

NORTH BERWICK HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF 8 SEPTEMBER 2022
HELD in the SCHOOL

Present: A Beedel (Chair) J Cottrell (Head Pupil)
S Wellwood (Vice Chair) S Bain (Depute Head Pupil)
K Dunwoodie
J Leslie
L Gurney
A Clark
C Jones
D Edmondson
T Heal
J Cottrell

Attending: Michelle Moore, Head Teacher

In attendance: S Williamson, ELC
S Akers, ELC
N Craik Collins, ELC
E John ELC
R Jones DHT
Alan Macdonald, Staff
Allison Cosgrove, Clerk

Other Parents Attending: Anneli Lyon, Douglas Hill, Frances Hill, Jacq Cottrell, Laura Forrest, Eddie Clark, Jacqueline Massie, Helen Dowson, Helen Gray, Sonia Bruce, Michael Gilhooley, Beverley Gilhooley, Maria Houseman, Anna Pult, Paul Bekkers, Cara Biskup, Kelly Biskup, Laura Carruth, Catherine McKinney, Damien Noonan.

Before the meeting, parents toured the new build part of the school, including the canteen.

- 1. Welcome:** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She gave a review of the Parent Council activity during the year, including a review of the mobile phone policy. The new constitution had been agreed in April. She noted that the first in person meeting had been in June, when a short presentation had been given on school meals. She advised that between 12 and 18 parents could be on the Parent Council and encouraged those present to get involved.
- 2. Election of Chair and Parent Council Members:** Damien Noonan was proposed and seconded as Chair. There being no other nominations, Damien was duly elected as Chair. POST-MEETING UPDATE. A review of the constitution after the AGM would suggest that this appointment was invalid as the wording stated that appointment of the Chair would take place at the first minuted meeting after the AGM. Damien Noonan notified the elected PC committee via email that he was not in a position to continue prior to that meeting. Those who wished to remain or join the Parent Council were: L Gurney, A Clark, L Forrest, C Jones, T Heal, J Leslie, A Beedel, P Bekkers, J Cottrell, D Edmondson, J Massie, S Wellwood and E Bennett. These were proposed and seconded by members of the Parent Forum.
- 3. Head Teacher's Report:** Ms Moore began by saying that it was essential to move beyond Covid but recognise the impact it had had over the past two years. She thanked Anna and Sharon for her introduction to the Parent Council as a new Head Teacher, and for their support throughout the year.

On the SQA results, Ms Moore gave a presentation showing Literacy and Numeracy attainment data by the end of S3, the leavers' data for S4 and S5, followed by the results for all levels. Noted the improved achievements since the last exam year in 2019.

She thanked all staff for their support of pupils during the exam period and for their support during the disruptive period of the new school extension.

Turning to the Improvement Plan, she highlighted the Key Priorities for the school: Learning and Teaching: Equity for All: Developing a Curriculum to meet the needs of all learners including taking a closer look at the Broad General Education (BGE): and Leadership at all Levels. The school wished to produce its own Diversity Statement and a new extra curricular programme, known as the Wider Achievement Offer. Noted that pupil leadership opportunities would be developed, especially in S3.

It is hoped that Fairs and Christmas concerts would take place as well as the S6 Leavers lunch and other parent events.

On trips and excursions, a good number of day trips and DofE took place as soon as restrictions were lifted from May 2022 onwards. School is planning a S3 residential trip and 45-50 seniors will be offered the opportunity to visit London as part of a Craft and Design course, for example. However there were no plans yet for international trips.

The Pupil Equity fund was explained.

The School Uniform Bank is up and running, and would be available on P7/S1 Open Afternoon.

On the Cost of the School Day, a link to a video would be sent out to parents:

<https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/CoSD/toolkit> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=464RVU5qg7M>

4. *Sports Facilities – Presentation by East Lothian Council* followed by questions/comments. The minutes below are not a full reflection of all matters raised/discussed due to the nature and layout of the meeting and lack of chairing by either outgoing or incoming Chair. Questions were selected by Eamon John. The meeting substantially over ran and as a result unfortunately no formal closure was possible. Ed Hendrikson (EH), Eamon John (EJ) and Samantha Williams (SW) spoke during the course of the evening. EH presented plans on a slide show presentation and stated that 3.6 Ha was the required space spread over three to four playing fields for the number of pupils at NBHS. There were currently 1056 pupils on the school role. Three different layouts of playing fields were shown, one with hedge retained, one with the same pitch layout but the hedge removed, and one showing two size 1 rugby pitches with the hedge removed. A full size 400m athletics track could be fitted in if the hedge was removed, and a 200m track on the new NB trust land if the hedge was retained. The plans were not drawn to scale and did not show any measurements of the space. Measurements of the pitch sizes were shown without run-off and lateral strips.

Parents had questions/comments as follows :

It seems the process is happening the wrong way round because space has been previously decided upon and now ELC are trying to squeeze the required pitch space into it. Why was adequate pitch space not agreed first and then the required land leased from NB Trust? The mature tree belt should not need to be removed to create the space needed since more is available if required, as shown in the local plan land designation. EJ did not detail any measurements but he asserted that ELC are giving the school 'adequate sports pitches, and some.' He also dismissed the questioner as using 'land tactics' that were not related to the interests of the school. In answer to the question about when was the area of new land decided upon, he stated that this was in December. This is when the lease for the new land was signed.

When and at what minuted meeting was the red outlined foot print displayed at the presentation for the expansion agreed ? This was not answered other than Eamon stating that the land secured what all that was needed for NBHS sporting provisions.

– *Why is ELC offering an option to remove the hedge when this goes against ELCs own Climate Change Strategy in several respects and against guidance in the ELC Local Plan? It is important to retain biodiversity on the school campus as the school will be trying to retain its Green Flag this academic year. It is important to show children that the climate emergency and the biodiversity emergency is being taken seriously by ELC and the school, and this would require the hedge to be retained as the only significant natural habitat on the campus.* The school will decide the layout of pitches, and the choice recommended by EJ was removal of the hedge. The value of biodiversity and climate amelioration measures was dismissed in favour of playing fields as 'just business'. It was suggested that given the choice between optimum sports facilities and a hedgerow Eamon John as an ELC officer and as a parent would choose the sports facilities. He also advised that there was no biodiversity value in the hedge and if locals were concerned about this they should look to the law or the lodge. SW confirmed plans would go through the normal planning consultation process and representations could be made at that point. EJ stated that a biodiversity officer would consider the hedgerow as part of this process but Eamon was confident that the removal of the hedge would

be signed off and approved. *Would there be space for outdoor learning that was not sports pitches, e.g. herbspaces, school orchard?*- This requirement is not part of the expansion of playing fields plan and has not been considered. *When would an additional Sports Hall be provided?* – the trigger point for this was at 1100 pupils, and this would require to be an indoor space. EJ stated that the trigger of 1100 was still some way off. SW confirmed that plans are already prepared for a four badminton court sports hall. EJ suggested that he could bring forward an argument to ELC to progress the sports hall sooner if the impact on the local community of not having access to the community sports centre, because of block booking by the school through the school day, was put forward. There is no guarantee of this, but pressure on usage of the sports centre is increasing. *Once the 1,100 pupils threshold is reached is the funding for the indoor sports hall in existence and ringfenced by ELC?* It was confirmed by Samantha Williams that the drawings for the indoor sports have been drawn up and are in existence but Eamon confirmed that the funding for such a development is not ringfenced by ELC. *Is current use of North Berwick Sports Centre included as part of the sports facilities?* – Yes

With regards to the current Educational Designation under the Local Development Plan for ALL the land shown on the plan ie: new proposed playing fields but also the two yellow shaded areas – can you confirm this designation is in place? What are your views on the Local Development Plan going forwards due to its renewal in 2023- present designation is educational for the whole area; no knowledge or indications this would change in 2023. The normal public and community consultations would take place prior to the new plan being drafted and agreed. EJ stated he would personally be strongly in support of the designation continuing as it stands. However, EJ confirmed that there was no guarantee that this land would be retained in the new local plan under an educational designation. Parents, as members of the public, would be able to engage in the public consultation of the new local plan.

5. *Future Meeting dates and discussion topics-* to be agreed at future meeting. The meeting came to an end because the school was closing and questions remained unanswered.