



Highland Parent Council Partnership Annual Conference and AGM - 2016

Saturday 12th November 2016, Charleston Academy, Inverness IV3 8ET, 9.30am – 3.45pm

Attendees: A total of 61 parent representatives attended the conference.

1. 10.00 Welcome & Introduction to HPCP

Fergus Weir opened by welcoming parents and speakers to the meeting and looking forward to open minded discussion. The aims of the conference were described as being to speak to each other, to share experiences, to learn what's going on, to ask questions and to get involved. Doing the best for our children requires a partnership approach.

HPCP is there to communicate with and represent parent councils and the parent forum of Highland region. It works in partnership with the Highland Council, to seek consensus to inform policy at both local and national level. It was constituted just a year ago at last year's conference and already has a number of parent representations including:

- The National Parent Forum for Scotland
- An advisory role at the Highland Council Education Committee
- The Strategic Management Review Committee
- The Facilities Management Group
- Developing the Young Workforce Group

HPCP has set up a new website and has developed a pyramidal communication strategy which potentially enables the parent forum of Highland to have a say on Council and Government policy. To find out more go to the website www.highlandpcp.org.uk or use the hashtag #HPCP2016@highland_

2. Post-It Exercise

Kate MacDonald encouraged delegates to use the Post-Its at the tables to add further questions for the speakers, to suggest priorities for HPCP over the next year, to list any big concerns as parents and to write any suggestions of good practice that has been successful and been found to increase parental engagement.

3. National Parent Forum Scotland – Iain Ellis (previous Chair for 5 years)

NPFS began in 2009, is a voluntary organisation that meets quarterly. It has one parent council representative from each local authority representing Primary, Secondary, ASN (and possibly College in the future). The role of NPFS is primarily to look at education issues on a National scale and at a Government level. NPFS sits on all the main committees related to Education in Scotland and SQA. There are many boards, events, conferences and focus groups all of which require and need volunteers for NPFS to be effective.

Publications are produced by parents, for parents. The Nutshell guides are very popular and are even used by teachers.

Partnership is at the heart of NPFS working with parents, schools, Head Teachers and Councils, building a bottom up approach to communications that build trust. Many regional groups have one or two parent representatives with voting rights on Education Committees and Highland should work towards this to have their say.

Current Issues that the NPFS is working on include:

- *National Parent Framework* – looking at standardised assessments
- *Governance Review* – parents should reply to the consultation now out; proposals include giving more power and responsibilities to schools covering accounts, personnel and health and safety.
- *Regional Boards* – are also being proposed and are about who has the final say and as parents we should think about what is best for our children and respond accordingly.
- *Changes to National 5s and Highers* – this is about doing away with Nabs and is proceeding without consultation with parents.

In conclusion the work of NPFS is about partnership, trust and engagement.

For more information visit the website www.npfs.org.uk , visit facebook <http://facebook.com/parentforumscotland> or Twitter <http://twitter.com/parentforumscot>

4. 10.50 Vision for Scotland's Education – Closing the Attainment Gap & Other Priorities Bill Alexander, Director of Care and Learning the Highland Council

Bill opened by thanking parents for attending, for their voluntary commitment and engagement.

4a. Closing the Attainment Gap is part of the Scottish Government's Education Reform; it is setting the agenda and there is huge activity and have set the ambitious target of closing the attainment gap within 10 years. It is on main priorities of Care and Learning at the Council and there are implications for educational governance, budgets and the management of schools.

Reform of Education is an overt and explicit agenda to close the attainment gap in education. Scotland is doing well but Scotland should be doing better. The Government has put education at the centre of its policy and is striving for excellence and equity. For the Cabinet Secretary, the 3 pillars are:

- *GIRFEC* (Getting It Right For Every Child)
- *Curriculum for Excellence*
- *DYW* (Developing the Young Work Force)

Governance Review is basically looking at who makes the decisions about the delivery of children's learning. The Government has obvious dissatisfaction and frustration with local delivery of education via the Councils and is reviewing their role. The Education system must be focused on delivering and improving outcomes. Locally and nationally there is general agreement on the direction, it is just the means of getting there about which there is discussion.

The Highland Council Standards and Quality Review 2016 priorities include focusing on all learners, new ways of teaching with IT and on leadership. Above all a world class education has to be about closing the attainment gap. Across Highland, at the end of S4 the 10% most disadvantaged pupils do on average half as well as the most affluent 10% and are worse than the national comparator. At the end of S6, Highland are doing worse than the national comparator at both ends, so even worse. PISA *scores for Highland are also very middling.

(*PISA means Programme for International Student Assessment. It is a programme for testing 15 year olds in science, reading and maths in 72 countries. On 6th Dec 2016 results from the 2015 testing will be published).

Attainment Gap Activity by the Council comprises the following measures:

- *Leadership*, ethos and the quality of personal relationships.
- *Integrated Services* ensure that children are supported outside of school.
- *Intervening Early* working on the child's developmental processes, including their fine motor skills are vital to attainment later in life. The brain is at full capacity by the age of 3; the first 1000 days of a child's life are absolutely key and flourish through nurture and love.
- *Attainment Advisors* are being/ have been ?? appointed to look at other authorities and other countries
- *Extra Finance* of £750 million throughout Scotland has been provided by the Government to close the attainment gap. £100million of this will be coming to Highland in different prescribed forms; for example short term funding will go to the 5 most deprived primary schools, the 4 most deprived secondary schools and for specific strategic projects.

4b. The Governance Review is ongoing and the consultation closes on the 6th January 2017. We do not yet know whether the Governance Review will lead to small changes or a revolution. Currently the Council mediates what comes out of the Government. In the

future we do not know what will happen about co-ordination of social care, child care and education? What will happen to vulnerable young people and how does Education Scotland and SQA fit in?

Parents are advised to read the parent guide available on the Scottish Government website: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/thegovernancereview/Parents>. Parents are advised to consult and respond to the consultation.

Comments or feedback can be emailed to the Government at governancereview@gov.scot

Tweet @engagefored or comment on Facebook using the hashtag #edgovrev

John Swinney is visiting Inverness on Monday 28th November at Drumossie Hotel, Inverness 10.30 to 12.30. The event is being hosted and delivered by the Scottish Government and its open to all – you just have to have a ticket first using the following link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ministerial-engagement-session-education-governance-review-tickets-28187193655>

The National Parent Forum Scotland is also hosting its own Governance review consultation, by parents, for parents, on 5th December. This will make up the National Parent Forum Scotland submission for parents. Venue to be confirmed.

4c. The Northern Alliance is already functioning in Highland. It comprises 7 Councils Orkney, Shetland, Western Isles, Highland, Moray, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Council representatives meet via teleconference every 2 weeks, meet in person every 6 weeks and have a residential every few months. Together, they have developed the emerging literacy programme, a 1 plus 2 languages programme, and a numeracy strategy as a shared resource. Highland have benefitted from developing this professional collaboration and sharing good practice with other Councils that share difficulties of geography and rurality.

The Northern Alliance also share a common vision with the Government of promoting the role of teachers, empowering the Head Teacher in the local community and enabling parents to have a stronger role in education. After all who wouldn't want these things?

4d. Budgets will be challenging for 2017/18. There is some uncertainty until the December Spending Review published by the UK Government, handed to the Scottish Government, who pass it on to the Local Authorities. There was a 4.3% reduction in budgets last year and the Council are expecting the same again next year. Local Authorities can now put up Council Tax by 3% without penalties. For Highland a 1% increase in Council Tax equates to approximately £1million of finance. The Council are projecting a £26 million gap next year and are planning for a further 20% saving in unprotected area (teacher numbers and PPP

are protected and the Council would face penalties for reducing these). This will inevitably mean having fewer departments at the Council and less being done (last year 400 people went). The same level of cuts is expected for the next 3 years, meaning Council savings of £75million will have to be made over the next 3 years ; things will have to be done very differently.

4e. Management of Schools Programme is currently reviewing:

- Curriculum Development
- Management Structure and Schools Groupings
- Early Learning and Childcare
- Workforce Planning and Recruitment, and
- Workforce Planning and Staff Development.

ASGs are being reviewed in turn over the next 3 years and the Council are seeking parent council engagement in the 6 ASG areas expected to change the most.

The role of the Head Teacher has changed to include less or no class commitments and new corporate management skills, making it difficult to recruit suitable candidates.

Jim Steven, Head of Education, Highland Council made the following additional comments related to curriculum development and management structure:

Head Teachers are sharing good practice, training is in place, consultation is happening locally and the new Head Teacher role is an exciting one.

Chromebooks, 1:1 devices for every child will be rolled out from August 2017. Good practice is being shared and there is a Council blog to share what is happening. Google classrooms will be an invaluable resource and use of them is not optional.

4.5 day week and a 33 period week will be compulsory across Secondary schools and optional across Primary schools. Highland will work towards having common time tables within certain geographic areas starting with Inverness schools.

Parental Engagement is an ongoing challenge. Nationally the return rate for questionnaires sent out within schools is just 30%.

Targeting resources is the Council's only option. 90% of pupils leave school and move on to a positive destination. However 7% of pupils still leave school with no exams and that is not right.

5. 11.20 How Highland Education Committee works in Practice – Drew Millar, Chair of the Education, Children's and Adult Services Committee.

Drew Millar began by outlining the composition of the Committee. There are 2 Vice Chairs Mrs I Campbell (Ind) and Mrs Fiona Robertson (Ind). There are 22 Council members appointed by political affiliation. There is the Youth Convenor Mr C Maclennan, X3 NHS Highland reps, X4 Advisors from the Third Sector, X3 Faith Reps (there is currently a petition in Parliament to decide whether unelected faith reps will continue) and now 1 parent council rep (Fergus until now) who attends in an advisory role only, who cannot speak and has no voting rights.

The Care and Learning Budget is £380 million which is more than all the other services of the Council put together.

The Remit of the committee: scrutinise and monitor the management and delivery of services, including statutory functions for Social Care, Child Health, Education, Culture, Sport and Community Learning and develop policy and strategy in relation to Care and Learning Services

We oversee the safeguarding of the wellbeing of adults and children, and secure continuous improvement through the development, review and scrutiny of strategic and operational plans and associated policies for the delivery of Social Care, Child Health and Education, Culture & Sport Services which are transferred to Highlife Highland.

Highlife Highland is a stand-alone company but owned by the Council with its own board made up of 4 Councillors and 8 members of the public who were selected following applications. Twice a year HLH present a report to committee which enables scrutiny on their performance by elected members. HLH oversee the Capital Programme and the Revenue Budget.

Adult Social Care has been transferred to NHS Highland but the ECAS still oversee the scrutiny of adult social care services including the consideration of recommendations for the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub Committee

The other roles of ECAS include:

- **Responding to UK and Scottish Government** representations and consultations;
- **Consultation with relevant agencies and organisations**, including the voluntary sector, to try and achieve a coordinated approach to the provision of services within the Committee's remit
- **Preparation of the strategic plan** relating to Highland's provision of Criminal Justice Services now called Community Justice
- **Community Learning and Development** 3 year plan published setting out how provision will be coordinated with other bodies, what will be provided directly and how needs for Community Learning and Development will be assessed

- **Engage with the national Police Service and the national fire and Rescue Service** on the development of their Local Plans for the Highlands for the following policy areas: youth justice, alcohol and drugs, adult protection, child protection and offending and re-offending. ECAS recommends to the Council the agreement of these aspects of the Local Police and Fire and Rescue Plans to ensure alignment with the Single Outcome Agreement.

The committee agendas are certainly varied, our latest one being a good example where we had a presentation from Drug & Alcohol Forum followed by a paper on Emerging literacy highlighting the excellent work across Highland by the team while collaborating with all the LA in the northern Alliance. Next we had a performance report from HLH for scrutinising followed by our Capital programme report and C&L revenue report. These do result sometimes in interesting debates which can be quite heated at times and can be seen on the video link.

Looking forward education is going through a process of redesign making it an interesting and exciting time in Education for pupils and staff:

- Reviewing school management working with all staff and Head Teachers one ASG at a time
- 33 period week for all secondary schools by August 2017.
- Common time table for groups of schools to enable distance learning
- Closing the attainment gap is top priority
- Refurbishments to improve the school estate as many are not fit for purpose.
- Personal electronic equipment to all pupils from P6 upwards

Build Projects. ECAS is submitting a hugely ambitious bid for projects to be included in the capital programme to be decided at full Council in December which will include new schools as well as refurbishments of schools and departments. This year we took possession of the new IRA here in Inverness which is a fantastic facility for all members of the community once. A new High school is nearing completion in Wick and in Alness early talks with stakeholders have commenced for a replacement high school there.

Conclusion With in Highland Drew Millar believes dedicated, caring, excellent well trained staff in our schools, are producing well prepared children for the modern workplace. Parental support to schools is also vital and schools would not be the success they are without them.

6. Panel Session - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – to the first 3 speakers

Q6.1. Tongue Primary. If leadership is a priority and you want HTs to have a bigger role in the community, why are you reducing HT numbers?

- A. Bill. The Council does not have the capacity to fully skill up 176 HTs. There will be a leader in each school but we cannot recruit 176 HTs of the right calibre for every school. Also in management terms we are looking at the education continuum from 3-15/18.

- A. Drew. The cluster HT on Skye worked by having an acting HT in her absence; it's about the right person in what is a management role.
- A. Iain. By 2018 all HT will need a new qualification which will make it even harder to recruit.

Q6.2. Alvie Primary. Regarding consultation on strategic management. (not minuted)

Q6.3. Lochaber Secondary. Having Business Managers in the SMT for a school cluster for 3-18 year olds is a big idea but will you be able to recruit? Lochaber has 6 vacancies at the moment where preference is given to gaelic speakers, so this really limits who can apply.

- A. Bill. Highland Council is an equal opportunities employer. We need specific people for specific posts and we have a duty to deliver gaelic. Health visitors, nurses, social workers and teachers are all in short supply at the moment.

Q6.4. Gairloch High School. Our ASG has 7 primaries with 2 schools sharing a HT that also has a teaching role. Where will a more senior HT come from and what will happen to the current teaching role of the HT ?

- A. Bill. The Council is getting better at identifying and supporting teachers towards taking a HT role where they are paid properly.
- A. Jim. The Council is looking at training and sharing good practice from the clusters. We are investing in leadership and recruitment. We went to the Scottish Learning Festival with marketing video clips promoting work opportunities in the Highlands.

Q6.5. North Kessock Primary. Having the Preferred Supplier List means that the procurement of materials in school is wasting money. Private contractors could provide items cheaper, for example photocopying services but we are not allowed to use them. At North Kessock the resource budget is exhausted by Christmas. Can anything be done?

- A. Iain. It makes no sense, keep challenging on this issue.
- A. Bill. Printing is actually a local not a national contract and contracts vary in value and cash comes out of the school budget. The Single Procurement Team oversees Highland, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. The new Finance Business Managers will be streamlining operations.
- A. Jim. We are thinking of stopping all paper communications to home.

Q6.6. Portree Secondary. Regarding the benefits of a 4.5 day week, where do you get your facts from and where does a parent find out when and how it will roll out?

- A. Bill. Having a 4.5 day week with 33 periods provides optimal usage of teaching time and will enable virtual schools to run. Discussions on how this will work have so far been between HTs.

Q6.7. Badcaul Primary. Regarding the Attainment Gap how is it evaluated? Is the Council looking at exemplars in countries better than us?

- A. Iain. What is attainment needs to be questioned. Exams are counted but wider achievement is not recognised, despite more pupils going on to work than university. Need to ask are raising attainment measures best for Scotland or best for PISA scores?
- A. Bill. Pupils need to be safe, healthy and included but the bottom line is that exams are the gateway to prosperity in life. Evidence was lacking but now we are pooling experience from Scandinavia, London and Canada. The positive destination statistics for pupils leaving school are good in Highland.

7. 12.20 Highland Council Schools Energy Saving Scheme – Giles Baker

With a working professional interest and as a parent member of HPCP, from Grantown Grammar, Giles sits on the Highland Council Energy Working Group.

The School's Energy Saving Scheme is open to any school in Highland. Each school has an allocated energy budget and on any savings that a school can make 50% will be re-directed back to the school. The average energy spend is £6million so a 10% saving across Highland would re-deliver £300,000 back to schools. In secondary schools with new smart metering it is possible to see energy usage every half hour, so parent councils could talk with janitors about how to reduce energy usage. Alternatively, senior pupils attending the Skills for Energy UI course could be involved.

Charitable Status for School Parent Councils can be benefit fund-raising in a number of ways:

- Gift aid on donations (for example given donated for sponsored events) can provide an extra 25% in funds.
- Benefactors and trusts may preferentially donate to charities; being a charity can be more attractive to potential donors.
- Ex-pupils may give a gift-aided lump sum from other external fund-raising events.

A guide to setting up your parent council as a charity is on the HPCP website.

8. 13.30 Constitution Review and Changes – led by Kate MacDonald, HPCP secretary

Changes to the Constitution (see attached document) were proposed by Kate MacDonald and seconded by Giles Baker. The vote by parent members was carried unanimously.

9.1 Election of HPCP Officers & deferment – led by Fergus Weir, Chair HPCP

HPCP is looking for a number of new officers including:

- Secretary
- Vice Chair
- Rep for National Parent Forum Scotland (travel expenses and accommodation paid)
- Rep for Education, Children's and Adult Services (ECAS) Committee
- Parental Engagement Good Practice Co-ordinator

We would like to defer the election of these positions until the next HPCP meeting on Wednesday 21st December, starting 10am at the Council Office, Glenurquart Road in Inverness. This decision is proposed by Kate MacDonald and seconded by Liz Green. The vote by parent members was carried unanimously.

9.2 Request for 2 ECAS parent representatives

Fergus will request that parents have 2 representatives on the ECAS committee with voting rights based on a mandate from this HPCP conference. Representatives will consult with HPCP members to get their voting rights. To start with Fergus will make his request to the Chief Executive of the Highland Council and the Leader of the Highland Council. This motions was proposed by Hugh Wright and seconded by Andrew McKenna and carried unanimously by voting parental members.

The new Council is formed in May and the first ECAS Committee will sit in June.

10. 13.45 Communication Policy of HPCP – led by Fergus Weir Kate MacDonald and Giles Baker

HPCP has a communication strategy that encourages a 2-way flow of communication from HPCP to parent councils and through to the parent forums. All parent councils have a generic email address currently of the form 'schoolnameparentcouncil@gmail.com'. It is then up to local parent councils how to administer this email. This gmail account can be forwarded to one or multiple private email addresses for ease of access. For a how to guide go to the tab 'Google FAQ' on the HPCP website, or ring Giles Baker, parent at Grantown Grammar, tel. 01479 821804.

The communication policy document (attached and on the HPCP website) shows how to log in, send block emails and much more.

At the start of next 2017/18 session when the SEAMUS forms with contact information go out to all parents and carers there will be a tick box with presumption in favour of accepting email communication with the school's' parent council. It is regrettable that the Council was not able to put this place for the 2016/17 session, but we have assurances from Colin Jack that this will happen next year.

Any parent can sign up the HPCP facebook page by applying to join on <http://www.facebook.com/groups/1588725608098222>

11. 14.10 Named Person Act – Awareness Raising of GIRFEC and its success in Highland, and the proposals for revised legislation

11.1 A View from the Care and Learning Department – Bill Alexander

Reforming the Children's Hearing System 15 years ago resulted in the formation of the Children's Panel. There were 2,500 to 3,000 referrals per year for children related to compulsory measures. Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) was introduced in 2005 and the Highland Council signed up in 2006 with practice tools. From 2008-10, GIRFEC was implemented and more children got more support quickly; the number of children on the child protection register, dropped significantly during this period. At the core of the new process was a Single Child Plan with usually the Health Visitor or the Head Teacher having the role of co-ordinating.

Included in the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 was the need for a Single Child Plan and a single Named Person role to co-ordinate the needs of the child. The Named Person role was appealed against and went to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court were critical of certain aspects of the sharing information provision for children; guidance should be clearer as information could be shared disproportionately or without parent's consent on grounds of the child's well-being. A re-write will be launched in August 2017.

Any actions taken under the Children and Young People's Act must also follow the Human Rights Act and the Data Protection Act. Information is only shared regarding issues of risk and consent.

11.2 A View from a Parent (who can read legislation and not fall asleep) – Kate MacDonald

Kate read out sections of the Act and judgement from the Supreme Court ([see attachment](#)). The information sharing provisions of the Act would now be law without the Supreme Court judgement in 2014.

It is the opinion of Kate MacDonald that this was a badly drafted piece of legislation and that future proposed legislation should support proportionate information sharing and intervention *only* with parental consent unless there is evidence of a risk of harm. She also believes that 'Well being' should be properly defined in the Act and SHANARRI factors should be more fully explained and understood.

Kate MacDonald calls upon HPCP, all parent councils and the parent forum in Highland to communicate with the Scottish Government during this period of engagement. There is no formal consultation process but comments can be passed on, so HPCP would welcome any comments, feedback or concerns from parents that we can pass on.

12. Panel Session - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – engagement and communication

Q12.1 There are many good parents, but there are many that are not so good. Is Government interference in people's lives a political or a human rights issue?

A. Kate. The Supreme Court believes it is a human rights issue. Sharing without safeguards in place is a political issue. Parents need a place to go when things go wrong. Currently wellbeing is undefined and it is my opinion that this is a recipe for future mis-communications.

Q12.2 Is there a definition of wellbeing?

A. Bill. SHANARRI is in place and is the best we have. Parents are asked by the Council whether they are happy for information to be shared. *Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights* provides a right to respect for one's "private and family life, his home and his [correspondence](#)", subject to certain restrictions that are "in accordance with law" and "necessary in a democratic society" – this cannot be compromised by any new legislation.

Q12.3 Has damage been done in Highland; have cases slipped through the net.

A. Bill. The Highland Council model is working and is pre-legislation. Parents want a single point of contact and Health Visitors are supporting the scheme.

Q12.4 Thank you for the clarification on what Named Person entails as I have found the Scottish Government website very confusing.

A. Thank you.

Q12.5 What is the role of parent council in recruiting a new Head Teacher? We have a new gaelic medium school setting up and new HT/staff must have gaelic.

A. Fergus. This was raised at a previous HPCP meeting and we now have clarity from the Council. Under the 2006 Parent Involvement Act 2006, guidance was put in place in 2007, that at the final interview for a HT up to 3 parental representatives can be present and for the final interview for a DHT up to 2 parental representatives can be present and have a vote.

- A. Ardnamurchan. Parent Council involvement is restricted. Due to reasons of equality between candidates, you are told what questions you can ask, no follow up questions are allowed and it is not a fulfilling process for parents.
- A. Gairloch. Our Acting HT is on a 23 month secondment, so the parent council were not invited.
- A. Jim Stevens. The local context is important and innovative solutions are an option. Parent councils can ask for a preliminary meeting with the chairman of the interview panel

13. 14.40 Introduction to the Hi-Hope Website – led by Kate Morris

Kate opened by saying what an exciting and innovation she has found the Hi-Hope website to be for post-16 and post -18 young people. Hi-Hope is in essence a noticeboard for employers to list work experience placement opportunities, apprenticeships and jobs. In short it is an amazing facility providing equality and excellence for all our young people.

14. 14.50 Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce (DYW) – Employer Led Initiatives – led by Andy Maxtone and Eilidh Edgar from Inverness Chamber of Commerce

DYW is a Scotland wide initiative arising from the Scottish Government’s Wood Commission Report 2014, which made recommendations about better preparing school leavers for the world of work. The three Chambers of Commerce in Highland, in Inverness, Lochaber and Caithness are working with the Council, Skills Development Scotland and UHI on local delivery of DYW. They are working to improve the relationship between education in schools and employers. Schools are founded on academic qualifications and don’t always understand employer’s needs.

The Inverness and Central Highland region of Chamber of Commerce covers 14 High Schools. The objectives of the work are to:

- provide experience of employment in schools including work experience, careers fairs, specific skills and employer links;
- help employers link in with education via modern apprenticeships, formal apprenticeships, Investors In Young People (IIYP) and funding schemes;
- work with parents to emphasise the benefits of work-based learning, capitalise on parents in the workplace and general to create networks and partnerships.

The launch of Hi-Hope has been well-received by employers as it provides a consistent approach, helps transition and increases confidence on both sides. There have been engagement issues in the past. Pupils and employers both need to be prepared and Hi-Hope is helping to set some work experience standards in schools.

Employers have a number of basic expectations of pupils when they are on work experience and these are to be punctual, respectful, hard-working, have a willingness to learn, be a team player, have realistic expectations and realise that this is an opportunity to learn before university as well as being a stepping stone into the job market.

Contact details of all the Chambers of Commerce can be found at the back of the Hi-Hope leaflet or go to www.inverness-chamber.co.uk, or www.lochaberchamber.co.uk, or www.caithnesschamber.co.uk.

15. 15.05 Developing Scotland's Young Workforce – led by Beth Brown, Strategic Quality Improvement Manager, leading DYW and Quality Improvement Team

DYW is a programme covering all years 3 -18. Career Education Standards sets out expectations for 3-18 year olds. Opportunities are a mixture of skills based experience, career's advice and career opportunities. DYW very much links into existing curriculum and is about engaging partners and parents.

Skills for learning, life and work is about learning to be creative, evaluative, to take ownership of learning and to develop skills for life such as problem solving. At P1-4 it's about hand on career's experience. At P5 to 7 it could something like chefs Adopt a School programme or a Career's Fair.

Hi-Hope has been a noticeboard site for 1 year. The work experience tab went live just 2 weeks ago and schools got their password yesterday. The benefit of this approach for work experience is that all the health and safety checks and insurance have been sorted out in advance, so there is not the bottleneck of safety checks that there used to be at the Council administration end of things. The aim is to have upwards of 700 employers on the Hi-Hope website.

16. Panel Session - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – DYW

Q16.1 Does the new co-ordinating role of the Chamber of Commerce mean it is now preferable for parent councils not to set up their own school career's fair but to attend more centrally organised shared events that are less likely to exhaust the goodwill of employers.

A. Andy. Chamber of Commerce will be working in collaboration with schools and are keen to support existing efforts. For example Nairn Academy recently had an evening Career's Fair event; it was a valuable opportunity for the school to engage parents and that

opportunity would have been lost at a bigger shared event. The Chambers are visiting each secondary school separately and working out with the HT and Guidance what arrangement is best for the school.

Q16.2 Is there a central list of previous work experience providers because despite having had all the checks in the past, I have not been contacted to go the Hi-Hope website list?

- A. Andy. The Chamber will work with the Highland Council and individual HTs to pool information to a centralised point.
- A. Beth. There are 2,500 employers on the Council database so we have focused on uploading those that are live users.

Q16.3 Gairloch High School. We had organised a range of work experience for our S3 pupils, but because the safety checks were not in place in time, the work experience was all cancelled. 10 out of the 30 pupils went anyway. Will the new set up have safety check in place?

- A. Beth Highland Council is working towards having less block work experience placements and instead drip feeding them into the senior phase only. The situation at Gairloch High School was based on a misunderstanding of communication. On the Hi-Hope website all employers have up to date insurance and this gives ownership of the placement to the young person.

Q16.4 Health and Safety checks have been a bottleneck that hinders work placement opportunities, has this been resolved?

- A. Beth The Chambers are co-ordinating health and safety checks within their own areas, but the Council still has the ultimate Duty of Care.

17. Unanswered questions from the conference have been sent to Bill Alexander and Jim Steven for answering and will be forward in due course.

18. Closing Comments from the Conference and the Post-It Sheets

- 18.1 Small rural schools have a raft of particular issues not covered by this conference.
Perhaps rural schools should have their own regional groups and have representatives attending meetings (with travel expenses?) to get their voices heard.
- 18.2 Small rural schools have particular needs. Closing the attainment gap should not just be based on social deprivation but on rural deprivation, transport and access to curriculum. Also the staffing formula is not fit for purpose in rural areas.
- 18.3 Many delegates would have liked more time to share ideas with other schools and less of the Council policy chat – something to bear in mind for next years' conference.
- 18.4 Only the Inverness Chamber of Commerce was represented and it would have been more informative to have a less Inverness-centric view of DYW.
- 18.5 Free access to space within schools for parent councils needs to be secured for parental engagement to be effective.
- 18.6 How do parents and parent councils actually make their voices heard ?
- 18.7 Attracting quality leaders to our schools is the number one priority.
- 18.8 The cut off dates for nursery entry are not very equitable. At the moment children start nursery the term after they turn 3 resulting in some children having significantly less time at nursery (starting in January as opposed to the previous August).
- 18.9 How do we encourage more parents to actively engage in parent councils?
- 18.10 Solving teacher shortages is more important than developing an over-reliance and misplaced trust in technology.
- 18.11 Rather than more IT, kids need more outdoor learning - cost saving too!
- 18.12 Closing the Attainment focuses too much on exam results and going to university which means that wider achievement skills and work experience are undervalued and underfunded.
- 18.13 Teachers that leave mid-term (particularly before prelims or exams) do not help pupils prepare. This is very disruptive and not fair on our children.
- 18.14 The danger of introducing more standardised testing is that schools and teachers focus on meeting targets rather than teaching.
- 18.15 Early years education should be focussed on developing social skills and not ICT.

Apologies for any inaccuracies in recording the minutes

Liz Green 16/11/16

Huge thanks to Liz Green for volunteering to help minute the entire conference
Fergus Weir 20/11/16