



## **Strathaven Academy Parent Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June @ 7.00pm**

### **Minutes**

**In Attendance:** Jack Campbell (Chair), Jo Tunney (Vice Chair), Cheryl McMorris (Secretary), Kirsten Kinniburgh, Aqsaa Khan, Catriona Webber, Vickie Leck (Teacher), Iain Fleming (Depute Head Teacher), Waheeda Huq (Headteacher), Paula Hamilton (Principal Teacher/Acting Depute Head Teacher) Cllr Elise Frame, Carolyne Mitchell, Adele Brennan (Virtual)

**Apologies:** Yvonne Vance, Giovanna McKenna, Julie LeBlanc Smith

### **2. Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March - Approved**

### **3. Matters arising:**

**i) Abuse of Toilet Facilities:** School is continuing to monitor the situation. No significant issues noted since previous meeting. Accessible toilet and staff toilets are now clearly labelled to avoid confusion.

**ii) Vaping in School Building:** The Cross Party Motion in relation to single use vapes that Cllr Frame had discussed at the previous PC meeting has been brought to full council meeting. The motion was backed unanimously at that meeting. Scottish Government is pushing through banning disposable vapes. This will also go to South Lanarkshire Council Education committee in relation to vaping issues in school establishments. The school currently does not have the authority to confiscate vapes from pupils.

K Kinniburgh asked about signposting to "Stop Vaping" services – leaflets at local pharmacy. Discussion that, as vaping was never intended to be for children, the initiatives to stop vaping are not designed for use by children either. Cllr Frame will go to education department to see if they can lead anything in relation to access to stopping vaping. School has access to addiction services that students can be referred to as well if they need additional support.

**iii) Sandford Bus – Update:** As discussed at previous meeting, there is a group of students in Sandford who do not qualify for free school bus transport. This has been an ongoing issue for many years and has been addressed again by a group of parents exploring ways forward. Information came back from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, stating that a proposal to have a privately funded bus has been through their legal department & they can't do a contract as it has to be led by the Council. Council has now accepted that they will create a contract. The bus company is aware of this and will issue an invoice as necessary. Application for finance funding will be submitted to Sandford & Upper Avondale Community Council (SUACC) once invoice received. Cllr Frame will forward information to Jo Tunney as soon as received.

**iv) Traffic Management:** Following on from discussion at previous meeting around difficulties with the access / egress to school, i.e., single lane access, cars stopped with engines idling, school bus access and parking, particularly at drop off / pick up times and the risk to students and other pedestrians using the route. Cllr Frame has been in contact with Roads, Facilities and Planning Depts and is meeting with Community Police tomorrow. It has



been agreed that, every time an issue occurs, this needs to be reported to police in order for a full picture of the risks to be established. New signage will be going up on the roads around the school. A question was raised as to whether the part of Bowling Green Road that intersects with Crosshill Road and is currently blocked off could be opened and a one-way route created. Cllr Frame agreed to put this suggestion to the relevant council departments. Cllr Frame also agreed to consult with SPT and ask for their feedback regarding any incidents with the buses. As part of the school travel plan, a survey will be sent out to parents at start of the new school year in relation to travel and traffic – parents to be encouraged to complete and be honest in responses. Cllr Frame offered to come and be around at the end of day to observe and help if required until the start of the summer.

#### **4. Headteacher's Report**

Thanks were given to Cllr Frame for her input with all the above items which have helped with moving things forward.

#### **Staffing Update**

Mrs Ferguson has left on a temporary basis to take up post as Acting Principal Teacher of Mathematics (Stonelaw High School).

Magdalena Cyran, our lower strings music teacher, will be leaving at the end of this term as she and her family move back to Poland after being in Scotland for 17 years.

Staffing allocation for session 2023-24 is 73 Full Time Equivalent teachers.

Seven Newly Qualified Teachers have been allocated to Strathaven Academy for session 2023-24 (Art & Design, History, History/Modern Studies, Maths, Music, PE & Spanish)

#### **SQA Examinations**

The SQA exams completed on Tuesday, 30 May 2023. All our young people were a credit to Strathaven Academy. Attendance levels were exceptional, and the feedback from the Chief Invigilator was very positive. Thank you to Mr Fleming, our invigilation team and Support for Learning staff, as well as staff across the school and parents/carers for their support.

The new timetable for seniors started on Monday, 5 June 2023, and we look forward to a positive set of SQA results on Tuesday, 8 August 2023.

Prior to the SQA examinations, our invigilators enjoyed a lovely lunch, which showcased the culinary skills of our young people (supported by staff), courtesy of the Hospitality team.

#### **Leavers' Events**

A day of celebrations was held on Friday, 21 April 2023 to mark the successes of our S4-S6 leavers. S6 parents/carers were invited to celebrate the event, with an after-party in the Games Hall organised by Ms Harvey and the team.

The S4/5 leavers' celebrations took place in the library in the afternoon with certificates, cakes galore and the opportunity to look back on school with fond memories.



The school prom will be held on Thursday, 8 June 2023, and we look forward to seeing all our S6 leavers as they enjoy the celebrations.

### **School Magazine**

This session, Mr Holmes and the S6 Communications Team were challenged to create a new version of the school newsletter which aims to capture some of the events and stories that continue to represent pupil voices.

The group has worked very hard to produce Strathaven Academy's new magazine *Avonmail*. The young people had full editorial control and, as a team, they dedicated the academic year to creating this fantastic magazine, which is available on our website.

### **Musical Achievements**

- Nicholas S - many musical performances in the local community, including the recent SLC Pupil Award Ceremony, where he received a special recognition award.
- Mrs Blades' jazz band *Saxplosion*, consisting of S4 pupils Nicholas S, Callum B, Coban P, Sam M and Samuel R, has performed at many local events, including the Clover Hill Festival at Hangarfest, to great acclaim. The band has also been interviewed and played live on Avondale Radio, and will be performing at the Instrumental Music Showcase in a couple of weeks.
- Nicholas S, Coban P, Sam M and Callum B are all in the pit band for our school show, *Grease*, and have been working hard throughout study leave by coming into school for rehearsals.
- Our Samba Band is leading a flash mob-style performance at the upcoming Instrumental Music Showcase.
- Nina B and Ira B have released a further single under their duo name of *Opaque*.
- Our Battle of the Bands rock group - consisting of Cara S, Emily S, Marcus H, Kayleigh L and Owen C - has gone on to perform at various events throughout the East Kilbride area.
- Another rock band, formed during our music class band units, and which consists of Rosie R, James I and Toby D, has had some success recently performing in venues across East Kilbride and Glasgow.

### **Sports Awards**

The Sports Awards took place prior to the spring break and were truly superb - a wonderful opportunity to celebrate successes beyond academia. It was a fantastic evening and a great celebration of all the talented young people we have at Strathaven Academy.

Since the Sports Awards, our S2/3 girls have won the SLC summer netball tournament.

Abbie M in S5 has been selected as part of her gymnastics display team Lunar Titans to represent Great Britain at the World Gymnaestrada in Amsterdam from the 29th of July to the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2023.

### **Clubs & Excursions**

We have a range of curricular excursions led by staff and the Equity Team. All our clubs, along with the growing offer of supported study, are only possible thanks to the commitment of our staff.

### **SLC Awards Winners**



Aimee H. (S2) and Caitlin S. (S2) joined their peers across SLC to receive an award for their work within school. Both girls are effective contributors and confident citizens, qualities which they have displayed through the initiative they have shown this session. Aimee and Caitlin set up a British Sign Language club as a tribute to Mr McGarrie, who sadly passed away in August.

Both girls have successfully established and managed the club on a weekly basis and enjoyed fantastic attendance by pupils and staff. The girls plan and deliver a different lesson every week at beginners' level and have shown incredible skill in leading learning. They are also promoting an incredibly important skill across the school. It has been a pleasure to watch the girls grow in confidence delivering these lessons and enabling pupils and staff to develop their sign language skills.

### **Quality Assurance**

We recently completed a quality assurance exercise in the form of Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE). We focussed on the Technologies Faculty, who kindly volunteered to take part in our pilot programme. This involved class visits by Mr Henderson, the Senior Team, and a peer Faculty Head (Mrs Bradshaw). We conducted various focus groups with staff as well as the House Council, who met with Ms Neil (PTPS) to discuss Learning & Teaching in the Technologies Faculty.

On the whole, the feedback was very positive. Relationships across the faculty are very strong and there is a strong culture of inclusion to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to feel safe, nurtured and successful.

Our recommendations for improvement have been shared with the faculty and these include a focus on questioning skills, peer observations and learners leading learning.

We aim to work with a further two faculties next session with an additional review stage with the Technologies Faculty to follow up on the recommendations.

### **End-of-Year Trips**

End-of-year trips will be going ahead soon, and information has been shared with parents/carers. Pupils and staff are looking forward to the trips, which include excursions to Blackpool and Alton Towers.

### **School Show**

School show preparations are well underway with Mrs Bradshaw and Mrs Blades taking the lead. We look forward to our very first school show since 2008! The dates of the performances are Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023.

### **Drone Competition**

Mr Gardner accompanied a group of pupils to NXP. The pupils, as expected, were outstanding, and two of our pupils (Ross M and Alfie M) were placed in the top four of an individual challenge, so they also each walked away with a £25 Amazon voucher!

### **Alpacas**

Strathaven Academy was visited by alpacas on Tuesday, 30 May 2023, and pupils had the opportunity to meet them. The alpacas are planning another appearance in the near future.



### **Ben Nevis**

27 of our S6 pupils climbed Ben Nevis with Miss Smith (Chemistry) in aid of St Andrew's Hospice on Friday, 2 June 2023.

### **Eco Schools**

The Eco Committee, led by Mrs Greenan, has completed their first litter pick - 185 pieces of litter collected from the park. The eco-elective is working on its first learning block – biodiversity - and focusing on communication, research, and numeracy skills. Pupils have undertaken their initial biodiversity survey of the school grounds and have identified key areas for improvement. We are looking to plant some wildflowers and install bug hotels and hedgehog houses in the near future. Contact has been made with a local gardener who is keen to help. We also intend to help with an up-and-coming community garden initiative within Strathaven.

Our planters are in position and, once the soil is delivered, we are looking to start planting our wildflowers.

Mrs Greenan has also made contact with South Lanarkshire's waste management department, who will send a representative to talk to us about waste management issues. This will also link into Developing the Young Workforce.

The committee is keen to move towards their “green flag”, and hopes to send the draft plan for approval in due course.

Mrs Greenan is looking for “garden nannies” - community volunteers to help tend our planters over the summer, and we welcome volunteers.

### **Healthy Eating Week** - Home Economics department (in conjunction with PE)

Healthy Eating Week is an initiative developed by the British Nutrition Foundation and, as a school, we have signed up to focus on a different area of healthy eating on each day (Monday, 12 June 2023 – Friday, 16 June 2023).

#### **Focus**

Monday - eat more fibre

Tuesday - eat more fruit and veg (5 a day)

Wednesday - vary your protein

Thursday - stay hydrated

Friday - reduce your food waste

**BGE Celebrating Success House Assemblies** - All new S2, S3 and S4 pupils took part in house assemblies to celebrate their success this session. All pupils received a certificate and were congratulated on their achievements by Mrs James, Depute Head Teacher. Over 500 certificates were issued to pupils for a range of successes including achievement in their subjects, attendance and timekeeping.



Cllr Frame asked if she could send a letter out for each year congratulating them on their successes

**Reading Schools Gold Awards-** Well done to Mrs Bradshaw and the English department for achieving Reading Schools Gold Award!

#### **5. Communications Sub-group:** Jo Tunney & Mr Fleming

**Parents Portal-** Now available to the school –Staff training has been delivered and they are now looking at best way of launching with parents. This will eventually replace the School App as the outbound communication channel as it fulfils the same functions and more e.g medical records and completion of consent. This is currently accessed via a web browser login, but the school has been assured the App will be available soon. A hybrid system will be in place until good uptake of Parents Portal.

**Satchel One (Previously Show My Homework) -** Met with S. Lanarkshire Council – looking at an August start due to technical issues.

**Parents Evenings-** The school plan to have in-person parents' night for all years for next academic year and are looking at having an online booking system for this.

**Parent Council Facebook Page-** Identifying how best to take this forward as currently it is just a one-way channel & will need monitoring of the page – need a few people to be moderators.

**P7 information evening –** Taken on the feedback from parents to make it more engaging. Good response.

**EVENT: Raising Awareness of Parent Council / Parent Teacher Association & Improving communication with Parent Forum –** Proposal of event (open to all parents) to include PC and PTA to PR what the role is, what they do and include some workshops / consultation with the parent forum about what they expect from school, PC, PTA and also expectations from the parent forum. Include Christine MacLean with kitchen team promoting healthy eating, how the kitchen team works and systems such as topping-up cards etc. Suggestion that guidance team available too. Sub-group to be set up to coordinate and develop the ideas for the event. Considering dates – TBC.

#### **6. Parent Council Improvement Plan:**

Ms Huq is going to update and re-circulate the Plan. Any feedback on this should be directed to Ms Huq. Engaging with parents as partners is a priority and remains high on the agenda.

**7. Mentoring Sub-group:** Evaluation completed with mentors. Many of the mentors are staying on to continue next year. Looking at a slightly different model and rebranding when relaunched in the new academic year. Anyone wishing to volunteer as a mentor should contact P Hamilton.

#### **8. AOCB**



Jack informed the group that 7 existing parent/carers are due to retire by rotation from Parent Council 2023. This will create 7 vacancies. All are eligible to apply to rejoin. This will go out on parent portal to advertise. Invitation to go out on first week of term. Discussed potential to move the AGM to the second meeting of the year rather than the first so we can have the Parent council PR event in between, to advertise the role of the Parent Council.

**9. Date of next meeting: To Be Confirmed.**