

Kinlochbervie High School Parent Council

Minutes

16 September 2009

Present: Amanda Amos, Fiona Belbin, Sarah Kish, Caroline McCowan, Margaret Meek, Paula Macleod, Anne Robbins

Christine Mackenzie, Gary Sutherland, Ian Sutherland

Ian Smith, Rector

Apologies: Sarah Kish

Absent: Sandra MacFarlane

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 May 2009 were accepted.

2. Welcome

The Chair asked Margaret to introduce everyone.

3. Matters Arising

Instrumental Tuition. The school has had an instrumental tutor since early 2009. However, there have been ongoing administrative problems; we hope that these will now be solved as the approval for her appointment has finally gone out. This means that the school will have two Highland Council music tutors: Sandy Wregg for pipes and Anne Wood for violin. In order to support the school's music programme, Brian and Margaret Jones teach wind and brass instruments.

Grants. Most of the funding for the McBeath Project has come from the Ward Discretionary Fund. We also have funding for an oral history project which will start soon.

Activities Week. There was a much better fit this year with all pupils enjoying the activities.

Other Activities.

- The shinty team also went up Ben Nevis in the hail and sleet and made £1500.
- The shinty team also went to Lewis.
- This term there were two trips to Hampden to see Scotland play.
- There has been sailing after school offered on a regular basis.
- John Wood has money for rowing as well as software so that the pupils can compete against others.
- All those who were in the Wind Band last year have been selected again this year.

4. Rector's Report

a) *School Bus*

i) The school bus broke down the other day. School buses were previously the responsibility of Education but this has now transferred to Roads and Transport.

ii) At Laxford, the pupils have always crossed the road between the two buses; for reasons of safety, the changeover will now take place at a nearby lay-by.

iii) The bus drivers, who are employed by Stagecoach, live in Talmine and Loch Eriboll. Problems are likely during the winter if poor road conditions hamper the drivers' ability to get to the school.

b) *Staffing*

i) Kate Aitken has now retired. Debbie Gunn has replaced her as Depute. The school still has to advertise for a Principal Teacher (previously held by Mrs. Gunn).

ii) The French probationer is David Cholet. We have also been allocated a French assistant this year; this has only happened once before.

iii) Sarah Kish has resigned from the school (.25 position) and will not be replaced.

iv) The school is still overstaffed according to Highland Council criteria and this may have a negative effect on the school at some point.

c) *Activities*

i) The McBeath Day (unveiling of cairn, exhibition and evening concert) was well attended and very successful. We received a parcel today from the City of Vancouver Police Department containing a letter from the Chief of Police, a DVD message and letters to each of the former pupils who had done the original McBeath presentation when they were in S3. The project is ongoing: an interpretative display board will be erected in the upcoming months.

ii) The SQA results were very good. There were only two fails at Higher and very good results at all other levels. More pupils are doing courses at levels that are appropriate to them. When compared to other schools, our school does well generally. Also, there is good progression from P7-S2.

iii) S6 visited the Sutherland Summit and met two government ministers. Councillor Linda Munro promised to come to the school to discuss transport to activities.

d) *Inspection*

We expect to be inspected this autumn although we have not been informed of a date. They were in Farr in August and in Ullapool in September so it likely our turn will come after the October Break.

5. *Correspondence*

a) DVD from City of Vancouver Police Department

b) Education and Culture Newsletter (we received mentions for shinty, Young Quality Scot and Scottish Youth Parliament representation).

c) Letter from Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop welcoming parents to the new school year.

6. A.O.C.B.

a) Chair Fiona Belbin noted that university admission requirements had been raised dramatically this year.

b) There was a brief discussion on several issues that had been raised by parents in the summer term last year: pressure to do optional after school activities, enhanced support for core subjects, homework problems (too little or too much, deadlines too short), visitors to the school that may have a specific bias (e.g. the BMX bike show), discipline (Mrs Gunn will be reviewing the discipline policy).

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parent Council will be held in the ICT Room of the High School on Wednesday 18 November 2009 at 7:30 pm.

There will be 3 more meetings of the Parent Council during 2009/2010:

- 18 November 2009
- 27 January 2010
- 28 April 2010