

NORTH BERWICK HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING of 1 JUNE 2021 via TELECONFERENCE

Parent Members: N Bradley (Chair)
L Gurney
H Way
J Leslie
E Clark
L Johnston
D Edmondson
V Crummey
J Waddell

Staff Members: L Rodger, Head Teacher
R Jones
F McCallum

Other Parents: W Ford, J Massie, K Stevens, G Milne, L Forrest, E Hay, J Lumsden, R Gill, M Hay, E Wise, M Kay.

Attending: Cllr J Goodfellow, Elected Member
A Cosgrove, Clerk

Apologies: S Spring and L Neri

Welcome: The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. On behalf of the Parent Council, he offered thanks to Mrs Rodger for all her good work as Head Teacher, and was glad that on her retirement she would now get some time to herself. Members concurred with this.

Mrs Rodger replied, saying that the spirit of the Parent Council meeting had always been very positive, and it was good to see so many parents interested in participating.

Minutes of Meeting of 28 April: These were approved.

Matters Arising - Subgroup for School Expansion – R Jones had requested that parents joined this group so that parents' views were represented. G Milne, S Spring, K Stevens, L Gurney and A Clark had all offered to join this group.

School Meals – Mrs Rodger had spoken to the head caterer, and was assured that food would improve.

Head Teacher's Report: A staffing report was made to the Parent Council. Noted that the Scottish Government would be continuing to fund additional staffing to assist with Covid recovery, and for NBHS this would mean one full time equivalent teacher and one pupil support worker. The teacher would also be working with cluster primaries, and the pupil support worker would take some of the caseload from staff working on recovery support.

There was a meeting of East Lothian Council's Education Committee the following week and Mrs Rodger would attend.

There had been one positive Covid test in School the week before, but no further cases.

Assessment Issues: Fraser McCallum spoke to this item, advising that information on appeals was expected imminently; regrettably not in time for the meeting. As soon as the information was to hand, it would be made available to parents.

Some assessments were still to take place. Quality Assurance was still ongoing and would be till mid June; there would be discussions with Faculty Leaders, followed by discussions with Quality Assurance Officers. Pupils will be issued with their provisional results in the week beginning 21 June, with certificates to follow in August. Places at University would not be confirmed until the certificates were issued.

The Chair thanked all staff for the way they had coped with the challenges, which was much appreciated by parents.

On a question of the likelihood of the SQA accepting the school's provisional results, Mr McCallum advised that no algorithms or modelling was being done by them, and they would accept information from the staff once all quality assurance checks had been done.

Mrs Rodger also advised that there had been rumours of exam papers being shared, and if any malpractice was identified, the School would follow SQA practice and could withdraw pupils from assessments. This had been discussed with pupils. She also emphasised that this year's achievements were as valuable as other years.

The Chair added that pupils had worked as hard as they could, as had staff and SQA staff, but the media coverage had been disgraceful, which he described as very disappointing, and had had a bad effect on pupils.

School Expansion: Mr Jones reported that work had started again that morning at the rear of the school where the bulk of the work was happening up to and including holidays. Meetings were currently being held about room specifications. The Contracts Manager from the Council would be asked to attend a future meeting and update parents.

Playing Fields: The Community Council was discussing this issue at their meeting that evening; signage was being planned and all Councillors had been informed. Noted that dog owners had been seen taking dogs on school pitches while outdoor teaching was taking place.

School Improvement Plan: Mrs Rodger had discussed the Plan with the Senior Leadership Team, but it had not been developed in consultation with all staff, as would normally happen. However it would be shared with staff later in the week.

Mr McCallum, Mrs Rodger and Mr Jones went through the three key themes of Learning and Teaching; Equity; and Curriculum, detailing the work that had been done and that planned for the future. Mrs Rodger expressed regret that extra curricular activities which contributed to pupils' wellbeing, had almost ceased due to the pandemic. Cllr Goodfellow concurred with this, asking how these activities could be encouraged across pupils from all backgrounds; it was noted that the Active Schools Co-ordinator had been tracking activity in sports but this could be extended to all activities.

On a question from Cllr Goodfellow on the meaning of equity in the curriculum, Mr Jones explained that the third year curriculum had been reshaped to make it more equitable.

Summing up, Mrs Rodger said that a priority for East Lothian as a whole was raising attainment, and that Writing in BGE had been identified in the School. There was a fuller Improvement Plan and Action Plans behind the key priorities.

AOCB: Wearing of Face Masks – A question was raised by a parent on compulsory wearing of face masks, with concerns as to long term effect. Mrs Rodger replied that it was Scottish Government guidance to wear face masks, and if local authorities didn't implement the guidance, they must put other measures in place, eg. two metre social distancing. The Chair pointed out that the age groups of 15-19 and 20-24 were most at risk of Covid at the moment.

Finally, the Chair thanked Mrs Rodger for her work, saying the School was very lucky to have had her as Head Teacher.

Date of Next Meeting: to be arranged during September. A new Chair was also sought on that date.