**BEARSDEN ACADEMY**

**PARENT COUNCIL**

This meeting took place at Bearsden Academy on 6th June 2023 at 7pm

**Attendees**

Chris Dorman (Chair)

George Cooper (Head Teacher)

Michael Healy (Depute Head Teacher)

Jen McMartin

Wendy McLaren

Katherine Sneedon

Stuart Dickson (Secretary)

**Welcome & Introductions**

**Apologies**

Stuart noted apologies from January, Debbie, Lisa, and Alison before passing to Chris. Chris has taken the difficult decision to resign as chair due to the travel which comes with his work commitments. The group agreed to delay the vote on a new chair to an EGM at the same time as the next Parent Council meeting after the summer holidays. The

Wendy thanked Chris for this hard work during his time here which spanned the Covid pandemic and associated disruption. All seconded this.

**Minutes of the previous meeting (14th March 2023)**

Stuart explained that he could not find these on his laptop, however he would distribute these afterwards for approval via email.

**Matters arising**

Katherine noted that the concerns raised by Lisa from the last meeting around vaping have made headlines in recent weeks. This has been mostly around the littering aspect of disposable vapes with the Scottish Government set to take action on these, however there is increasing awareness of the health aspects not least due to education within the school.

Wendy asked about the possibility of a sixth year space in the school or a common room. Mr Cooper said that there is no space for the 160 pupils who would have access, however Mr Liddle and Mrs Higgins are looking for places for them to study in the school during study periods – perhaps in the library and other places. However, the school has never had this facility in current or previous buildings 14 years ago. The free periods tend to be in the middle of the day when the eating areas are very full, and we are keen to make arrangements as this will mean they don’t have to go home.

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Stuart asked if there was any more colour on the recent decision to push back the move of Bearsden Primary School to the Academy grounds to allow redevelopment work. Mr Cooper does not have information beyond the recent news from the council as reported in the press and to Community Councils – work starts in April 2024, however details are not well defined beyond this. The main concern for the Academy is that the pitches are returned to a good state after the work is complete.

Stuart asked about the curricula and exams for S4, 5, and 6. Are we back to the pre-pandemic curricula and appeals process. Mr Cooper said that they were.

**Head Teacher Report**

Parent leadership group. Started in August. We have had 4 staff lead and 4 lead by West College, Modules focused on things which were important to the school and allowed us all to upskill across a range of issues. Parents and staff enjoyed it. We had thought it would be a 1 year program but many parents wish to continue so we will likely do this. We will explore ideas around parents leading sessions for example and we are becoming more ambitious. 42 started and about 35 completed the modules so they get accreditation from West College. We will continue to work with them and we intend to develop our own courses and qualifications for pupils.

Mr Liddle can send out details if we wish.

Questionaires have gone out to staff and will soon go out to pupils and parents – this gives us feedback on evaluation. We can map across previous surveys and we will report on what we see.

Celebration assemblies – we asked what we should be recognising – they said the school values and what had been achieved in and out of the classroom. We have had positive feedback from parents on the Sways we produce and pupils are becoming more keen to take part in these and in we are listening to the feedback the pupils are giving on such initiatives.

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The prizes for academic achievement? There will be dozens of opportunities for leadership on anything they want. This will help UCAS – our success rate in UCAS is incredible but this will support it further.

The awards, Mr Cooper and Mr Healy – it might be the traditional model, but may go further. The problem with raking everybody is that someone lower here might be very high at another school. S4, S5, S6.

Previously we had a Head girl and a Head boy, and we chose prefects 30 or so, but 150 who were not which could lead to disenchantment and a lack of engagement. Our experience wasn’t so great so having listened to pupils we opened up leadership to all if they wished to participate and we can have anyone representing the school in S6 across a range of issues. We are arguably the most successful local authority school in Scotland.

We tie these into the SQA volunteering awards – which can help UCAS applications through the personal statements. We’ve always had pupils volunteering to help in the school and the community, but we can now have accreditations for their experiences.

Mr Cooper said that he had had the chance to meet and say goodbye to the sixth-year pupils post their exams. This sixth year are the most successful we have ever had.

**Next meeting**

Date of next meeting is September the 6th at 7pm and will include the EGM at the start.