

BELMONT ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting
Wed 27 November 2024 at 6.30pm
School Library



PRESENT:

Parent Members: Aynsley Lawrence, David Bulloch (Treasurer), Karen Donn, Emma Brown, Heather Knox, Josephine Docherty (Secretary), Karen McGimpsey, Lesley Strain, Lorna Russell, Lyssa McCartney & 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) & Laura MacMillan (Principal Teacher Music)

Pupil Members: Mabel J (School Captain) & Julia C-B (Vice Captain)

1. Welcome & Apologies (Susan Bell)

Chair, Susan Bell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and intimated apologies on behalf of Amiee Young, David Codling, Lucinda Ferguson-Hunter, Sarah MacLeod, Sharon MacKenzie, Jonathan Hagen & Rosemary Logie.

S1 parent, Lynne Yuille has intimated her immediate resignation from Parent Council.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting (30th October 2024) (Susan Bell)

The Minute of the last meeting held on 30th October 2024 was approved by David Bulloch and seconded by Graeme McLean, as a true record of that meeting.

3. Matters Arising

- a) Belmont has talent – new date proposed – Thu 6th March, with rehearsals commencing early in the New Year. **Action: G McLean**
- b) Pupil survey – not yet conducted (carry forward) **Action: E Brown**
- c) Card reader – Square App downloaded as an alternative to a physical card reader. Treasurer and Chair have the log in details, with funds received via the app, automatically being credited to the Parent Council's bank account. **Action: CLOSED**
- d) Outdoor learning facility – It was suggested this could be incorporated into the Duke of Edinburgh award and is an area for progressing in the New Year. **Action: K Boyd**
- e) Student debt/budgeting advice – Mr Watson had liaised with HMRC to determine what resources were available to build 'financial topics' into the curriculum, to help pupils understand about tax, mortgages, banking, debt management etc. Mr Watson is liaising with the wider PSE Group to see what is possible and agreed to provide an update at the Feb '25 parent council meeting. **Action: I Watson / J Docherty**
- f) Belmont PC Meeting Notes – approved Minutes from PC Meetings will be uploaded to the school website under the Parent Council section. Josephine Docherty to send the approved note to Graeme McLean in PDF format, for uploading to the school website. **Action: Docherty / G McLean**

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- g) Movie Night – Due to increasing costs, it was decided to cancel the proposed movie night in the school. Alternatively, a raffle was held over the 3 nights of the School Show (The Addams Family) with £226 in raffle ticket money and £193.80 from tuck shop sales. Mr Boyd advised that bouncy castles had been booked for the Awards Day at a cost of £600 and the raffle monies raised could be put towards those costs.
- a) Donation of Halloween Costumes – As suggested at last meeting, pupils had created a poster seeking donations of Halloween costumes to be recycled. The poster was shared on Instagram, with a request for donations to be handed into the school office. It was suggested that this initiative could be extended to Christmas jumpers (as well as Prom outfits) to support pupils to participate in special events, where the cost of new items could be a barrier. Similarly, the recycle initiative would stop unwanted, unused items going to landfill.
Action: Pupil Council
- h) Art Exhibition – Belmont Funding Futures Group have managed to source art donations from local artists Vanessa Lawrence and Madhumati Manda. These will be on display within the school during an art exhibition on Mon 9th Dec, where there will be the option to purchase a raffle draw (£5 per ticket no.) with the winner being drawn from a random number generator.
- i) Gambling Act Licence – the current licence is due to expire. Treasurer, David Bulloch agreed to complete the paperwork, to renew the licence, at a cost of £20 to Parent Council.
Action: D Bulloch
- j) Cost of the School Day/Pop-up Shop – Plans are progressing to host a ‘pop-up’ shop in Maybole (Sat to Thu 10am – 3pm), early 2025 (date to be confirmed). The pop-up shop is normally well attended and typically can raise £1-2k during the course of a week. Emma Brown agreed to liaise with VASA to determine if they had any volunteers willing to support the cause and a plea will also go out to parents to support this too, with funds raised returned to the school for the benefit of pupils. It was proposed that items of clothing and sports equipment left in lost property within the school would be donated to this initiative also, once a final plea reminder had been issued to parents to retrieve any lost property belonging to their children.
Action: E Brown

4. School Captain's Update (Mabel J & Julia C-B)

- a) Halloween Disco - This event was well attended, with everyone having an enjoyable evening.
- b) Remembrance Day – A number of School Captains attended the Remembrance Service at Church as well as the Service which took place on 11th Nov. There were a number of Remembrance assemblies took place within the School Atrium, which were well attended and well respected.
- c) Children in Need – Over the course of a week, a wide range of activities took place within the school to raise funds for Children in Need; these included a bake sale, a sponsored head-shave, guess the dinosaurs birthday, teachers v pupils football tournament and a soak-the-teacher event, with a whopping £2,100 raised in total.
- d) Fundraising for S6 Prom – a number of events are planned to raise funds in aid of S6 prom, including The Masked Singer (entry fee), bake sale, karaoke etc.
- e) Pupil Council Newsletter – Instead of a whole school newsletter, it is now proposed this will be an S6 newsletter.

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- f) The Night Before Christmas Charity – pupils and teachers will have the opportunity to pay £1 for a candy cane, which may be accompanied by a message, which pupils will deliver.
- g) Belmont Cluster Interact – Julia provided information on Belmont Cluster Interact, a non-profit organisation supported by Rotary Ayr and VASA, providing volunteering opportunities to raise money for local charities. There is an event upcoming which will aid local Honeypot charity, an initiative to give young carers aged 5-12 a weekend getaway. There will be a table set up within the school to promote this charity and there will be fundraising in the form of 'guess the number of beads in the jar' to help raise money towards the charity.
- h) Recycling Week – it is proposed for an inter-house competition within the school (Feb) to recycle plastic, with a prize for the house who collects the highest volume – pupils are yet to discuss the proposal with Mr Boyd, to seek approval. The plastic will then be recycled and any money raised will be donated to foreign charities in need of safe drinking water. It was suggested that used crisp packets could be recycled also, for sleeping bags for homeless charities.
Action: Pupil Council
- i) Cancer Awareness Event – it is proposed for fundraising events to be arranged over the course of the school year, in an effort to raise awareness and raise funds for this deserving cause.
- j) Lend with Care – this international initiative consists of lending £15 to fund a small business, who can invest the money in seeds (for example) and in turn they will grow crops, which they will harvest and pay back and/or reinvest the money raised in sale of crops, to aid countries to work their way out of poverty with dignity.

All of the fundraising events listed above enable pupils to offer their support to local, international and global fundraising initiatives. The Treasurer from Ayr Rotary Club is liaising with the Treasurer of S6 Pupil Council, in order to set up a business bank account for Belmont Cluster Interact.

5. Belmont Funding Futures (BFF) Update (Emma Brown)

A number of events are planned over the course of Nov and Dec – school show, parents evenings, art exhibition, Christmas concert etc – a plea was issued to parent members to support these events and a number of parents had kindly put their names forward. BFF will look for similar support in the New Year for fundraising events, as it's helpful to know in advance who is able to support, when. Thanks was given to all those who have provided support up to now.

6. Treasurer's Report (David Bulloch)

Previous balance was £1378.31, with £17.29 in cash given to David from Susan from refreshment sales at parents evening events, bringing the bank balance to £1395.60.

Given there are no upfront associated costs, the Square App has been set up for the Parent Council's use for contactless payments at events, it is controlled by a dashboard with certain individuals granted access. There is a fee of 1.75%, so for every £1 spent, less than 2p will be taken as commission. It is planned to trial this at next week's Art Exhibition, with the App operational on either Android or Apple devices. On a weekly basis, any funds raised via the App will be sent directly to the Parent Council's bank account. David will create a Standard Operating

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Procedure (SOP) for members, so they know how to install and operate the app for Parent Council events.

7. Pastoral Update (Ian Watson)

a) Remembrance assemblies – Mr Watson commended pupils from Belmont Academy who had attended the Remembrance events at Castlehill Church, as well as The Cenotaph at County Buildings, they displayed dignity and respect and were a credit to the school. Likewise, the Remembrance assemblies which had taken place across the week within the school had been very well received, with pupils displaying respect for those fallen in the line of duty. School Captains did a sterling job presenting the assemblies within the school atrium. Senior pupils presented a poem, which was very moving, and very well received by pupils and teaching staff. It was proposed that The Last Post be live-streamed next year, via Teams, if possible.

b) Bullying – Mr Watson delivered a presentation in relation to forms of bullying, by frequency, with statistics ranking these as follows: -

Verbal – 46%, Gossip – 41%, Being ignored or isolated – 27%, Physical – 10%, having items stolen – 8%, threats or sexual assault – 5%.

A national poll of S1 students showed 40% of young people were bullied in the last 12 months. 6% of all young people had experienced bullying daily, 9% between once a week and once a month (UK National figure).

Belmont Academy will continue to focus efforts to eliminate bullying via school assemblies, PSE delivery, restoration meetings with pupils, in an effort to reduce incidences of bullying, which is known to impact on young people's mental health.

c) UCAS Update – 80 applications submitted from Belmont Academy pupils, to date – 39 have been sent to UCAS and 41 are 'in progress'. 33 of the applications submitted have had a response from universities, to date. In January 2025, applications will open up for college entries. There are also work experience or modern apprenticeship opportunities due to open up and it is important that pupils continually check Teams notifications, in order to not miss out.

d) Poland Trip – pupils were polled to gauge interest in a trip to Poland (Sep 2025). So far, there has been a high level of interest. Flights would have to be booked early in 2025, so parents will be asked to pay the initial deposit £60 in the coming weeks, before the Christmas break. There are currently 50 spaces on offer at a cost of £820 for the 5-day trip.

8. Music Department Update from Principal Teacher (Laura MacMillan)

Miss MacMillan delivered a presentation to PC members outlining the Broad General Education (BGE) experience available to pupils within Belmont Academy, the extra-curricular opportunities available, the partnerships and pathway options and an outline of what the future holds for the Music Department.

Pupils have opportunities to perform music and can experience keyboard, tuned percussion, ukulele, guitar or drums, with pupils having the choice of two instruments they'd like to further develop their skills on from S1 onwards. The department is looking to extend those choices to include voice, electric guitar and bass guitar, all reliant on funding/budget dependent. A new Samba Band, Belmont Beats is coming soon. Through differentiated sheet music, pupils are

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able to progress, pace and challenge themselves either as individuals or in a group. From S3, practice room access is permitted during class time.

As well as performing, pupils are able to compose music through a range of creative resources.

There are extra-curricular music opportunities available Mon through to Fri, either at lunchtime and/or after school.

There is a multitude of pathways available beyond Belmont Academy, which the school is able to signpost pupils towards.

Belmont Academy offers pupils Level 4 through to Level 7 music options within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Exam results for Aug 2024 showed 73% of pupils achieving A grade at Nat 5 Level, 71% achieving A grade at Higher Level and Advanced Higher stats were A-13%, B-38%, C-25%, D-25%.

The Music Department has a wide range of ideas planned for the future, with a refresh of S2 and S3 curriculum, consideration of Sound and Light Production Arts qualifications, Belmont Music in the community – delivering music to care homes and cluster primaries, consideration to NPA Music Performing and Music Leaders Award as a dual qualification course option, partnership working with Ayr Hospital Radio and Ayr United FC, residential weekend opportunity prior to the summer concert, contribution to Duke of Edinburgh Award – skill development and/or volunteering (Saltire Award), Staff Choir, as well as an additional member of staff for the department.

9. School Improvement Plan

The [School Improvement Plan](#) for this session and the Standards & Quality Report for 2023-24 is available at the bottom of the 'Our School' website page along with other useful links. Once again, we have created a SIP Summary on a page to highlight our improvement work.

10. Head Teachers Update (Kevin Boyd)

a) Staffing

We have recently appointed:

- Sarah Kyle, PT Design & Technical
- Molly Campbell, Science Technician (started 18/11)
- Laura Dickie, Clerical Assistant (started 18/11)
- Grace McGill, Clerical Assistant (started 25/11)

Acting posts:

- Miss Valerie McMahon – Acting DHT (Kintyre House) – started 18/11

My personal thanks to Mr McMahon for his support throughout his time as Acting DHT. Ross has returned to his substantive post as PT Physics.

Adverts:

Current open adverts are:

- 1.0 FTE Teacher of Geography (closed 26/11, interviews 3/12)
- 1.0 FTE Teacher of English (closed 26/11, interviews 4/12)

We now require to place an advert for 1.0 FTE permanent Teacher of Technical post. I'm pleased to report that our levels of staff absence continue to be reasonably low. We currently have three members of staff who are off long-term. Our staffing situation is settled for this time of the year.

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b) Communication

The S6 Leadership Team are converting the first edition of the Belmont Banter into a Sway format before issuing to the school community. In addition, with the support of Jodie Murdoch (Digital Lead) we will reinstate an updated version of the Belmont Banner (also a Sway) with two issues being published each term. These publications will help to communicate the excellent life, work, many activities and successes that take place throughout Belmont Academy with the whole school community.

11. Any Other Business

- a) **Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) Award** (pupil equity) – due to limited spaces available at Belmont Academy, a number of pupils missed out on the opportunity to participate in the DoE Award Scheme.

Emma Brown had liaised with DoE Scotland, DoE UK, as well as South Ayrshire Council and explained:

- There is a resilience fund which can be accessed by the school to help ensure that all young people that would like to participate in the Bronze DoE can do so.
- D of E are currently undertaking a huge fund-raising effort across the UK to ensure that all local authorities have at least one, possibly 2 DoE coordinators.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parent Council will take place on **Wednesday 29th January 2025** at **6.30pm** in the **School Library** within Belmont Academy.