

North West Sutherland Schools Parent Council
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday 10th September 2024, 7pm, Durness Primary School

AGM

1. Attendees

John Naples-Campbell, Katy Lee, Aileen Macdonald, Neil Macdonald, Iona Shaw, Alanna Macleod, Krysha Davis, Noeleen Chapman, Katherine MacLure, Linda Flett, Carol-anne Forsyth, Denise Macdonald, Sophie Beveridge, Meg Coull, Yvonne MacRae, Mathilde Lewis, Dan Price-Davies

Apologies

Selena Campbell, Ashley Milne, Sally Czerwik, Heather Paterson, Lynzi Montgomery, Toni Harvey

Chair's report

Denise welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided the annual chair person's report as follows.

The role of any Parent Council is to support the school in its work with our children and represent the views and wishes of all parents and carers. As a 3-18 ASG Parent Council we are keen to ensure we have a balance of representation of parents and carers from all ELC, Primary and Secondary settings. We made the decision to move away from hybrid meetings this year and return to in person. We try to make the parent council as accessible as possible so continue to alternate our meetings between villages each term. We share our agendas and minutes to those who sign up to the parent council mailing list and this year we set up our own Facebook page which all parents and carers can follow.

I would like to thank everyone who continues to attend and support our parent council, including our NWSS management team, who join our meetings, provide detailed reports and address any concerns raised.

I would also like to thank our office bearers who carry out these essential roles. In particular, I would like to say a special thank you to our secretary, Yvonne MacRae, who has been a tremendous support to me this year and works incredibly hard giving up much of her time. Between minute taking, funding applications, emails and various meetings, it has been a challenging year at times. We joined together with Gairloch, Ullapool and Farr parent councils as we formed the Save Our Rural Schools campaign. We have focused on fighting for equity in education for our four West Highland schools. It's something we have made positive progress with and we are passionate to continue on that journey. This morning, I was invited to attend a focus group with HMIE as part of a national inspection of all local authorities. This gave me the opportunity to raise our campaign issues with the inspector and highlight the barriers small, rural schools face.

Iona Shaw has kindly continued as treasurer. This year we agreed to the closure of each individual school parent council account and going forward any individual school fundraising would be paid into their own school fund. We agreed to concentrate on one NWSS parent council bank account which will enable us to apply for any ASG funding. An application to the Highland Council Ward Discretionary Fund gave us an award of £1000 which enabled us to fund extracurricular activities. This provided golf sessions for primary and secondary pupils and transport for P1-7 pupils to football training in Bonar Bridge. An award of £1000 from the Anne Duchess of Westminster fund enabled us to purchase NWSS sports tops and

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shorts for primary pupils. We will look at organising ASG fundraising events throughout the school year.

The 2023/2024 academic year has brought many changes, including saying goodbye to some much-loved staff members. We welcomed our permanent new Headteacher, Mr John Naples-Campbell, who has been hugely supportive of our parent council. He has been open and honest about the challenges we face but he has brought a new positive outlook and continues to keep us engaged with his vision for North West Sutherland Schools. We had to

say goodbye to Mrs Aileen MacDonald as she left for a one-year secondment, but we are very happy to welcome her back this academic year! We would like to thank Ms Katy Lee for the extra duties she has covered during this period.

During this year we have campaigned for the reopening of Kinlochbervie ELC. It was a huge effort to bring the setting up to standard, but the support received has shown what a vital part of our community the ELC is. We have supported the upgrade of Scourie ELC to ensure it can provide enough capacity for those children enrolled. It is our hope that Durness ELC will reopen in the next academic year with no issues and that we have a thriving ELC in each village.

2. Approval of accounts

Durness Primary School	£1361.67
Scourie Primary School	£288.00
Kinlochbervie Primary School	Account closed – transferred to school funds
Kinlochbervie High School	£2416.92
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Total	£4066.59

The Parent Council will need to apply to the Highland Council for their financial contribution at the end of Sept / start of October.

3. Selection of council and office bearers

All previous office bearers stepped down prior to elections.

Elected office bearers for 2024/25:

Chair	Denise Macdonald, Yvonne nominated, Dan seconded.
Vice chair	Mathilde Lewis, volunteered, Krysha seconded
Secretary	Katherine MacLure, volunteered, Sophie seconded
Treasurer	Iona Shaw, volunteered, Carol-anne seconded

4. Any other business

Scourie Primary PC bank account needs the signatories to be updated.

Meeting close 7.30pm.

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Ordinary meeting followed immediately after AGM

1. Welcome

Denise Macdonald, re-elected chair opened the meeting.

5. Attendees

John Naples-Campbell, Katy Lee, Aileen Macdonald, Neil Macdonald, Iona Shaw, Alanna Macleod, Krysha Davis, Noeleen Chapman, Katherine MacLure, Linda Flett, Carol-anne Forsyth, Denise Macdonald, Sophie Beveridge, Meg Coull, Yvonne MacRae, Mathilde Lewis, Dan Price-Davies

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2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved by Denise, seconded by Carol-anne.

3. Matters arising from minutes

Nil

4. Head Teacher's Reports

Mr Naples-Campbell provided the following report:

A new year with a new drive to succeed! We started the year on a positive with SQA results showing a rise in attainment, new goal posts on the astro from pupil parliament and the library and social area moving locations.

Staffing

- Aileen MacDonald returned to her DHT substantive post with a remit for ASN
- We have advertised an Art/Music post (0.6) twice now but had no applicants to date – pupils are still getting their expressive arts contribution through Drama and Film in the BGE. We will look at the music and art post again in March for the new academic year. Pupils will have visiting staff for one off workshops in Art and Music throughout the year.

Area Office:

- We have a new Collaborative Lead joining our School to support with HWB. I met with Toni McCartney and looking forward to working with her on our journey.
- HMIE have been doing a region visit with The Highland Council and Denise was asked to take part in a focus group as chair of parent council and I was part of a head teachers group.

Learning and Teaching

- SQA results came out in August and showed that our journey is working as results showed an increase in attainment. We still have a long way to go but both staff and pupils are rising to the challenge.

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- The new timetable is proving to be successful with staff and pupils engaged and enjoying their new day and subject.
 - Behaviour
 - We have a lot of LOW LEVEL behaviour with pupils egging on pupils to be silly.
 - S1 and S2 are boy heavy
 - We are being consistent with our routines and messages regarding behaviour.
 - The behaviour we are seeing isn't just misbehaviour but behaviour in their work ethic too; work is being too rushed, no pride over it etc
 - This will take time to manage and to change
 - Tuckman's theory on team work says we Form – Storm - Norm – Perform
 - We are at the Storm stage
- All faculty heads have signed up for the middle leadership course through Highland Council which is excellent and shows their commitment to do their best for our pupils.

Engagement

- Pupil Parliament starts again this week with some new members of Pupil Parliament starting but many continuing in their role.
- We have started our 'courageous calls' home on a Friday to celebrate success of our pupils but also break the stigma that we only call home for negative reasons. Parents and carers have responded positively to these and the calls are made by Faculty Heads on behalf of their staff.
- Our S1/S2 Rural Skills Class have started working with the geo park education officer.
- All teaching staff have completed Stage One of the LGBT Education Stage One E-Learning course from Scottish Government. This E-Learning module forms Stage 1 of a two-stage national professional learning opportunity. This course provides us with the necessary information and skills to support delivery of LGBT Inclusive Education within our school. Once all other staff complete we then move onto Stage Two.

Extra-Curricular

- Students attended the Scotland V Poland game in Glasgow – sadly it was a loss but the school had fun!
- Paddleboard club started again and is proving to be popular with our young people
- Our Active Schools co-ordinator is still off. Heather Paterson is liaising with Highlife Highland to see how they can support us.
- Annie rehearsals to start after Sept weekend with the production date being end of Oct.

Other:

- Our school website is being redesigned and re-jigged to make it easier for parents and pupils to navigate. This is almost ready to launch.
- The library space has moved from where it was to upstairs in the open area outside English. This was a planned project from Dec 23 to happen over summer 24 to help

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use the dead space in that area and enable pupils to be more seen and supported in the main school.

- Social Areas – our next phase is to create social areas for ALL pupils. S1 and S2 to have the common area under the stairs, S3 and S4 to have the current common room and S5 and S6 to move into the area that was the library.
- The Area outside the new S5/S6 common room will be used to create a 'swap shop' for school uniform as well as a pantry of food and products for pupils to access without question if needed.

5. Nurseries - Mrs Aileen Macdonald provided the Early Learning and Childcare report attached as appendix 1.

a. Durness

Currently mothballed, 2 children currently travelling to Kinlochbervie for part-time hours.

b. Kinlochbervie

Vacant post for 4 hours per week.

c. Scourie

Children have adapted well while attending Kinlochbervie nursery, however some children struggled with the daily journey.

6. Primary Schools - Ms Katy Lee provided the Primary School report attached as appendix 2.

a. Durness

New P1s settling in well.

b. Kinlochbervie

Discussion around adapting to the single teacher classroom.

Request for an open day at Kinlochbervie Primary School so that Scourie and Durness parents can see where their children attend on a Thursday. Staff agreed to arrange this.

c. Scourie

Parents raised concern regarding the lack of supervision in the playground at morning break and after lunch, particularly for younger pupils. It is HC policy not to provide playground supervisors in schools with less than 49 pupils unless there is a specific pupil need. Parents expressed their concerns with regard to injury, access to the playground, pupil ability to leave the playground and potential for bullying.

Staff reassured parents that pupils are aware that they can access staff within the school building if there is any issue during break times.

Some parents would like to take the matter further and make a formal complaint to the HC as they have a duty of care to provide a safe environment for the children.

There was also a discussion around supervision of P1-3 children who have to wait on the school premises until school transport collects them at 3.30pm.

The pupils are to play in the second classroom with the door open to the senior pupils classroom should they need an adult.

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Clarity sought as to why there has not been any woodland school this term, this will be reviewed going forward. Staff assured parents that the reason that the woodland learning was not possible this term was due to all the materials being inaccessible upstairs within Scourie Primary School while building work has been ongoing.

Concern was raised regarding handwriting declining when older pupils start working on Chromebooks. Staff assured parents that they aim to raise attainment in reading, writing and spelling.

7. High School

As above in Head Teacher's report.

8. Treasurer's report

As AGM above.

9. Fundraising

Nil.

10. Correspondence

Iona does not routinely receive bank statements, Denise to update address for bank statements to be delivered to Iona.

11. Any other current business (AOCB)

- a) Neil Macdonald – parent and Scourie Development Representative informed the group of proposed plans for moving the Scourie Primary School car park to the grass park immediately in front of the school. There will also be a designated drop off area and bus stop. There is a proposal for new houses to be built in the field beside the Scouriemore Brae towards Camus na Taraidh. The Scourie Community Development Company has secured money for the new car park project and has an agreement with the Highland Council (HC) that the HC will maintain the area. The new car park is expected to provide parking for 10-12 cars. This project will go to tender in October and it is hoped the project will be carried out in Winter 2024 / Spring 2025. Parents present at the meeting welcomed the proposal and received the plans positively. Neil will share drawings of plans with the group. Further parent comment is welcome.
- b) Save our rural schools campaign – not covered this meeting
- c) Christmas Pantomime trip – provisional plan to take primary school pupils to see Jack and the Beanstalk at Eden Court on Thursday 5th December at 1.30pm, this has not yet been booked.
- d) High School Trip to Canada planned for October 2025! Details to follow.

Date of next meeting

This was not discussed at the meeting. To be confirmed

Meeting close 9.10pm

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Appendix 1: Aileen Macdonald's Early Learning & Childcare report

New school year

The end of the summer holiday & start of the new school year has been very challenging for the staff and families in ELC this year.

The renovations work in Scourie were started in the summer holidays, but a structural issue was discovered which led to lengthy delays. However, everything seems to be on track for the completion certificate to be available on Friday.

Durness ELC has been officially mothballed due to declining numbers, but we will continually monitor the situation for the future of Durness ELC. The staff from Durness ELC have been redeployed across the school group to various roles.

Due to the hard work of the committee who own the KLB Early Years building, the Care Inspectorate were happy to issue the registration certificate allowing the KLB setting to open on Tuesday 20th August. Thankfully the Care Inspectorate also approved the variation to allow the Scourie children to attend the KLB setting as an interim measure until the Scourie building is ready.

These first 4 weeks of term have been a great opportunity for the children from our 3 villages to socialise & they have all settled in so well with the changes they have faced. The ELC staff have worked hard to ensure the children are coping with the extra travel and we would like to thank them for this.

Next steps

Care Inspectorate visited Scourie ELC today and were happy with progress of the building. Highland Council will be visiting again on Friday & will hopefully sign off the completion certificate, so everything is still on track for the Early Years staff to set up the room on the in-service days next week with a view to the setting being open on Wednesday 18th Sept. The planned registration is for a maximum of 10 children from 2 years to school age, with no more than 5 two year olds.

ELC managers from Highland Council will be visiting both KLB & Scourie settings on 23rd September.

Staffing

KLB : Gladys & Meg or Kris

Scourie : Lynzi & Iona or Meg

There is a vacant post in KLB ELC for 4 hours each Friday. This position is currently advertised on MyJobScotland. Please encourage any potential applicants to apply.

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Appendix 2: Katy Lee's Primary School report

Primary School staffing in base schools:

Durness Primary: School roll 8 pupils

Class Teacher P1-7: Jenni McFadzean

Lone Worker Auxiliaries : Kris Colton/Emma Mackay

PSA : Anne Morrison (Weds)

Support for Learning Teachers : Murdette Price-Davies (Mon)

Clerical : Wendy Morrison (Tues)

Senior Management : Katy Lee DHT (Tues am), Aileen MacDonald DHT (Support for Learning), John Campbell Headteacher

Durness ELC has been mothballed for this year so lone worker auxiliaries are in place in the school so the class teacher is not on her own. The whole school has had a lovely refresh thanks to Mrs McFadzean working so hard to organise the two classrooms into fantastic learning spaces. There have been a number of bat visitors recently so the children have been learning about bats... Their history topic for this term is the Stone Age and they'll even be a cave in the classroom!

Kinlochberrie Primary : School Roll 13 pupils

Class teacher P2-7 : Abby Forrest

PSA : Christine Corbett (Mon/Thurs), Anne Morrison (Tues), Sally Czerwik (Weds), Ellen Parker (Friday)

Support for Learning Teacher : Murdette Price-Davies (Weds)

Clerical : Linda Flett (Tues/Weds/Thurs)

Senior Management : Katy Lee DHT (Weds pm), Aileen MacDonald DHT (Support for Learning), John Campbell Headteacher

Ms Forrest has been busy rearranging the classrooms so it is suitable for all age groups. Kinlochberrie Primary has a new play area with lots of engaging activities including dressing up costumes which is proving very popular with all ages. This term the children will be learning about the Victorians for their history topic.

Scourie Primary : School roll 22 Pupils

P1-P3 teacher : Krysha Davies

P4-P7 teacher : Sian Curley

PSA: Ellen Parker (Mon/Weds)

Support for Learning Teacher : Murdette Price-Davies (Tues)

Clerical : Mandy Ross (Mon-Fri) and Marg Meek (Tues)

Senior Management : Katy Lee DHT (Weds am), Aileen MacDonald DHT (Support for Learning), John Campbell Headteacher

A huge well done to Scourie teachers and pupils for adapting to a very different start of the school year with the building work in progress. The children coped very well to all being in one class for the first week (as did their teachers!). There are now back in two classes. Thank you to all Scourie staff for the hard work they have put in to getting the classrooms ready for the start of term. The school entrance already looks so much smarter with new lino

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and doors.

Class teachers were quick to use the opportunity for a 'construction' topic this term... There are lots of buildings being made inside complete with architect's plans!

School Improvement Plans for 2024/5

We have 3 action plans specifically for primary this year:

- Leadership at all levels
- Creativity through drama
- Raising Attainment in reading

Progress so far

Creativity through drama: We will be taking part in a two year drama programme with Eden Court. Teachers will have the first training workshop next week on the inservice day and there will be two day 'take-over' days with the Eden Court outreach workers visiting each primary in Oct/Nov.

Reading : We are currently reviewing our reading resources including the new school library and beginning to use a new programme 'NESSIE' to support individual pupils.

NWSS Thursday

It has been great to see children becoming more confident as they move into new classes this year. With Miss Maddocks leaving we have made a few changes to our timetable. Mrs McFadzean is now teaching P1-2 and Ms Forrest is teaching P3/4. The P7s seem to be enjoying having Dr Whitely for Science and having HS break/lunch times.

We have made a slightly later pick up time for pupils travelling from further out and for the Ullapool morning bus run. Transport from Durness and Scourie has been arriving between 9:10-9:15 am.

Reporting to parents

Teaching and learning is shared regularly on class SEESAW pages and on our NWSS SEESAW pages. Weekly planners of what your child is learning in school can also be found there.

Parent/teacher meetings will be in the week beginning 7th October- dates/times will be shared soon on Seesaw.

If you have any concerns please get in touch :

Katy Lee : katy.lee@highland.gov.uk

Aileen Macdonald : Aileen.macdonald@highland.gov.uk

John Campbell : john.naples-campbell@highland.gov.uk