



Hawick High School Parent Council

Minutes of meeting—Wednesday 28th November 2018

Hawick High School Staff Room at 18:30

present Andy Maybury (Chair), Keith Morgan (Vice-Chair), Becca Anderson (Secretary), Johnny Short (Treasurer)

Laura Melville, Alison Short, Louise Potts, Lyndsay Hodgins, Coreen Knight, Derek Forrest, Lisa Welsh, Sheila Clyne, Morven Brown

Vicky Porteous (Headteacher), Duncan Taylor

apologies Graeme Cockburn, Sean Page, Fiona Carlile, Neil Richards, Susan Green, Ailsa Green, Evelyn Chelley, Stuart Marshall, Watson McAteer

Developing the Young Workforce

Due to the inclement weather, we started with the DYW presentation (in the Lecture Theatre) so that Bruce could travel up to Edinburgh before it became too late. Sara Ward, Programme Manager of DYW Borders was due to also present but was not able to be present due to family circumstances.

Bruce Aitchison, Deputy Head Teacher for S1&2 also has responsibility for Developing the Young Workforce. He explained that the DYW approach should seek to understand the individual pupils and help them find careers that fit their interests, turning their passions into jobs. Sometimes there is a disconnect between what youngsters say they want to do and the interests that they actually pursue. The school aims to produce well-rounded individuals rather than just training workers.

Bruce explained how DYW fits in with various aspects of the school improvement plan from curriculum development to improving attendance through increased relevance to developing inclusive practice that encompasses a broader range of options and careers.

There are various tools that the DYW team use including the DYW Borders [website](http://dywborders.co.uk) (dywborders.co.uk) and the Right Skills, Right Job Programme, run in S4 and covering topics such as Personal Finance, online appearance and preparation for Interviews. There is also specific help on [My World of Work](http://myworldofwork.co.uk) (myworldofwork.co.uk) and there are 'Ambassadors' to promote both MW of W and DYW in the school and the feeder primaries.

Significant numbers of pupils have been involved with the DYW activities and visits along with many teachers, parents and local businesses. The end goal is for pupils to gain experience and become excited about their futures.

Welcome from the Chair

The meeting reverted to the Staff Room and Andy welcomed everyone. He apologised for the late circulation of the minutes, which was due to many factors and everyone being very busy. We are again without a student scribe and Vicky apologised for failing to arrange that although a

Andy had earlier circulated information from the Council regarding the school campus discussions. The SBC officers are recommending that Galashiels Academy be prioritised over Hawick High School for rebuilding. Emphasis is placed on the difficulties of the Hawick situation with no clear site and the imminent flood protection works. The report was scheduled to be presented to Council the following day.

Andy has sent a copy of our constitution to SBC for their records.

Subgroups

The two subgroups set up at our last meeting have met and made good progress.

Learning & Teaching

The parental feedback to the school about the teaching focussed on the reporting system and how well the current reports help parents to understand where their children are in the learning process and what lies ahead.

The group will work with Vicky to further improve the reports and all parents are encouraged to feed back positives and negatives about the existing reports. Emphasis is being placed on teachers identifying specific work that each pupil can focus on to improve their performance.

Are the comments of the reports helpful? Please give feedback about this.

Alumni

Keith reported that the group had met and quickly drawn up a list of career areas and populated those with names of former pupils that were known to the members of the group.

The idea is to formulate a set of standard questions that individuals can answer to camera or record on audio and send with a static image. This can build into a library of 'interviews' about a broad range of work sectors and parts of the world.

It was suggested that the Common Riding Committee may be a good source of contacts as they often invite Hawick High alumni and seem to be in touch with large numbers of former pupils. Graeme Cockburn was also suggested as he knows everyone and hears from folk after they have left the school.

It was later highlighted that Richard Henderson recently received a Nobel Prize and is keen to recognise his alma mater.

Headteacher's Report

Staffing

Mandy Everett has been appointed Principal Teacher of Complex Needs.

Richard Allott is acting PT of Maths until the post is filled. Vicky is taking one S1 class for Maths due to staff shortages.

Two of the DHTs—Ally Ratcliffe and Lisa Scott—are going on maternity leave and one post is being advertised as a temporary position. The standard allocation of DHTs for a school of this size is three rather than five as we currently have. If a suitable candidate cannot be found the school will run with three DHTs.

Ronald Yule has secured a job with ITV in London although he is willing to continue certain aspects of work on the school website after his move. Richard will help with the website. Members of staff will oversee the site and a parent with web design experience was suggested as a possible resource.

Fabric

There are no further updates to the building repair programme but the council recommendation to delay the new campus would require further extensive refurbishment of other areas. The PE changing rooms need significant work but no date has been set yet. Some of the flat roofs need maintenance.

Events

S3 will hold a *Winter Warm* concert on 6 December for older folk who are in assisted accommodation or care homes.

The Poppy project was a great success.

There have been assemblies by Pete Beaton about guidance matters and the effect of poor attendance at school on outcomes for youngsters.

There are senior school Parents Nights in the coming weeks.

Prelims will start soon after the school reopens in the new year.

The debating society is running and the team won a recent debate against another school. HHS will host a debate soon with other schools; the motion is about whether Google has done more harm than good. It was noted that debating skills are very relevant to DYW and communicating with others in adult life.

Student Voice

Student representatives have been chosen by each year group. They will decide what sort of mechanism they prefer to assess and represent student opinion. It was noted that this was an encouraging development and had been missed in recent years.

House system

There has not been much development of the house system of late but the house names are on the walls and house colours are being discussed.

Small Group Discussions

The meeting broke into small groups to consider questions relating to the DYW theme and returned to share responses. There was broad consensus between the groups as well as different facets highlighted.

What work skills do I want my offspring to develop?

- **Communication**
- Articulation (of point)—debating skills
- **Respect**
- Follow instructions
- Determination
- Extra effort
- Willingness to learn
- Academic strength in the 3Rs
- Testing
- Transferrable skills
- Timekeeping
- Self confidence

What practical work experiences do I want my children to have?

- Wide-ranging
- A work placement relevant to chosen career
- Realistic—not just making tea/gopher
- Exposure to other possibilities not considered
- Practicalities—awareness of expectations
- Preparation and practice for interviews

What can my business or workplace offer to youngsters?

- Work Experience
- Modern Apprenticeship
- Statistical / accounting
- Community opportunities, eg, admin function for local group

Plenty of specifics were given here including opportunities in schools, hospitals and other workplaces.

It was also pointed out that broad experience can be gained from involvement in clubs and associations and can help to endorse (or challenge) perceived interests.

The school has a statutory duty to provide work experience for pupils before they leave school 'when appropriate' and can be scheduled at the most appropriate stage. There are advantages to leaving work experience until pupils are over 16 as the risk assessment process is less arduous.

The school has a bank of possible placements for pupils.

New School Campus

The chair had circulated links to the SBC papers coming to Council the following day regarding the school estate in the Borders. The officer recommendation is for Gala' Academy to be prioritised ahead of Hawick High, which would be scheduled for completion in 2026.

There is a Review document by Stallan-Brand for each of the two schools and the analysis of Hawick's situation evaluates nine possible locations for the new school; filters out two (Common Haugh and Police Station) on the basis of acreage and further evaluates the remaining seven, concluding that there is no clear winner. No public consultation has been done on these suggestions and some (including the current site) are in areas with flooding risk.

The cost of renovating the current Gal' Academy is several times the cost of carrying out the essential upgrades to Hawick High and this may factor into the officer recommendation.

It was note that Donna Manson, who was actively supportive of Hawick High being put forward for funding alongside Gala' has moved on and is no longer pushing for this outcome. The work that the Parent Council has done was not well acknowledged in the SBC report and there are vague comments that suggest that the Hawick community was not as cohesive in its support for a new secondary school as the Galashiels community although this contention is groundless.

Final Questions

Punctuality, attendance and uniform were raised as concerns and questions raised about what consequences were meted out to pupils who flouted these requirements. Vicky clarified that the school has very few powers to punish students who transgress and generally it is counter-productive as they then refuse to comply with the punishment and it sours the relationship. Most of the youngsters who are compliant are in difficult home situations or are struggling with mental health issues.

Vicky also pointed out that the ultimate consequences of poor attendance and rebellion against school uniform and other rules is poor life outcomes.

A follow-on question was raised about whether this linkage was communicated to the kids who exhibited such poor behaviour and Vicky assured us that they have people in to talk to targeted groups about life consequences. Some of these speakers made poor choices when young and ended up falling foul of the law so can speak from bitter experience.

Dates of next meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 31 January 2019**.

Subsequent meetings are Monday 25 March and Tuesday 28 May.