



## Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2016, 10am, Care and Learning Meeting Room, Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness

### Attendees:

#### From 10am

<b>Fergus Weir</b>	Kirkhill Primary School
<b>Giles Baker</b>	Grantown Grammar
<b>Samantha Blyth</b>	Dingwall Academy
<b>John Whitfield</b>	Golspie High School
<b>Pauline Whittka-Jezewski</b>	Ben Wyvisa Primary
<b>Liz Lennon</b>	Lochaber High School
<b>Lyndsey Shaw</b>	Lochaber High School
<b>John Greenhowe</b>	North Kessock Primary
<b>Liz Green</b>	Culloden Academy
<b>Kate Morris</b>	Charleston Academy

#### Attempted

<b>Andrew McKenna</b>	Via telecom link but HC quality too poor Lochaber High School
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#### From 11am

<b>Jim Steven</b>	Head of Education, Highland Council
<b>Ros Bell</b>	Policy Officer, Highland Council

### Apologies:

Jill Fryer - Crown Primary  
Jane Scott - Inshes Primary  
Laura Trappit - Croy Primary

## 1. Welcome

Fergus Weir chaired and opened by welcoming new parent representatives to the meeting and reiterating the main aim of HPCP (only constituted in 2015) to create a formalised group for parental engagement; forming a parent voice representative of Highland that works collaboratively with the Highland Council to gain the best possible educational outcomes for our schools.

## 2. Confirmation of minutes from 7th October 2016

Agreed correct.	<b>Proposed:</b> John Whitfield <b>Seconded:</b> Kate Morris
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## 3. Election of HPCP office bearers and representatives

Fergus opened by giving a brief resume of roles. Since its constitution in 2015, just over a year ago, HPCP has achieved a great deal. Notably, we have a parent representative on three Council working groups: Schools ICT group (Fergus); Strategic Management of Schools group (Fergus) and Facilities Management group (John Greenhowe). We have one advisory representative on the Education, Care and Adult Services committee (ECAS - Fergus) and a Highland representative on the National Parent Forum Scotland (NPFS – Fergus). Clearly Fergus is wearing many hats and going forward the different roles should be shared among a wider range of parents. Following explanation and people putting themselves forward, the meeting agreed the following roles:

### 3a. Chair. Fergus Weir (proposed-Giles & seconded-Kate).

The meeting was unanimous in its thanks and appreciation for Fergus playing such a leading role in progressing HPCP and asked him to continue as Chair to which he agreed

### 3b. Vice Chair. John Greenhowe (proposed-Sam & seconded-Kate)

### 3c. Secretary. Liz Green (proposed-Giles & seconded-Kate).

Liz is able to fulfil this role for one year only and will work with Fergus to take on more of the admin for setting up meetings.

### 3d. ECAS Representative Sam Blyth (proposed-Liz & seconded-Giles)

#### ECAS Deputy. Kate Morris (proposed-Fergus & seconded-Giles)

The ECAS committee meets 4 times a year for a full day to vote on key issues impacting on education. There is a lot of paperwork to read before the meeting. HPCP will time its future meeting to be before ECAS meeting so that we can be aware and discuss upcoming issues and keep Councillors alert to parent views.

So far the role of the one HPCP rep is advisory, not allowed to speak and has no voting rights. However, HPCP has a mandate from the HPCP conference to pursue having two reps with voting rights (as many other Council regions do) and push for possible travel expenses and loss of earnings payment. Fergus has already spoken with Margaret Davidson and the Chief Executive of the Highland Council and we plan to provide a bullet point mandate to Councillors before the May 2017 elections that we can hold them account to.

### 3e. NPFS Representative Fergus Weir (to continue as a figurehead role for HPCP)

**NPFS Deputy vacant**

Members present considered it important that Fergus Weir continue in this role as a figurehead person for HPCP. We still need a deputy for occasions when Fergus is unable to attend.

The National Parent Forum Scotland (NPFS) was set up 5 years ago to give Parent Councils and Parents an opportunity to discuss and raise educational issues of mutual interest or concerns at a national level. NPFS speaks to Scottish Government representatives directly and responds to consultation procedures related to education. NPFS meets 4 times a year in Edinburgh or Glasgow with one representative from each of the 32 local authorities in Scotland attending. Funded by the Scottish Government, NPFS provides travel expenses and overnight accommodation if required.

### **3f. HPCP Good Practise Co-ordinators for Primary and Secondary (both vacant)**

These are desk based roles to help compile parent council good practise across primary and secondary schools in Highland. Based on email communication, we would like a central bulletin/ notice board on the HPCP website where parent councils can resource good ideas and see what other schools are doing. If you think you may be able to help with this, please get in touch as this would be a valuable, welcomed and much needed addition to HPCP.

### **3g. HPCP Website Manager (vacant)**

We still require someone to oversee the HPCP website, update postings and optimising its usage generally. If you have experience working with Wordpress and would be willing to relieve Fergus of this additional responsibility, please get in touch.

The HPCP website is: <http://www.highlandpcp.org.uk/> and to be successful , both now and in the future, updating the HPCP website needs to done more collectively by Highland parent councils and not just by Fergus.

### **3h. HPCP Regional Co-ordinators for Primary and Secondary**

The meeting agreed that having regional co-ordinators/ representatives would be a valuable additional tier to HPCP. Their first job is simply to make a list of the schools in their region with the size of the pupil role and get that put on the HPCP website. Secondly we will begin to build better links at a regional level to ensure that issues such as those related to small schools and remoteness are better covered by HPCP. The Regional Co-ordinators agreed so far are:

North Region Primary	vacant
North Region Secondary	John Whitfield (Golspie)
Mid Region Primary	Sam Blythe (Dingwall)
Mid Region Secondary	Sam Blythe (Dingwall)
South Region Primary	vacant

South Region Secondary      Kate Morris (Charleston) and Giles Baker (Grantown)

West Region Primary      vacant

West Region Secondary      Andrew McKenna (Lochaber)

#### **4. National Parent Forum Scotland meeting update (Fergus Weir)**

The NPFS have been very involved with the Governance Review and following a number of regional focus group reviews using a facilitator have submitted their consultation response to the Scottish Government. EIS, the teaching union have also submitted a response that is quite scathing of the consultation process. Fergus will circulate these submissions to inform parent councils. The final deadline for Governance Review submissions is the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

#### **5. Parent Council Conference 2017 Review**

The HPCP conference from November 2016 was thought to be a success. Feedback has been that the question and answer sessions were the best bit and that in future we should allow more time for parent council representatives to talk to one another. One way of increasing engagement opportunities would be to have a social on the Friday night. Next year we should focus on having more school presentations and good practise examples.

#### **6. HPCP Communication Strategy**

The HPCP Communication Strategy has been focused around getting all parent council Chairs having access to a generic gmail system. There have been some difficulties with lost passwords and needing to go via a Council staff member to reset these. HPCP (Fergus and Giles) are now looking into having a dedicated HPCP domain. The system would work in the same way; addresses would simply change to xxparentcouncil@highlandfpcp.org.uk. The advantage of this would be having multiple administration options and it being easy to change and reset passwords. To register a domain at low cost, one needs to be a charitable body, so HPCP is looking into the possibility of becoming a charitable body. Alternatively we could use Grantown Grammar Parent Council which is already a charity. ACTION Fergus and Giles.

Jim Steven / Ros Bell (from 11am)

#### **7. Scottish Government Budget Impact (Jim)**

The impact on education of a reduced budget is changing daily and the final scenario will not be decided until March 2017 (although cuts are still being implemented and passed on from March 2016). Also the Council's redesign will not be entirely ready and in place by March 2017. It is looking likely there will need to be between a 10-20% cut across all services excluding teacher numbers. At the moment it is looking like the biggest cuts will be across education provision that is non-statutory. One of these is music development education - that is instrument tuition and regional music groups - so it is likely that music fees will increase. However Jim emphasised that nothing is finalised yet. Parent members raised the point that the priorities of GIRFEC and Curriculum for Excellence are not based on statutory requirement and that equity is being stripped out by a lack of basic resources being available for all pupils.

Increasing teachers for early years learning is a statutory requirement so will not be touched. The gaelic language plan is also a statutory requirement.

The ICT development will still be going ahead as this is from Capital as opposed to Revenue budget.

**Pupil Equity Funding** will continue. Highland will get £4.8 million of the £120 million allocated across Scotland as 'Pupil Equity Funding' (formerly 'Closing Attainment Gap funding'). The money is allocated across P1 to S3 pupils on the basis of free school meal entitlement and is worth £1200 per pupil per year. (On this information it would appear to make sense for Parent Councils to encourage parents to apply for free school meals where ever possible, even if they do not end up using them). The framework for spending Pupil Equity Funding is based on improving literacy, numeracy and health/wellbeing, and yearly feedback/ reporting is required.

**Attainment Challenge funding** will continue and is bid for each year from a total available pot of £900,000 in Highland. This is available to schools in SMID areas 1 and 2. There are 14 eligible schools in Highland including Invergordon, Alness, Wick and Inverness High School ASGs

**Cumulative Savings requirements** on Primary School Head Teachers were discussed at some length. For example if a Primary School has a resource budget of £2,500 (based on pupil numbers) it may have a Cumulative Savings figure of £2,451, leaving less than £500 for the year to cover basic materials. Overspend is disciplined and new Head Teachers worry to death so don't buy resources. Whereas more experienced Heads can plan ahead and by carrying upto 5% forward each year have managed to keep a bit back. None of the parents present really understood how or why this system is in place and HPCP will try to find out more.

## **8. Update on ICT "one device for all" roll out**

Fergus opened by reporting on his experience of the ICT working group (Fergus represents HPCP on this). Progress is like treacle but getting there slowly. August 2017 is the roll out date but not all schools will start on day 1. For it to be successful the culture of education needs to embrace digital learning as an additional alternative to teacher-based learning. Delivery will be a disaster unless sufficient bandwidth and infrastructure is in place in all schools, with BT fibre lines to all schools.

The learning ahead is for parents, teachers and pupils alike and ensuring that this initiative is perceived as a positive change that enables problem solving and increased engagement with learning is an important message to drive through. Ideally it should be a watertight rollout of first getting infrastructure in place, second getting expertise in place and thirdly getting the devices in place with a trickle down of shared knowledge and good practise. But with only 3 out of 28 Secondary schools in Highland having an ICT teacher progress is not straightforward.

Jim responded by agreeing that fibre delivery to all schools was behind in 84 locations and that network capacity has only been tested in the original pilot schools that trialled chromebooks. It was stated by Fergus that the both the Highland Council and HPCP should put pressure on

the Scottish Government to expedite the roll-out of the fibre to schools. Jim also made the following points:

- An **ICT training plan** is being put in place by Steven Stuart (seconded from Lochaber High School); he will be drafting bespoke plans for all new schools in receipt of Chromebooks in 2017.
- **Google classrooms** are what is accessed on a Chromebook using a Chrome browser. Google classrooms should allow teachers to teach in a more engaging way rooted in sound pedagogical principles.
- **New course options** will be a long term benefit of the new system. For example pupils at Mallaig are now learning German online and schools in Dumfries and Galloway can now learn music online. Herriot Watt Scholar online courses offer opportunities such as National 5 maths courses. In smaller secondary schools it is hoped that teachers will be able to teach locally say 60% and online another 40%. This is already happening for gaelic provision in the Western Isles.
- **The 33 period week** to be implemented across Highland Schools from August 2017 will make it easier for school clusters to block in sections of common time table for shared teaching options. Policies that enable senior pupil supervision and tutor mentoring to avoid drift are being looked in to.

## **9. Highland Council INSIGHT data sharing plan**

This item was requested by parents who wish to find out the attainment of their schools so they can help towards making improvement where there are gaps. Parents would like to know what to ask their school for and whether there is any best practise guideline out there.

Jim acknowledged that some guidelines would be useful and agreed to look into this. Jim briefly mentioned that generalised headings of literacy, numeracy and attainment compared to a virtual comparator were easy to pull out. What parents would really like to see is how results compare from one year to the next for all subjects, but due to a change in data systems this may not always be easy for Head Teachers to pull out. Guidelines for PCs – ACTION Jim Steven

## **10. 2016/17 objectives/ work plan**

Jim agreed with the HPCP plan to have meetings scheduled before each ECAS meeting to enable parent councils to input and feedback beforehand. He is also in support of HPCP petitioning to achieve 2 elected ECAS committee members with voting rights.

## **11. A.O.C.B**

**Parental details** are now finally included on the Highland Council school enrolment forms as an opt-in for parent council email contact. Parents requested that this be changed to an opt-out and also be added to the permissions/ contact form at the start of the year. ACTION Ros

**Enforcement of faculty approach** on schools, with a principal teacher for each faculty was raised by Lochaber asking why it had to happen. Jim responded saying that the Faculty system is the



policy default agreed a few years ago and that not all schools were there yet, meaning they were still over their point's allocation.

**Date for next meeting**

The next meetings in 2017 are scheduled to take place at Glenurquhart Road, Inverness in March, June, Sept, and Dec (plus the conference in Nov) – options will be available soon via a Doodle website meeting planner: