

North West Sutherland Schools Parent Council
Ordinary Meeting Minutes following AGM
Wednesday 29th September 2021, 6pm via Microsoft Teams

1. Welcome

Graeme Smart welcomed everyone to the meeting and handed chair over to Sophie Beveridge following AGM.

Attendees

Aileen MacDonald, Graeme Smart, Iona Shaw, Alanna MacLeod, Leanne McKee, Carol-anne Forsyth, Denise MacDonald, Fiona Johnson, Heather Paterson, Donna Morrison, Sally Czerwik, Sophie Beveridge, Joshua Keitany, Yvonne MacRae, Katy Lee, Krysha Davis (6.50pm)

Apologies

Angela Craggs, Christina Findlay, Selena Campbell, Emma MacKay, Ashley Milne, Linda Tebay

2. Minutes of last meeting (written by Aileen MacDonald)

Approved by Iona Shaw, seconded Yvonne MacRae

3. Matters arising from minutes

None

4. Head Teacher's Reports

Please find the Head Teacher's reports for the High School, Primary Schools and nurseries attached as appendix 1.

Graeme Smart highlighted changes to High School staffing including newly appointed teachers. Dr Rachel Whitely will join the school science department and is qualified to teach Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences. Mrs Rachel Thackeray will teach English on a temporary basis until a permanent teacher is appointed.

A full-time guidance teacher post will also be advertised. It is hoped to recruit a guidance teacher who is also able to teach a second subject in addition to their guidance role.

Posts are funded from the Covid recovery fund plus additional funding secured from the Highland Council.

5. Nurseries

a. Durness

Tia Keith is leaving her post; this post will be advertised shortly.

b. Kinlochbervie

Nothing to report

c. Scourie

Highland Council no longer supports Early Years; P1 and nursery combined classes. Currently only Scourie and Bonar Bridge have Early Years level classes and the Highland Council position is that these classes should not be

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continued into the next academic year. The Parent Council are asked to consider this change and the impact this will have on the school in the future.

For Scourie Primary School this means:

August 2022, 1 class teacher, teaching P1-7, school roll less than 15 pupils

August 2023, 1.5 class teachers, teaching P1-7, school roll 15-16 pupils

Teacher allocation varies depending on the school roll; it is projected for the academic year starting August 2022 there would be a loss of a part-time teacher for 1 year, returning to 1.5 teachers the following year.

The current Early Years class use the second of two classrooms in the school building so either the nursery or the part-time teacher would require to use a different room / space for the 2023 session onwards.

The existing Primary School building does not have any further rooms which could be converted into a third classroom. If new premises need to be sought for the nursery this decision is financially questionable. Clarification should be sought from the Highland Council. Nicky Grant has been invited to visit the school.

Parents voiced that they thought the current Early Years setup worked well in small, rural schools.

6. Primary Schools

a. Durness

The school have welcomed Ms Angela Craggs who is settling in well, nothing to report.

General discussion regarding low pupil numbers but projected roll to increase in future years

b. Kinlochbervie

The school have welcomed Ms Catriona Maddocks who is also settling in well.

There were concerns raised regarding inconsistency in discipline. Children have been complaining that some pupils are allowed to do things that others are not. This is creating bad feeling and causing pupils to think school is unfair. Staff recognised that that some pupils have significant additional support needs and how those pupils are dealt with be may be seen as inconsistent. This needs to be better communicated with pupils to avoid feelings of resentment. Parents also said their children felt there was inconsistency between staff in their approach to discipline.

It was also highlighted that the Kinlochbervie P4 to P5 transition from lower primary to upper primary class has gone particularly smoothly this year.

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It was questioned whether children were supervised while having lunch. Primary age children are supervised by a teacher and dining staff when having lunch. However, P7s sometimes supervise P1s to finish their lunch as the on duty teacher needs to supervise play outside. This is seen as a Buddy role for the P7s and is usually only for a short time at the end of lunch.

Playground supervision at morning break and lunch were discussed. One member of staff is on duty at both but parents felt that due to the playground layout this area is too large for one person to cover. There is not a budget for increased supervision and this is usually only considered necessary when there are fifty or more pupils in a school. Feasibility of CCTV cameras will be considered.

c. Scourie

Discussion around how some pupils are distracted in the P2-7 class and the challenges of composite classes.

Altogether days

Parents had varied feelings on how well children were mixing during the altogether days. Pupils are encouraged to mix beyond their usual school friends and this is encouraged by wearing the same purple jumpers on those days.

7. High School

The Pupil Support Assistant (PSA) supply list are looking for staff. Jobs are advertised on myjobscotland website for limited times. Any interested people should contact Graeme Smart or Aileen MacDonald as they can advise people who want to apply or register for the supply list. There was no interest in the recent fixed term PSA position in the High School. Discussion around difficulty recruiting to fixed term posts. All but one of the current High School teachers is in permanent post.

8. Treasurer's report

Durness Primary School	£1175.55
Scourie Primary School	£284.59
Kinlochbervie Primary School	£707.73
Kinlochbervie High School	£1166.95
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Total	£3334.82

9. Fundraising

Christmas fundraising ideas will be considered at the November meeting as Highland Council should have released their position on Christmas parties, shows, fayres, etc by then.

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An Associated Primary Schools and Nursery Group trip to the pantomime in Eden Court is being considered. If this goes ahead it is likely to be a staff trip with no requirement for parents to supervise.

10. Correspondence

Nil

11. Any other current business (AOCB)

Sports For Champions will revisit Kinlochbervie in November to inspire pupils and encourage resilience and determination. This year their visit will include Chris Bennet, a hammer thrower who has competed at the Olympics and Commonwealth Games. Heather Paterson requested money from the Parent Council to cover costs to support this and remove need for pupils to raise money themselves. The Parent Council agreed to fund £300 towards this. Iona Shaw will provide a cheque to cover this plus £200 for the school maths department.

Graeme Smart reported that he presented former secretary Christine Mackenzie with a Highland Stoneware plate for her many years of work from the Parent Council. She was delighted and passed on her thanks for the gift.

12. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 10th November at 6pm via Microsoft Teams

Meeting close 7.59pm

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Appendix 1: Head Teacher's Reports

NSSS Primaries

Durness Primary School

Staffing: Ms Angela Craggs is the new full time teacher with PSA support from Sally Czerwik and Ellen Parker. Ms Craggs is an experienced teacher who has worked in variety of different settings from larger schools in Aberdeen to small school settings on Rhum, Muck and the Falkland Islands!

We have 4 children on roll this session. This term they are working on a history topic about HMS Hood- they hope to visit the Hood Stones above Loch Eriboll to repaint them as it is the 80th anniversary of the sinking of HMS Hood by the German battleship Bismarck.

Kinlochbervie Primary School

Staffing : Ms Abby Forrest continues to teach the P5-7 class. We have a new teacher in the P1-4 class, Ms Catriona Maddocks. Ms Maddocks was previously teaching in Gretna. She is delighted to be working in the Highlands.

PSA support is provided by Christine Corbett and Kerry Eastcroft.

We have 24 children on roll with 12 children in each class. This term P1-4 are finding out about Scottish scientists and inventors for their history topic. P5-7 are learning about the Highland Clearances- through the novel 'Fur for Luck' by the Inverness author Barbara Henderson which is based on the Durness Riots of 1841.

Scourie Primary School

Staffing : Mrs Krysha Davis is teaching the Early Years Class which has 5 pupils. Mrs Sian Curley continues to teach the P2-7 class.

We have 13 children on the school roll.

This term P2-7 class have been learning about the Romans which has included making some excellent Roman sandals!

All our primaries are currently replacing the spiral bound pupil profiles with profiles that can be posted on children's Seesaw Journal pages. This has been well received by parents and it is something we hope to develop further as the year progresses.

Altogether Days

We are delighted to be back to normal with our NWSS Thursday timetable. Teaching and learning for Thursdays is shared with parents on separate NWSS Seesaw pages.

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**NWSS ELC & SAC
Report for Parent Council
September 2021**

Staffing

When our settings re-opened in August after the summer break, we had some staffing changes in KLB and Scourie and are now planning for more changes in Durness.

The current situation is:

KLB – Leanne McKee & Gladys Kipchumba are the early years & school aged childcare practitioners from Monday – Friday, with Kerry Eastcroft working for 2 hours Monday – Thursday in the support worker role.

Scourie – Selena Campbell is the early years practitioner Mon – Thurs, with Tia Keith covering on a Friday. Selena is also supported by Krysha Davis as Scourie is an Early Level class.

Durness –

Klara Jancuskova & Tia Keith are the early years practitioners Mon – Thurs, with Kristina Coulton providing the support worker role. Then, on a Friday, Klara & Kris work together for the morning. However Tia has tendered her notice so will be finishing by Fri 5th November. Tia has been a valued member of the Durness team & has been very helpful in providing cover in Scourie. We would like to thank Tia for her hard work & wish her all the best with her future.

There will shortly be an advert for the 24 hr practitioner post in Durness and 4 hrs in Scourie. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please encourage them to apply or contact Aileen for more information.

Pupils

We currently have 5 children attending the Durness setting, 6 attending KLB and 4 attending Scourie. These numbers will increase over the course of the year as Early Years have intakes after almost every holiday.

The numbers who attend SAC (school aged childcare) vary with Fridays being the busiest day of the week.

Charges

All 3 settings are able to offer the full 30 hours provision to eligible 3 year olds. Durness and KLB are registered to also accept 2 year olds. Families may be eligible to a 2 year placement if they fulfil certain criteria or through request from the health visitor. Otherwise there is a charge of £4.70 per hour. Payments are made by direct debits and contracts drawn up by Carla Gallon, the area manager for early years.

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This hourly rate now also applies to SAC, which is a reduction from the previous £11.55 session rate.

Care Inspectorate

All ELC settings are registered with the Care Inspectorate & can expect to receive regular visits which have now resumed post- restrictions. KLB had a visit from Patsy Matheson on Tuesday 30th August. Whilst we are still awaiting the full written report, we have received the verbal feedback that indicated some areas requiring improvement, mainly within management and paperwork. I have already started to implement some changes across the 3 settings & will feedback to staff & parents when the full report is published.

Durness is the next setting likely to have a Care Inspectorate visit as it a new registration, with Scourie likely to be later in the year.

COVID

As we are now learning to live with Covid, we still have restrictions to adhere to in each setting. These include parents & carers having limited access to the sessions. We will keep you updated as and when the guidance changes.

Together sessions

Our pre-school children have been attending the Safe Strong & Free workshops in KLB and have enjoyed some time to play & socialise before & after the session.

We would like to have more together sessions regularly, but appreciate that transport & distance & timings can make this difficult for some families. Therefore, staff will take all of this into consideration whilst we plan these events

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Head Teacher's Report to Parent Council

September 2021

High School

COVID 19

We continue to take precautions in all the schools to limit the spread of covid-19. These include restrictions on visitors, enhanced hygiene routines and the use of disinfectant and hand sanitiser at entrances and in classrooms. Staff and pupils in the high school and staff in the primaries are now wearing masks in communal areas and when working closely with pupils. Recent events serve as a stark reminder that the virus is not going away and we will emphasise regularly with pupils and staff the need to take these precautions seriously.

I would urge all parents to reinforce the message that this is serious and particularly for our senior pupils that they should be practising social distancing as much as possible.

The school and the Highlands being in level 0 does make some things a little easier, we can now do some indoor PE for example and Head Teacher and DHT's are allowed to move between schools where this is necessary for continued operation.

Highland Council regularly updates its position statement and any new advice to parents will be posted on all the usual social media outlets and on the website as well as by email or letter home. I appreciate that sometimes this advice can seem contradictory and confusing but we are obliged to follow Council and Government guidance.

I would ask parents to encourage young people who are eligible to have the vaccine if they are able to do so.

SQA:

The SQA are reviewing the exam diet for this year and will publish regular updates as the situation becomes clearer. As things stand at present we expect there to be exams for N5, H and AH subjects this year with some course content removed to take account of later starts and disruption to schooling.

Parents Evenings:

We are still unable to invite parents to come in to school so we will shortly contact S1 and 2 parents to arrange telephone appointments with teachers should these be required.

Staffing:

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We had appointed Dr Blackstock as a teacher of Science but unfortunately there has been a delay in his GTCS registration being processed and he has now left. We interviewed on Monday this week and have appointed Dr Rachel Whiteley to the post. She will take up her post as soon as possible.

We welcomed Ms Pintado as a teacher of Geography, History and RMPS in August and she will be with us for the rest of the session as a replacement for Ms Watkins who is on a career break.

Mrs Richards has added music to her teaching portfolio and will cover High School music for the remainder of this session and beyond if Ms Lockhart does not return.

Mr Galbraith is leaving us shortly and we will be advertising his job very soon. We will also be advertising for a full time Principal Teacher of Guidance, which will add to the support we are able to offer our pupils.

We had advertised a PSA post for 25 hours but had no applicants. We will be advertising again shortly but if any parent is aware of anyone looking for work please ask them to get in touch with the school.

Flu Vaccines:

These are being given to pupils across the ASG on Thursday this week and I am pleased that they will also be offered to staff should they wish to have the vaccine.

School Improvement Plan and Standards and Qualities report:

These are currently being worked on and will be published as soon as possible after scrutiny from our Quality Improvement team in Highland Council.

Education Scotland Grant:

We have been given a grant of £3000 from Education Scotland for a “Food for Thought” project that S1 and S2 will undertake. This will involve the construction of a poly tunnel and planting and growing food as well as pupils being enrolled in the John Muir Award.

Westminster Foundation:

We were given a grant of over £6000 from the Duchess of Westminster’s trust to add to the stock of books in the library and to purchase new resources for the sensory room and for supporting some of our more vulnerable pupils. Resources are now starting to arrive and have been very well received by the pupils who have used them so far.