

Glen Urquhart High School

Parent Council meeting

15th February 2023, 7pm

Present: Donald MacRae DM Head Teacher

Alan Hood AH Chairperson

Deirdre Hart DH Secretary

Jill Hodge JH Treasurer

Grainne Ballantyne GB

Wendy Urwin WU

Anne Dyce AD

Amanda Luscombe-Smith ALS

Amanda Graham AG

David Cooper DC

Lorraine Young LY

Brad Garrison BG

Karen Simpson KS

Debbie MacKinnon DMK

1. Welcome

AH welcomed everyone to the meeting, no apologies had been received. Round table introductions.

2. Approval of AGM 14TH September 2022 minutes.

Approved by LY and seconded by ALS.

3/4. Approval of minutes of 9th November and matters arising.

Transport issues with Stagecoach seem to have improved and it was agreed there was no need for any action at this stage. DM confirmed he was aware of past issues and is in contact with Stagecoach. The direct contact with the HT seems to work well and allows for communication on social media at the earliest possible opportunity.

AD mentioned bus monitors should have clear guidance. DM advised protocols were being refreshed internally.

AH thanked AG for her help with the raffles at the show, and KS for organising the refreshments for the show and the dance.

Minutes approved by LY and seconded by AH.

5. Correspondence.

DH confirmed the new Parent council email account is active...GlenUrquhart.High@HighlandPC.co.uk. Miscellaneous correspondence dating back to 2021 was found on the account but there was nothing of importance.

There has been an email alerting us to the Etape on 23rd April. KS advised Debbie McWhirr had asked that we appeal for more parent volunteers to marshal at the event. DM will put out a request.

There have been emails concerning the Parent Council funding grant and JH has dealt with this application.

AH had had various email exchanges concerning:
Soirbheas funding for the show and for Duke of Edinburgh scheme.
Discussion with Councillor David Fraser re Stagecoach issues, bus timetable and HT post
Discussion with Fiona Shearer HC re Acting HT and HT posts.
Email from Mr McAndrew re DofE funding
Discussion with Strathglass Community Fund re Study bus funding .

Highland Parent Council Partnership notice re proposed dates for Industrial action 28th February and 1st March when schools will be closed.

6. Treasurer's report.

JH presented the report as follows:

GUHS – Parent Council

Treasurer Update 15th February 2023

Opening Balance (Nov 2022) £3360.64

Receipts

Soirbheas Grant for Christmas Show (Nov): £1000.00

Loch Ness Marathon Volunteering (Oct): £50.00

2023 Leavers Fundraising from S6 (Nov): £128.94

2023 Leavers Fundraising from Raffles at Christmas Shows (Dec): £703 - £40 float = £663.00

Donations for Refreshments at Christmas Shows (Dec): £198.71

Donations for refreshments at Careers Fair (Feb): £12.90

Payments Made

TO GUHS – Soirbheas & Highland Council Grant Money for Christmas Shows (Nov): £1500.00

TO GUHS – For food for School Sponsored Walk (Nov) £299.35

To Lidl (KS) – For Food/Drink provided for Christmas Shows (Nov): £38.06

Closing Balance (Feb 2023) £3576.78

Payments Due

Less monies being held for 2023 Leavers: £791.94

Less monies being held from 2020 leavers fundraising: £338.44

Less monies due for Drama (Grant) for school: £490.00

Account balance available to Parent Council £1956.40

There followed discussion re the raffle at the show. AG advised that this raised less than usual, as attendance was relatively low on the Wednesday evening. ALS suggested in the future we could look at potentially setting an evening aside for example for the Care Centre users if we could find a way to transport them. They could be specifically invited for the Wednesday evening.

The £490 Scotmid grant is still held so ALS will look to purchase benches.

JH confirmed the Parent Council funding application has been made.

The account balance available to the Parent Council is £1956.40.

7. Grants.

AH provided update. Of the £3900 from Strathglass Community fund for the Study Bus £2091 had been spent up to Christmas. This has been extended for another 6 months. We will need to monitor how it is financed when these funds are used up.

AH confirmed the awards of £500 from the Highland Council Discretionary fund and £1000 from Soirbheas for re-establishing the show . Feedback and evidence has been provided to Soirbheas. There was no need to provide any feedback to HC but AH suggested we should write to thank them and confirm success of the event.

AH also confirmed Soirbheas grant of £2745 for equipment for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. There will be a need to provide receipts and evidence of payments to secure release of the funds. DM confirmed he has prior experience in working in the D of E scheme.

AH asked that we all keep our eyes open for other grant opportunities.

8. Head Teacher's report.

DM confirmed a change in HC in that our area manager is now Annika Jansson rather than Fiona Shearer.

Glenurquhart High School – Parent Council

Wednesday 15th February 2023

Headteacher Report

I want to start by thanking the previous Headteacher, Mrs Nelson for her devotion, hard work and support she gave to the young people of GUHS and the support she offered me prior to her retiring at the end of last term.

Since starting at the start of this term I have taken time to build relationships with the GUHS community. I continue to spend time to gather views from all stakeholders as to the strengths and areas for improvement.

Staffing

Ms C Lowder has been appointed 0.6 Geography teacher, fixed to the end of this academic year.

Looking back

Prelim examinations were successfully held in January – these form a vital component for all S4-6 students, I wish to thank Mrs Angus for her role in ensuring the successful delivery. We are now collating the results to review our current attainment. The leadership team plan to meet with every student in S4-6 to discuss their next steps to improve their academic performance between now and the final exams.

The school is keen to promote the extensive study support opportunities offered to students – these include after school study, supported by teaching staff, with transport.

I had the pleasure in visiting all the primaries in our ASG, plans are in place to meet more regularly and explore further collegiate working.

Student Success

The school show made a welcomed return in December. An evaluation is currently being carried out.

I am pleased to report that our Youth Philanthropy Initiative group (YPI) were highly successful this year and have been asked to deliver on the National stage, in Perth, later this year.

Our S3 students were well immersed in the world of work during the start of February, where they all experienced a wide range of local sectors, which included, hospitality, Power generation, aviation, and the emergency services. In addition to this, I was delighted to see the return of our career's fayre with over 30 local employers attending and engaging with both students and parents. I want to thank all our local employers and supporters in making that week a huge success.

I was thrilled to be part of a large group of students and staff who travelled down to Edinburgh to watch Scotland play Wales. It was lovely to spend time with our students, out of the classroom.

S2 students are this week visiting the Newton Rooms in the University of the Highlands and Islands. This provides students with a great experience to explore the theme of Space, engaging students to think creatively to seek out solutions.

Finally, it is important to also recognise student success out with school, of which there are many. We celebrate these through our social media channels. Today we were made aware of Duncan Hill being accepted into the U15 rugby development squad for Highland.

Looking Forward

We are further developing our strategic planning as we work through our School Improvement Plan (SIP) for this year and start to prepare for next year. I am keen to develop leadership at all levels with every voice being included and valued including the voice of Parents and carers. Self-evaluation is key in our improvement journey; plans are being drawn up to engage with our young people through questionnaires and focus groups.

Student attainment remains our top priority and as a leadership team we remain focussed on ensuring all our students attain to the very highest levels.

Subject choices for those in S2 to S5 will take place next month with work well under way in preparation for this important event. I have made some small changes to the process, but much is very similar to previous years. I am at the early stage of commencing a curricular review to ensure we are meeting the needs of all our learners; this will form part of a two-year plan.

Plans are in place to encourage learners to take ownership of their own learning. I am particularly keen to shine a light on the additional support my team offer students in terms of revision between now and their final exams. After school study forms an important offer – I am aware that this is not being taken up as much as I would like, so I plan to advertise this, targeting those in S4-S6. I am especially mindful of those in S4. Analysis of current student performance will allow us to put in place a personalised support plan. Senior Phase (S4-6) Parent/Carer information afternoons, coming up in March will further allow us to work with families to support their young people.

9. AOB.

1. AG asked if she should proceed to order the medals for the Leavers and this was agreed. As this is her last year someone would need to take over the role of assisting the Leavers and coordinating their events. KS and ALS volunteered to take on this role jointly. AG confirmed there is quite a large group of 6th years this year and it is unlikely their fundraising will be sufficient to pay for meals for the staff. AG will do a note to the staff to explain. The Loch Ness Inn is still to confirm what they will charge so amount required remains unknown.

2. AH mentioned HT recruitment . HC had advised the permanent post would be advertised at the end of January but there is no sign that this has happened. It was agreed he should go back to HC for an update. BG queried whether the deputy head position was also still an “acting” post and this was confirmed. It was agreed this was not ideal and HC should be pressed to clarify their plans.

3. ALS thanked the Parent Council and the school for their support in putting on the show, and there was consensus that we should continue to support the show for the benefit of the school and the wider community.

4. AG mentioned that as she is a cheque signatory she should be replaced. ALS agreed to be added. JH will put this change in motion.

5. WU raised concern about staff absence in the music department and the impact on SQA pupils particularly for their practical exams due to be held early in March. AD concurred that the lack of available teaching time was a concern especially if you factor in school holidays and industrial action. DM confirmed that staff illness and the impact on pupils can be submitted as a consideration to the SQA if deemed necessary. DM will ensure there is focus on the exam pupils and will assess whether there is need for additional support. If deemed necessary there could be a request to postpone the dates of the practical exams.

6. DH confirmed date of next meetings: **19th April**; 14th June; 13th September .