

BELMONT ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting

Wed 30 October 2024 at 6.30pm

School Library



PRESENT:

Parent Members: Aynsley Lawrence, David Bulloch, Lucinda Ferguson-Hunter, Karen Donn, Vicky Pang, Amiee Young, Heather Knox, Jonathan Hagen, Josephine Docherty (Secretary), Karen McGimpsey, Rosemary Logie & Susan Bell (Chair).

Staff Members: Kevin Boyd (Head Teacher), Graeme McLean (Depute Head Teacher), Ian Watson (Principle Teacher Guidance), Lynsey Pollock (Principal Teacher Modern Studies and History) & Alison Harvey (Principal Teacher Maths)

Pupil Members: Olivia F & Drew W (School Captain / Vice Captain)

1. Welcome & Apologies

Chair, Susan Bell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and intimated apologies on behalf of Emma Brown, Lesley Strain, Sharon McKenzie, Lynne Yuille, Sarah MacLeod, Lorna Russell, Lyssa McCartney

2. Minutes of Last Meeting (25th September 2024)

The Minute of the last meeting held on 25th September 2024 was approved by Graeme McLean and seconded by Heather Knox as a true record of that meeting.

3. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting(s)

- a) Belmont has talent – new date proposed – Thu 6th March. **Action: G McLean**
- b) Pupil survey – not yet conducted (carry forward)/ **Action: E Brown**
- c) Card reader – not yet purchased by David Bulloch; David will proceed to purchase the Square card reader, which had less fees than some of the others on offer. **Action: D Bulloch**
- d) Outdoor learning facility - the school grounds had been surveyed and Mr Boyd agreed to meet with Emma Brown to discuss the opportunity to include an outdoor learning facility, which would link in with the sustainability learning opportunities, for which the school has a budget. **Action: K Boyd**
- e) Student debt – Mr Watson advised HMRC had visited Belmont Academy to educate the young people on budgeting and there is potential to include sessions for other year groups. Mr Watson awaits further information from the organisation involved and agreed to circulate to the guidance team. This emanates from a suggestion by some of the older pupils who felt they were not well equipped to understand financial budgeting as they prepare to leave school. It was agreed to keep this topic on the agenda and Mr Watson would link in with Rosie Logie. **Action: I Watson / J Docherty**
- f) SQA qualifications/alternative pathways – an information evening (S2-S5) has been organised for parents and young people in the school on Thu 7 Nov. A QR code was sent to parents to sign up for the event. **Action: CLOSED**
- g) Belmont PC Meeting Notes – agreed Josephine Docherty would send the approved Minutes from PC Meetings to Graeme McLean in PDF format, for uploading to the school website. **Action: Docherty / G McLean**
- h) Belmont funding futures – (please see agenda item 5 below).

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4. School Captains Update

- a) The S6 leadership team raised over £500 for local mental health charities on Mental Health Day at events including karaoke, face-painting, bake sale as well as wearing 'a hint of green'.
- b) The S6 Halloween Disco for both Belmont Academy and Kyle Academy will be hosted at Belmont Academy, with Belmont alone having sold 90+ tickets thus far.
- c) Pupil Council and Prefect applications have been circulated and it is hoped appointments will be made by in the coming two weeks and meetings will then be set up to devise the pupil improvement plan for the remainder of this school year.
- d) Senior pupils plan in issuing a monthly newsletter. The Belmont Blog, with the first issue sent to Mr Boyd for approval. The monthly edition will provide an update for parents and carers on fund raising events and achievements within the school and pupils will approach teachers to determine if they have any information they wish to include.
- e) Special mention was made to S3 & S4 pupils who won the regional Maths Enterprise Challenge.
- f) Belmont Academy was recognised by Ayr Rotary for the vast range of fundraising events they arranged last year and Mr Boyd, along with pupils received the rotarian establishment recognition certificate.
- g) Parents Evening for S1s was successful, with a large proportion of parents booking and attending appointments, with S6 leadership team in attendance to assist with registration, direction to subject areas etc.
- h) S6 pupils will attend the next Parent Council Meeting and will provide an update on their fundraising efforts in aid of Children in Need & Remembrance Day.

Chair, Susan Bell asked Drew and Olivia if the senior pupils may be interested in donation/sale of Halloween costumes for next year's event, as well as consideration for recycling/sale of prom dresses (similar to what Kyle Academy does). Drew and Olivia agreed to discuss with their peers and would update at a future meeting.

Action: School Captains

5. Belmont Funding Futures – Calendar of Events

Volunteers were sought for the following forthcoming events:

- Wed 20 Nov School Show
- Thu 21 Nov School Show
- Fri 22 Nov School Show
- Tue 26 Nov S3 Parents Evening
- ~~Thu 28 Nov~~ ~~Movie Night~~ (Post Meeting note – **postponed**)
- Wed 4 Dec Art Exhibition 3-4pm
- Wed 4 Dec Art Exhibition 6-8pm
- Tue 10 Dec Christmas Concert

School Show Raffle – Astoria Cinema had donated cinema tickets and it was proposed these would be entered into a raffle, with tickets sold at the School Show (20 – 22 Nov) and the final draw made on 22 Nov. Parents were asked to donate raffle prizes.

Action: All Parents

Movie Night - Mr McLean would arrange to seek the views from pupils at personal support as to their preferred movie choices (S1 & S2 late afternoon, S3-S6 early evening on Thu 28 Nov).

Action: G McLean

Art Exhibition – 3 art pieces have been donated to the school, with a proposal to sell tickets priced at £5 and £10m with the winner selected via a random generator.

Action: E Brown

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6. Treasurer's Report (David Bulloch)

Gambling Act – Local Authority charges are £20 per annum (for raffles etc). Emma Brown had paid this from her own money last year. The renewal is due Dec 2024, agreed if Emma does the renewal and provides a receipt to David Bulloch, he will arrange reimbursement.

Action: D Bulloch / E Brown

Current funds are sitting at **£1378.31**. Circa £38 was collected at S1 parents evening earlier in the week, David will deposit these funds to the bank account.

Action: D Bulloch

David reminded PC members that this would be his final year's involvement with the school and therefore a replacement Treasurer would be sought in the coming months as his replacement, to allow a handover.

Action: All Parents for consideration

7. Pastoral Update (Ian Watson)

- a) UCAS Update: There were currently **68 applications** in progress, with 10 already submitted to UCAS.
- b) Attendance = Attainment Presentation: Mr Watson delivered a presentation demonstrating the correlation of attendance to that of attainment and was able to back this up with statistics which showed:
 - The average attendance of a Belmont Academy school pupil pre-covid was **92%**.
 - The average attendance of a Belmont Academy pupil last session was **86%**. That's a difference of **6%**.
 - There is evidence that shows that each decrease of 1% in attendance cost **3%** in exam performance. i.e. **6% x 3% = 18%**.
 - This session, the average attendance rate so far is **90%** - **4%** better than last session. This means on average pupils will score **12%** more in assessments than they did last year.

Mr Watson demonstrated secondary attendance for 2023-24 v 2024-25 (by stage – week 8) and this showed that attendance was better for **every** year group, but all year groups are attending **less well** than the **South Ayrshire average**. It was believed some of this was in part blamed on Unauthorised Parental Holiday (UPH), where a pupil roll of 1180 students there were 214 learners who had lost 875 days to unauthorised parental holiday (18% of students), which was a **38% rise** on the previous school year. Back in **2017-18**, there were **7,500 days lost** to UPH, but last year that number had risen to **12,000 days** over the full session.

South Ayrshire Council are currently running a campaign to improve attendance and they are currently considering a third phase with the public campaign, Every Learner Every Day, given the increasing statistics demonstrated above. They propose a survey to all parents/carers to gauge feedback about school attendance. Parent Council Members endorsed this idea.

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8. Mathematics Presentation (PT – Alison Harvey)

Since Lockdown 2020, the Maths department have moved towards exclusively using Teams / One Note for the delivery of all lessons/information, as it is believed this is an easy way for pupils to access all materials delivered in class – at any time, from anywhere, from S1 through to Advanced Higher pupils.

In addition, Belmont Academy has taken out a subscription to Zeta Maths, an online resource to support learning. This clearly shows the topic covered and includes links to online textbook exercises associated with that topic.

A 'Tips & Tricks' fact sheet has been developed for Teams, One Note and Zeta Maths, so pupils know how to log on to Teams, useful Apps to download etc.

Belmont Academy offered Maths support in the form of a weekend residential opportunity at Dumfries House, targeting borderline candidates – with data from assessments, to give them additional support (Nat 5 and Higher levels), in an effort to raise the profile of the Maths department with pupils learning in a fun environment, building relationships, whilst having a positive impact on maths attainment. Some of the activities included rock climbing and archery, as well as maths tuition. 40 students had attended and the event was hugely successful. It is hoped that similar can be offered over two weekends in 2025 (31 Jan – 2 Feb for Nat 5 students) then, 7 – 9 Mar (for Higher/Advanced Higher students). The department have still to conduct assessment data before a shortlist may be compiled as to which pupils it will be suitable for.

It cost £5k for last year's residential event, which was a pilot programme, with £600 grant aid received from The Mathematics Society and the remainder funded from the school budget.

A similar event in 2025 will cost circa £85 per pupil, covering maths tuition, activities, accommodation, food and drinks as well as bus transfer and the department have applied for funding from The Mathematics Society once more and if a similar grant is awarded, this would hopefully cover the bus costs for the two weekends and the department are considering fund-raising opportunities in an effort to negate costs for individuals to attend, so it can be accessible for everyone.

Miss Harvey will be demonstrating Alternative Pathways at next week's Options Evening, explaining the difference between National 5 Maths and National 5 Applications for Maths, which is a new qualification offered as an alternative to Nat 5 Maths, as an alternative to pupils who are not going down the STEM pathway. It is possible to sit both Nat 5 Maths and Nat 5 Applications for Maths, but this is not recommended by Miss Harvey.

9. Cost of the School Day – leftover belongings (Kevin Boyd)

A large quantity of clothing has been left behind in school and despite alerts to parents to reclaim personal items, a huge quantity remains unclaimed – in the form of school uniform, jackets, shoes, trainers and PE kit. Mr Boyd made a plea to all parents to mark clothing with their students name and asked parents to consider how unclaimed items may be recycled. Susan Bell advised of plans to hold a pop-up shop in Maybole for a weekend, in an effort to raise funds for the school and suggested unclaimed items be recycled in this way, with funds raised going back to the school, for the benefit of the pupils. Susan/Emma are liaising with the shop owner to determine a date when the shop may be available for such, as it's booked up for a number of months ahead. This subject will be revisited in due course.

ACTION: S Bell/E Brown

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10. Head Teacher's Update (Kevin Boyd)

a) Staffing

Mr Pringle (English) finishes with us on Friday, 1 November and we wish him every success in his new post at Barrhead HS. Following the recent recruitment and selection process, we did not appoint a replacement for this post. I have requested an advert for a 1.0 FTE permanent Primary Teacher – Teacher of English (BGE). In the interim, cover staff will be deployed to cover the shortfall in English staffing.

We have recently appointed:

- 0.4 FTE Teacher of English (Temp - start date 25/11)
- Two Clerical Assistants (Temp - start date TBC).

Acting posts:

- Mrs Ross McMahon – Acting DHT (Kintyre House) - Val Gibson 18th November

Adverts:

Current open adverts are:

- 1.0 FTE PT Design & Technical (closes 5/11, interviews 22/11)

I'm pleased to report that our levels of staff absence continue to be reasonably low. We continue to have two members of staff who are off long-term. Our staffing situation is reasonably settled, and we have had a positive start to the new term.

b) Quality Assurance

On Tuesday, 8 October we had an extremely positive and productive attainment visit where members of the senior team discussed our many strengths, areas for improvement and next steps with Lyndsay McRoberts (Director of Education) and Gavin Pitt (QIM). At the end of the meeting Lyndsay thanked all staff for their hard work and commented on the positive outlook for our school community moving forward.

c) Department Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) Programme

This week we have begun our Departmental VSE visits. This involves a team of staff visiting departments over 1/2 days with a focus on LTA and one other quality indicator chosen by the department. The programme includes a departmental presentation; observed lessons; pupil focus groups; and staff focus groups. This activity allows us to identify strengths and share good practice, as well as identifying areas for development. On Monday we visited the Music department and today/tomorrow we are visiting Social Subjects.

d) S1 Parents' Evenings

Many thanks to all members of the PC who assisted during Monday night's S1 Parents' Evening.

- Of the 219 parents/carers of S1 pupils, 78% (170 parents) made bookings, an increase of 5% from the same time last year.
- Of those who made bookings, 85% of parents/carers attended, an increase of 16% from the same time last year.
- Overall, this means that 66% of S1 parents/carers attended Monday night's event.

Parents/carers will be asked to complete a short survey about S1 Parents' Evening, and we will provide feedback when this is collated.

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We are aware that not all S1 parents/carers were able to see the teachers they wanted on Monday night. I'm happy to discuss this and invite S1 PC members to provide feedback on the running of the Parents' Evening to make our next one even more effective.

e) **Supported Study Programme**

We continue to deliver a wide range of supported study (focus on SP) this session. The school website section 'Pupils/ Supported Study' will be updated with the details our provision and we will continue to update this. Mr McLean DHT will also promote this information with pupils and parent/carers.

11. Any Other Business

- a) **Achieve Programme** – the school has introduced an interactive programme where all subject resource materials can be found online to support study in/out of school.
- b) **Departmental validated self-evaluation programme** – there are currently two departments taking part in this initiative – Maths as well as Social Subjects. There is a focus on learning and teaching at departmental level and one other quality indicator chosen by the department, with Music opting for 'Leadership' and Social Subjects choosing 'Curriculum'. The department deliver a presentation, lessons are observed for full periods (sometimes with more than one member of staff), pupil focus groups and staff focus groups to garner feedback, which allows the school to identify strengths within individual departments and sharing of good practice and highlights areas for development/
- c) **School improvement plan** to be carried forward to the next PC Meeting (Nov 27).
ACTION: K Boyd
- d) **School Show** (The Addams Family) – tickets are on sale now for the forthcoming school show, which will be on 3 nights Wed – Fri (20-22 Nov). These are priced at £7 / £5 concession for under 18s and school pupils (no concessions on the Fri evening). Tickets are on sale

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parent Council will take place on **Wednesday 27th November 2024** at **6.30pm** in the School Library (1st floor).