

Perth Academy Parent Council Hybrid AGM

Minute of Meeting on Wednesday 25 January 2024 7pm-8pm

Hybrid meeting B2 in person and via Teams

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies (Rebecca Mackay)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

**Attenders (in person)**

Callum Alsmeyer  
Cllr Liz Barrett  
Liz Barron-Majerik  
Hanna Braithwaite (Head Prefect)  
Mrs Andrea Cooke (School Librarian)  
Lindsay Davidson (Vice Chair)  
Stacy Dornan  
Mrs Joyce Jamieson (Pupil Support Assistant)  
Lesley Joyce (Minute Clerk)  
Alison Mailer  
Rebecca Mackay (Chair)  
Emma Milne  
Miss Joan Montgomery (PT Computing Science)  
Mrs Eleanor Paul (Head Teacher)  
Charlotte Roach (Head Prefect)  
Irene Robertson  
Eleanor Stamp  
Mr David Taylor (Deputy Head Teacher)  
Mr ThomasTyrell, (Teacher of Social Subjects)

**Attenders (online)**

Amanda Charters  
Iona Johnston  
Claire MacFarlane  
Ellie Moses  
Meeting Guest (anonymous)

**Apologies**

Catherine Escott  
Emma Gerrard  
Cllr McCole  
Janet Ross  
Sarah Sloan  
Mary Stanger

The Chair noted that Mrs Cooke, the school Librarian, was in attendance at the meeting and invited Mrs Cooke to speak about library activities. Mrs Cooke provided a summary of a wide range of activities which included supporting reading for pleasure (c5,000 items); supporting the curriculum, providing lessons on research skills and referencing; supporting P7 transition; providing information about universities across the UK; running events (eg inter-house quiz, inter school S1/2 reading quiz 'Well Read'); running book awards and providing access to a wide variety of resources on GLOW. The Chair thanked Mrs Cooke and acknowledging the value of the school library.

2. Hearing from staff and their roles

The Chair welcomed staff attending the meeting to provide a snapshot of a typical day in their respective posts.

**Mr Taylor, Deputy Head Teacher**, advised that he focusses strongly on supporting children and young people as the need arises each day, being on hand to support young people do the best they can. The job is extremely varied. Strategic leadership aspects of the job include learning and teaching and SQ coordinatioan. Mr Taylor is the SQA Co-ordinator for the school and is responsible for timetabling. Having been at Perth Academy on secondment previously, Following a period of time back at St John's Academy, Mr Taylor who is PT of PE there has returned to Perth Academy as acting DHT at a challenging time across all schools.

In response to a question regarding the inspection process, Mr Taylor advised that he is still involved in the school inspection process and that the school is waiting for the draft report to be shared with the school. Each member of the senior leadership team had different aspects of responsibility for the inspection.

Mr Taylor advised that he was thankful for the support of the PC

**Miss Montgomery, Principal Teacher of Computing** advised that she had responsibility for supporting teachers in the department and supporting senior leadership in the school. After many years in the school, her favourite part of her job is still teaching in the classroom. She has experienced that more time is needed on preparation for teaching than in previous years with less resources available. On a day-to-day basis, she is involved in teaching, exam preparation, marking and classroom management. Developing new courses, sharing ideas with other schools and electronic procurement are all part of her role. She confirmed that she thoroughly enjoys her work which is very varied. Pupils and relationships within the classroom are still at the core and she is constantly trying to help children do better each year.

In response to a question about whether gaming is of benefit to you people Miss Montgomery said she believes that gaming can help young people develop a range of skills including working on tactics, devising strategies, problem solving, co-ordination and collaborating with others – all of which are good for brain development. She noted that the gaming environment is often not based in real life and that there is a need to maintain a happy medium between time spent online and not.

**Mr Tyrell, Teacher of Social Subjects** advised that he is usually in school from 08.30-16.30 where his teaching commitment can vary between four and seven periods a day in classes with anything between sixteen young people in the senior phase to thirty two young people in the junior phase. Breaks and lunch times are often spent with young people who use his room at these times. In addition to preparing, teaching and marking, Mr Tyrell is involved with the debating club and after-school meetings each week.

In response to a question about the challenges of teaching a class with different years/levels, Mr Tyrell advised that, across social subjects, there is often overlap in topics across different levels, focussing on breadth at lower levels and depth at higher levels. He acknowledged that it is better to have classes teaching one level but this is not always possible. In response to a question as to how the PC might support teachers, Mr Tyrell advised that, for most classes, parents/carers can look at their child's Teams to check for their child's homework which can be very helpful for young people and their teachers.

**Mrs Jamieson, Pupil Support** (Intensive Support Provision ISP) advised that she has been working within pupil support for many years and her specialism is autism/ADHT. There are currently forty young people in the school with a wide range of ISP needs from nursery level to S6, including formal qualifications N2-AH levels dependent on the needs of the pupils. Activities include outdoor activities (inter sport and Duke of Edinburgh) running the school motor skills group (gross and fine motor skills) teaching and learning through play, dealing with social and emotional issues and personal care for a small number of pupils. The aim of the department is to provide the best education possible for young people and the school has pupils going on to, for example, Cambridge University. Mrs Jamieson also has an early start to her day as she runs the school breakfast club which has now served over 31,000 free breakfasts in total.

The Chair thanked all members of staff for their time, informative presentations and for their valuable contributions to the work of the school.

3 Questions from parents are incorporated into text associated with each teacher.

4 Head Prefect update and questions (Hanna Braithwaite and Charlotte Roach)

Charlotte and Hannah advised that, at the end of last term, a Christmas Café had taken place in two classrooms over two lunchtimes and a candy cane delivery service had delivered 100 candy canes. Funds received from these activities will be calculated in due course. Thanks were extended to Mrs Cooke for donations of books, also thanks extended for planned improvements to the S6 Common Room where new furniture and clean carpeting which is much appreciated and consideration is now being given to what action might be taken on graffiti on the walls in the Common Room. A competition to design a House Crest had taken place with the junior design being particularly popular and the final announcement to be made after the school prelims.

On the topic of the S6 Common Room, attenders noted that another local school has a blackboard wall and a whiteboard wall in their Common Room which might be worthy of consideration. Attenders also mentioned the forthcoming school Prom suggesting that it might be worth trying to arrange for outfits worn last year to be made available to pupils this year. Charlotte and Hannah thanked were grateful for this suggestion they would share it with the Prom Committee.

5 Head Teachers update and staffing update (Mrs Paul)

Mrs Paul confirmed the approval of the re-decoration of the S6 Common Room which will happen during the easter holidays, if not sooner. Mrs Paul provided details of a range of staffing/recruitment arrangements including: Mr Martin Deputy Head Teacher on loan from Breadalbane, Mr O'Donnell completing the guidance staffing cover for Mrs MacGregor, Miss Hood library assistant and Miss Simpson acting PT Art who has joined from Kinross. Recruitment is underway also for pupil care and welfare officers, pupil support assistants, PT of Art as well as a fixed term PT of Music. Mrs Paul advised that prelims are underway and the course choice process is about to begin.

In response to questions about whether the toilet upgrade had helped, Mrs Paul advised that the layout of ground floor boys' toilet has stopped issues. The layout of the girls' toilets is still presenting challenges but, overall, the situation has definitely improved. With regard to vaping, Mrs Paul advised that if a young person is caught vaping, the device is removed and disposed of. A letter is sent to their home and there are further steps in a process for dealing with cases when vaping is undertaken on more than one occasion. With regard to information about course choices, Mrs Paul advised that information would be emailed and sent home with young people this forthcoming week. A Microsoft form will be used for S2 into S3 and S3 into S4 and paper forms for S4 into S5 and S5 into S6. Mr Taylor will be leading online information sessions commencing 29 January.

6 Items raised by parents (Rebecca Mackay)

**Property.** Parents had expressed concerns about issues being experienced in the science block. Mrs Paul advised that the school has made feelings known to the project management team reminding of arrangements/conditions agreed at the outset of the refurb programme associated with aspects such as noise levels and gas supply for experiments issues – the latter of which portable alternatives have not yet been provided – impacting on teaching and learning, particularly given the re-introduction of assessment of the experiment at N5. Mrs Paul stresses that issues were not all necessarily the contractors at fault, the age

of the building can create unplanned delays. For example, underlying concrete lip issues had recently been discovered and responsibility for gas supply lies with PKC with storage being an issue. Mrs Paul has asked staff if they wished to arrange for access to labs at the High School but staff have advised that this is not necessary. Mrs Paul reminded attendees that the school is fortunate in having a refurb budget, albeit that there are issues, a parent suggested that Perth College may be able to offer support, if needed. Cllr Barratt volunteered to ask PKC for an update. The Chair advised that we are waiting for a response from Brian Reid and an update from Cllr McCole but there would be no harm in Cllr Barratt also asking.

**Website.** Mrs Paul has advised that she is very pleased that the website is running and the challenge now is to get departments to populate this keeping it updated which is an ongoing process. A parent has asked for the school calendar to be available on it. This should be on the website by the end of next week. Departments have been asked to create space showing curriculum outlines and progression pathways and that parents are invited to contact the school office to suggest information or provide feedback which could helpfully be incorporated into the website.

7 Parent Chair update (Rebecca Mackay)

The Chair advised that the PC had received a brilliant amount of donations from parents and staff to put towards our Perth Academy community hampers and she thanked everyone who supported the Christmas Hamper initiative. Special thanks were expressed for Lindsay Davidson for making up the hampers. The raffle made around £800. Thanks were also expressed to Lisa Jackson, Inclusion Officer, in working with the PC to deliver hampers to those in the Perth Academy community who would particularly appreciate it. The PC made funds available to buy some warm clothing to give to pupils at school in December: £250 on school hoodies and £265 on jackets and leggings. £200 was made on our stall at the Christmas concert and the school also plans to make a contribution from ticket sales.

The Chair advised that she and Lindsay Davidson had met with Cllr McCole to discuss property improvements. Also, the Chair is in communication with PKC about a secondary school review that is going to go ahead and invited parents to get in touch to share expertise/thoughts in this respect. In response to a question on this latter aspect, The Chair advised that she would be happy to send, upon request, a copy of the briefing note informing that a working group would be set up.

8 Close

The Chair closed the meeting by saying thank you for joining us online and in person.

The next meeting in March has been scheduled to take place in Letham St Marks Church at 7-8 pm on Wednesday 13 March 2024.

Chair: Rebecca Mackay

Vice-chair: Lindsay Davidson

Treasurer: Sarah Sloan

Clerk: Lesley Joice

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Preloved uniforms and study books, to pick up or donate, were available at the meeting