lock the door from the inside so that is not safe.

**Last week there was a fire alarm and pupils couldn’t access the 2G pitch (muster point) as it was locked.**

Mr Wilson gave an update on recent fire alarms and the process when the alarm sounds, as follows:

Fire alarm last Friday was accidentally set off by BAM construction. When there is a fire alarm the head janitor reports to the fire panel, reports to that zone, ascertains whether fire, if so, call 999, if not, gives all clear. 2nd janitor allows fire engine access. Across Scotland, the Fire service will no longer attend schools – it was costing too much – they have stopped responding to school unless the school alerts them.

The 2G pitch (muster point) was locked so pupils queued as it took 5 mins for the janitor to come with the keys. It would be easy to just keep it unlocked, but PE staff want it locked during social times to minimize misuse and littering.

Deputes now carry a 2G pitch key whilst others sweep the classes etc. ? Could the 2G pitch perhaps be kept open as long as not abused?

Action: Mr Wilson to speak to Mr Mcmordie & the prefects to discuss if they could monitor the 2G at social times.

**New 3g pitch requires boots not standard trainers**

Mr Wilson - there has not been a communication re boots to parents, but there were plans to do that. So far communication has been from PE to young people directly.

A parent reported there did not seem to be enough spare boots in the PE dept for everyone (in all sizes).

There were a few more questions about the 3G pitch which Mr Wilson can’t answer – they should be directed to Live Borders who manage the pitch.

Action: Mr Wilson will check with PE dept if there are enough boots in all sizes, to loan out to pupils for use on 3G pitch.

**Recent Careers Event** was a very well delivered and successful event.

**Remembrance service in Peebles** on Sunday was really well represented by PHS. Pupils giving readings, playing pipes, etc. Over 300 people there who would have witnessed the good behaviours of the pupils. Also remembrance assemblies at school on Friday very successful, and the S2 assembly was recorded for S4 to watch (as theirs was disrupted by the fire alarm).

# Headteacher Update Campbell Wilson

**HMIe inspection:**

As frustrating as I understand it must be for those of you invested in the outcome of our Inspection, I am not at liberty to share the inspection conclusions at this stage. I understand that Education Scotland aim to publish their report in early January 2024 and I have been told that I can expect a copy of the letter they issue to parents one week prior to publication. I will not be able to answer questions people may have on this topic this evening. Sorry

**Staffing:**

Since we last met in September, when a number of new staff had recently started with us, staffing has remained relatively settled and static. Martha Riddell has replaced Robert Armour as our newest full time permanent Pastoral PT. Moira Irvine (Chemistry) returned from maternity this week. Kayliegh McDonald, new drama teacher, will start in December. Amanda Bell, complex needs teacher, starts tomorrow. Adverts out for Maths (Mrs Lee leaving) and PE (Eilidh McColm leaving) due to teachers moving on to new schools.

**LRC and silent study spaces:**

Our latest attempts to provide quiet dedicated study spaces for senior students has been to introduce a timetable of available rooms for young people to have access to. Uptake has been lower than expected but it is important to report that there is always a quiet room available, normally with a teacher present every period of the week. Several students are choosing to continue to use the canteen and atrium as their chosen place of study.

There is now WiFi working in the PE classroom.

The LRC is available when there are no maths classes on. Max no. seniors on study leave in a period is 63 – they would not all fit in the LRC.

**Improving school toilets:**

 The Student Parliament provided excellent feedback on further improvements they would like to see by way of improving our school toilets. Most of their recommendations are easy fixes. SLT are going to discuss the proposal of having to collect a key to go to the toilet during lesson times.

*There was a discussion about the toilets:*

Mr Wilson – students raised things like free sanitary products, new soap dispensers. It’s not about the toilets but the people we might meet there. Suggestion to collect key from janitor if you need to go to the toilet during class time. You might feel safer. This is policy used by Galashiels HS.

**Could Pastoral have discussions with the kids to try to get to the bottom of what it is they’re scared/unhappy about?**

We’re patrolling them. More issues in junior girls toilets this session, last session it was senior boys. This is the same in all schools, they are intimidated by older kids in groups.

**Could this be a question added to the PC survey – toilets - is this an issue for your child?**

Rights Respecting School move towards getting silver - ‘ERIC’ school toilet charter – nothing should be out of our reach – we need to spend more to improve further.

The toilets across the school are: Atrium – Jnr boys and jnr girls; outside canteen – Senior boys and senior girls; Portacabins - juniors tend to use. So there are 3 lots of toilets.

**Could we split them 3 ways for S1/S2, S3/4, S5/6 ?**

Action: Mr Wilson to think about this suggestion of allocating the 3 areas of toilets to specific year groups, as it hadn’t been looked at that way before.

**New School Update Tristan Compton**

Construction phase has started on the building, and the 3G pitch is finished. Steven Renwick the project manager has now left SBC. New Project Manager has been seconded in but not named as yet.

Mr Wilson – update from SBC today: Chris (?) seconded in from Turner & Townsend for this and Hawick and Gala high schools. Questions now about the construction should go through the SLT of the school. Project Team will update Mr Wilson. Mr Wilson will do a monthly newsletter item on the new building. New sports hall is going really well.

Drop off and pick up points for vulnerable children with enhanced needs – lots of parents using the same points which is a safety risk for these vulnerable children. BAM site manager Jim Muir has put in stricter policies now – BAM are now preventing parents do this. Mr Wilson made a plea to all parents to please not drop children near the main entrance.

Jim Muir site manager of BAM will come to next Parent Council meeting and happy to meet with the Building Sub Group. Now all site traffic is going round the Craigerne Lane entrance and not coming through the school main entrance so feels safer.

SBC Project Board next meets 12 Dec – update will go to Mr Wilson to share before Christmas holidays.

If anyone wants to join the Working Group for the new build please get in touch.

**Parent questions:**

**There is a lot of new work involved for SLT in a new build. Are you confident you can take this on?**

Yes, school is point of contact for updates on the new school building – I may delegate this responsibility to another depute.

**Variety of actions Steven Renwick (previous SBC project manager) took away from last meeting – are you (Mr Wilson) point of contact for that now? I will forward these to you.**

Yes

**Fantastic opportunity for pupils to get involved and learning for pupils, engagement with the construction.**

The site manager is working with a group of young people who are going to be ‘reporters’ on the new build. We could look at other opportunities.

**Schedule – are we still on track**

Yes, November 2025 is still the date to move in.

**Re Exams next year, exam diet is now out for 2024. Could we share this with BAM now, so that noisy work is scheduled outwith these dates? Certain days will have more exam pressures – eg Maths and English**

Action: Mr Lee – notify BAM of exam dates and schedule noisy work outwith these times.

Mr Wilson- The sports hall will be used for exams. Current S3 are particularly large year group.

**Prelim timetable – the school is testing holding some before Christmas and some after. How will we evaluate this approach?**

Mr Lee will evaluate this after the prelims around March time.

*There was a discussion on this new model and the pros and cons*

Mr Wilson -The appeals system has changed last year – the prelim is not ‘fall back’ evidence. Appeal now is a clerical check of the paper sat in the May/June diet. If you don’t sit the exam at all, they will look at evidence (packaged up by the teacher) but only in exceptional circumstances.

**Teachers had said they don’t have enough time to cover the course – 5 periods a week – this is making the pupils anxious.**

Mr Wilson - I’ll remind the staff of positive reinforcement to give the pupils the confidence they need.

**Parents Nights - Still not enough appointments to see the teacher.? For S6**

There is a mop-up date (introduced this year) so this shouldn’t happen.

**Is 5 mins enough? If things aren’t fine, it’s not enough. Always have to contact the teacher separately.**

If you increase the time, it decreases the appointments available

**Is there an opportunity for families to come and talk about preparing for exams for those whose children are entering the senior phase? S3 June time (going into S4) would be the time to do it.**

We have had ‘how to succeed in the senior phase’ evenings before. Covering revision skills, etc.

Action: Mr Lee to look at running information session(s) for families for preparing for exams

**Exam adjustments for neuro diversity – parents have no knowledge of this and that could be covered too.**

You can choose to have a laptop - this is not an adjustment – for all exams.

These things would be useful to have on the website and at a parents information evening.

Mrs Ramage, Mr Lee deal with these adjustments.

Plea for readers and scribes. 33% of pupils needing adjustments in exams. Because of a national awareness of / or increase in, neurodiversity.

**To test for eg needing extra time in exams the child must sit evidential test for *every* subject not just once. Should this be taken up with PC Chairs then SQA?**

**Parent Council Working Groups**

Parent Council will be setting up new working groups and we need to decide what they are….eg – Key areas could be: **Environment:** existing estate & new build; **Communication**: parents evenings, sharing results, group calls, website, newsletters, **Experience:** parent & student experience, eg evaluations of prelims

**Daily Bulletins – where are they? They’re not on the website.**

They are in the Year Group Team – this is the quickest way to find them. House tutors should also read it out daily.

**Maybe some house tutors don’t read it out because it takes too long - could it be weekly rather than daily?**

Mr Wilson - We have had a GDPR breach this week – a teacher misplaced EV2 forms for Adv H Chemistry – we have reported to SBC and this will go to UK Info Commissioner.

**The meeting closed at 9pm**

**Please get in touch around any of the issues raised at** **phspc@outlook.com**

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**Helpful Info/Reminders**

**Parent Council Meeting Dates for 2023/24**

Wednesday 13 September 2023 – in person

Wednesday 15 November 2023

Wednesday 24 January 2024

Wednesday 20 March 2024

Wednesday 24 April 2024

Wednesday 12 June 2024 (AGM)

**Post Holders**

Chair – Ellie Johnstone

Vice Chair – Tristan Compton

Secretary - Claire Barrett

Communications Officer – Dawn Johnstone

Equalities Lead - Lorraine Murray

Event Coordinator – Gillian Moran

Friends of Peebles High School SCIO representative - Eric Nightingale

Property Working Group Lead – Tristan Compton

Taskforce Coordinator – post vacant

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**

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

**Website: phsparents.org.uk**

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

**Twitter:** @PHSparents @PeeblesHigh