

North West Sutherland Schools Parent Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday 8th November 2023, 7pm, Durness Primary School

1. Welcome

Denise Macdonald opened the meeting.

Attendees

John Naples-Campbell, Katy Lee, Denise Macdonald, Iona Shaw, Carol-anne Forsyth, Linda Tebay, Ashley Milne, Krysha Davis, Selena Campbell, Lynzi Montgomery, Noeleen Chapman, Meg Coull, Yvonne MacRae, Councillor Hugh Morrison

Apologies

Aileen Macdonald, Dan Price-Davies, Heather Paterson, Mathilde Lewis, Sophie Beveridge, Sian Curley, Diana Morrison

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved by Iona, seconded by Krysha.

3. Matters arising from minutes

Gift for Gail Ross – it was agreed that £50 from each Parent Council account will be used towards purchase of a gift for Gail Ross as a thank you for her long service. A bench was a suggested gift. Yvonne will look at a cost for this. **ACTION YVONNE**

4. Head Teacher's Reports

Mr Naples-Campbell shared his Head Teacher's report. Information within this report has been divided amongst the appropriate headings below. The report was discussed and received positively by parents present.

Importance of pupil attendance at school, in particularly Secondary School, was stressed. Poor attendance impacts greatly on academic performance / attainment and High School teachers are noticing the impact of irregular attendance on their classes. Request for parents to please encourage better attendance.

ACTION PARENTS

Panto

As you may be aware we are not attending the panto this year. Scourie Primary did historically go to the panto as a school which was funded by the community. Last year it was decided that the whole of North West Sutherland Schools should attend as it was the first year post-Covid. This was helped by funding from outside agencies as well as contributions from the school. This year the tickets were held for the school before my appointment but no funding was put in place and it was going to cost the school approximately £3000 in total to take the whole school – money we simply don't have (tickets, coaches etc). As a Drama Teacher I am 100% behind young people seeing live performance as it's so important for their development and cultural input however with cost of living it is not fair to ask parents to pay for this wholly. Senior Leadership Team took the decision to make it every two years to a) source funding and b) spread the cost for the school.

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Staffing

- Staffing remains good at the High School and throughout the campus.
- Gail Ross's retirement had been discussed at the last meeting. Her hours have combined with Murdette Price Davies to make a full time ASN Teacher for the campus.
- Aileen's Acting Post has been advertised and there were applicants so that will go to interview and Aileen will return to her substantive post in due course.

Area Office:

- We have had three visits from Area Office
 - Fiona Grant (Head of Learning and Teaching)
 - Annika Janssen (Area Manager)
 - Mark Jones (Collaborative Lead)
- Each found the school to be warm and welcoming and really engaged with the positive journey we are on to getting it right for every child and our aspirations for attainment and the curriculum.

Learning and Teaching

- Andy Brown, Education Scotland lead for Maths and Numeracy, came to work with the maths department; observing broad general education classes and working with staff to aid improvements.
- Faculty Head meetings have been focused on What Should Learning and Teaching look like in our school and also looking at our behaviour and pupil relationships policy. These two areas are key to raising attainment and developing key Health and Wellbeing within our school

Engagement

- Parents evening across the campus took place and Katy and I need to discuss how we can engage more parents in attending; possibly looking at virtual meetings (especially for the high school) but those parents who did attend found it worthwhile and valued the conversations with staff on supporting their child in their education.
- I've been doing bi-weekly 5@5 sessions with pupils – 5 questions to 5 students about the school. This has been a valuable exercise in pupil voice and gauging what they really feel about the school.
- The curriculum consultation went out to all parents in P5 – S3, we had just over 50% return and all supported the proposed changes to a 2+2+2 curriculum from next academic year.
- Pupil Parliament begins this week and we have 16 members of parliament across the campus.
- Head Teacher drop-in happened this week with sessions from Scourie and KLB being busy and informative.

Extra Curricular

- The Newton Rooms came to visit the school and enabled young people to develop skills in STEM.

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- The Army to come in and work with our P7 – S6 students on various activities and tasks to develop lifelong skills. The Army commented how successful our young people were and how much they enjoyed working with them. Having observed some of it I have to say how great it was to see young people from all year groups working together to support each other to achieve.
- Murdette and Harvey are in Poland today after travelling to Edinburgh to start their Holocaust Education Trust Lesson from Auschwitz Project. Pupils said how thought provoking the whole seminar was and hearing Janine Webber (Holocaust Survivor) speak in person really brought home the importance of learning about the Holocaust as its own subject. Visiting Auschwitz will be a life experience for them both.
- Rev Andrea was in yesterday doing two assemblies; one for the primary and one for the secondary, about Peace. Lots to think about as she discussed what Peace is and looks like in this ever changing world. It was nice to welcome her into the school for the first time this term.

5. Nurseries

a. Durness

Nothing to report.

b. Kinlochbervie

KLB Nursery has been mothballed at present but the community are working at the moment to get necessary funding in place and building works complete in order to meet Care Inspectorate standards. Meetings are ongoing with the Highland Council, there is not a final plan in place for next year as yet. This information will be shared when known.

c. Scourie

Building work funding has now been approved but is unlikely to be complete before Summer 2024 as work must be done in school holidays.

6. Primary Schools

Please find Ms Lee's report for the primary schools and nurseries attached as appendix 1. This report was discussed at the meeting. Please see action for parents in this report regarding completion of Seesaw Questionnaire. There was a discussion around the value of the Seesaw app at different settings and what information should be shared.

7. High School

As above in Head Teacher's report.

8. Treasurer's report

Durness Primary School	£1543.12 (includes £85 for shared use)
Scourie Primary School	£287.56
Kinlochbervie Primary School	£1764.25
Kinlochbervie High School	£1147.04
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Total	£4741.97

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The Parent Council still need to apply to the Highland Council for their financial contribution for this academic year. Request for Sally to pass on PC email account details to Denise please.

ACTION SALLY & DENISE

9. Fundraising

Scourie Primary and Kinlochbervie Primary Parents will arrange local Christmas Fundraising events.

Councillor Hugh Morrison was present and spoke about funding streams that we could apply to fund / subsidise extracurricular activities. From next April a special fund (Sutherland Transport Forum) will go live that can be used for to pay for transport to and from extra-curricular activities.

Request for parents / staff to please tell Ms Lee about any extra-curricular activities they would like funded along with costings / quotes. Golf, ballet / dance, football, swimming were discussed as potential ideas.

ACTION EVERYONE

Yvonne will try to collate ideas and apply to the Ward Discretionary Fund for funding again.

10. Correspondence

Nil

11. Any other current business (AOCB)

Councillor Hugh Morrison wanted to raise awareness of Youth Voice Places at local Community Councils for our 16-18 year olds. Parents please encourage your 16-18 year olds to approach their community councils (CCs), there are two youth places at each council and currently only one place at Scourie CC is used and none at Durness or KLB. It is a great opportunity for young people to have a voice in their community and learn about how CCs work.

ACTION PARENTS

Hugh also spoke about the opportunity for Spaceport representatives to come out to schools to talk about what they do and potential apprenticeships / job opportunities for our young people.

School Working Groups – request for two parents to join school working group. Meetings will be online to help with parental engagement for school improvement. Group will focus on Role Within Our Community, please get in touch with Mr Campbell if you are an interested parent.

ACTION PARENTS

Parent request for school Twitter account to be used in addition to Facebook as some parents are on Twitter and do not have a Facebook account. Staff agreed, Mr Campbell agreed to action.

ACTION MR CAMPBELL

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Date of next meeting

There was discussion around whether online or in person meetings were better. Majority agreed to continue with in person meetings and continue to rotate around the three villages.

Next meeting: 7pm, Wednesday 28th February 2024 at Scourie Primary School.

Meeting close 8.50pm

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Appendix 1: Katy Lee's Primary School and ELC report

Primary

Staffing

Learning Support : Gail Ross (Support for Learning Teacher) has now retired and Kathryn Barnes Miller (Scourie PSA) will be leaving at the end of this month.

Active Schools

Scott Macrae left last month. Katy and Heather are currently discussing a replacement with the head of Active Schools. We stressed how important this input was for our schools. The post for 17.5 hours a week will soon be advertised. Hopefully it will attract someone who will deliver high quality sports sessions for our pupils at lunchtimes/after school and during the holidays. If you can think of anyone with relevant coaching experience/youth work experience who might be interested please tell them to look out for the post being advertised. We may be able to have an active schools coach from Golspie/ Dornoch to cover Thursdays in the interim period. We will keep you posted on this.

Raising Attainment

We had a very useful visit from Simon Scott the Primary Collaborative Lead last month. Simon attended attainment conversations with Katy and the primary teachers. Together we looked at what strategies were in place to support all learners. Simon then led a CPD for primary staff on '*What makes a good lesson*'. Key assessment tasks are carried out termly with pupils in aspects of literacy and numeracy. A written report of these is shared with parents on Seesaw. This week primary children are taking part in online national assessments. These are SOFAs (Scottish Online Formative Assessments) for P2, P3, P5, P6 and NSAS (National Standardised Assessments for Scotland) for P4 and P7. These assessments together with key assessment tasks and teacher judgements of curriculum benchmarks combine together to enable teachers to make an evidenced based judgement of pupils' current attainment. They also help teachers to identify any areas that a pupil may need reinforcement or support in.

Parent/teacher meetings were held in October in each primary setting.

Adverse Weather:

We have put together a management plan to avoid closure of schools locally. This means if we have the staff that can walk to school we will be able to open Durness, Kinlochbervie, Scourie Primaries and ELC. There is also a High School plan in place and a plan for NWSS Thursdays. (This plan was received very positively by parents at the meeting.)

Family Engagement:

Kinlochbervie Primary invited parents in to a numeracy open classroom last month. Scourie Primary parents are invited to a reading open classroom this month. We hope parents find these sessions useful.

Durness Primary are planning an open classroom session for this term too.

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Seesaw: Our subscription to Seesaw is up for renewal at the end of December. We use Seesaw extensively in primary and early years to share teaching and learning, also for messages. It is expensive though so we need to make sure it is a worthwhile expenditure. Please can parents look out for a survey of your views on the use of Seesaw- we can then use the result to justify the expense (or not).

ACTION PARENTS

ELCs

Staffing

Durness : Emma Mackay, Gladys Jepkurui Kigen, Kristina Coulton

Scourie : Lynzi Montgomery, Iona Harper- Reynoldson

ELC Manager (acting) : Katy Lee

SMT Durness : John Naples- Campbell (Mon), Katy Lee (Tues)

Scourie : John Naples- Campbell (Tues), Katy Lee (Weds)

Durness and Scourie ELC together day

Scourie ELC visited Durness ELC for a together day on 31st October. It was a lovely day with Hallowe'en crafts and games. We hope to have these days once a term with transport provided by the school car.

Management Plan : Snow Days : Each setting now has a management plan in place to cover snowy/icy travel conditions. This should prevent schools from having to close unless it is a blanket closure from Highland Council.

Scourie Nursery Building Work : Area managers visited Scourie Nursery (26th Oct). They were hugely impressed with the spaces the nursery staff have created in the snack room and the classroom. The building work funding has now been approved but it is unlikely that building work will start until the Summer.

Family Engagement : ELC staff regularly share learning activities on Seesaw with families. There will also be an opportunity for parents to come to a 'play and stay' session in their child's nursery. These sessions will include opportunities to discuss care plans with ELC staff and to see children's floor books.