

# BELMONT ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting

Wed 29 January 2025 at 6.30pm

School Library



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## PRESENT:

Parent Members: Aynsley Lawrence, David Bulloch (Treasurer), Karen Donn, Emma Brown, Heather Knox, Josephine Docherty (Secretary), Jonathan Hagen, Kirsty Thomson, Lesley Strain, Lorna Russell, Lyssa McCartney, Rosemary Logie, Susan Bell (Chair), Tonie McCormack & Vicky Pang

Staff Members: Kevin Boyd (Head Teacher), Ian Watson (Principle Teacher Guidance), Lynsey Pollock (Principal Teacher Modern Studies and History)

Pupil Members: Mabel J (School Captain) & Olivia F (School Captain)

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### 1. Welcome & Apologies (Susan Bell)

Chair, Susan Bell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and intimated apologies on behalf of David Codling, Lucinda Ferguson-Hunter, Karen McGimpsey & Graeme McLean.

S1/S4 parent, Sarah MacLeod has intimated her immediate resignation from Parent Council.

### 2. Minutes of Last Meeting (27<sup>th</sup> November 2024) (Susan Bell)

The Minute of the last meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024 was approved by Lesley Strain and seconded by Heather Knox, as a true record of that meeting.

### 3. Matters Arising

- a) Belmont has talent – this event is proposed to take place 6<sup>th</sup> March, Mr McLean was not present at the meeting to provide an update (carry forward). **Action: G McLean**
- b) Pupil survey – not yet conducted (carry forward). **Action: E Brown**
- c) Outdoor learning facility – It was suggested this could be incorporated into the Duke of Edinburgh award (carry forward). **Action: K Boyd**
- d) Donation of Halloween Costumes – A small amount of Halloween costumes had been handed into the school office, following a plea from pupils to recycle for the benefit of other pupils. **Action: Pupil Council**
- e) Gambling Act Licence – Treasurer, David Bulloch had completed the relevant paperwork, which required countersignature by Susan or Emma. David would thereafter submit the application to South Ayrshire Council. **Action: D Bulloch**
- f) Pop-up Shop – Emma confirmed she had secured a let of the Maybole pop-up shop from Fri 21 Mar until the close of business the following Thursday (27<sup>th</sup> Mar). The cost will be £100 for 1 weeks' hire. A plea for donations of bric-a-brac, clothing, books, CDs/DVDs, gift sets etc to either be handed into the school office or taken along to the premises in Maybole (day/time TBC). Any items leftover will be donated to Cash for Kids charity. Josephine to issue a poll to gauge availability of members to support the shifts in the shop over the course of the week-long let. **Action: J Docherty**

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## 4. School Captain's Update (Olivia F & Mabel J)

- a) Christmas Parties – S1/S2, as well as S5/S6 had both enjoyed Christmas parties last month. The S3/S4 party was cancelled due to lack of interest. There was also a P7 cluster school party at Belmont Academy, a good opportunity for pupils from the cluster primary schools to meet in advance of them joining Belmont in the summer.
- b) Prom Fundraising – a number of fund-raising activities have taken place to raise funds for the senior prom including Christmas Jumper Day, sale of candy canes, bake sale, art exhibition, and Christmas volleyball in fancy dress. It is hoped there will be further fundraising events around Valentine's Day, including a 'soak-the-teacher' event. Cost of the prom are yet to be finalised – it is still to be decided whether there will be a live band or a disco. Cost of tickets will be confirmed in due course.
- c) Parents' Evening Events – S4 was on 28 Jan, S5/6 will take place 18 Feb and S2 will take place on 24 Feb. Senior pupils will support these events, checking in parents on arrival and directing them to the areas where there appointments are.
- d) Prelims – Higher and Advanced Higher prelims have taken place during January. Storm Eowyn (Fri 24 Jan), which resulted in the closure of all schools in the region following the red weather warning, meant some of the prelims had to be rescheduled to this week.
- e) Burns Supper - planning has commenced for the forthcoming Burns Supper on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb, where there will be traditional haggis supper, poetry, singing, music and dancing to enjoy.
- f) Meeting with Director of Education South Ayrshire – School Captains from South Ayrshire will have the opportunity to meet with Lyndsay McRoberts (Director of Education) next week.

Emma Brown suggested senior students consider a fashion exchange show, an opportunity to recycle pre-loved clothes and raise money at the same time. Mabel & Olivia said they'd explore this option further.

**Action: Olivia & Mabel**

## 5. Belmont Funding Futures (BFF) Update (Emma Brown)

BFF have secured a let for the pop-up shop in Maybole from Fri 21<sup>st</sup> – Fri 28<sup>th</sup> Mar to raise funds to benefit the young people from Belmont Academy.

Volunteer helpers will be required to set up donations (Fri 21<sup>st</sup> Mar), assistance with shop sales (Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> – Thu 27<sup>th</sup> Mar, excluding Sun 23<sup>rd</sup>) and clear-up of the shop (Fri 28<sup>th</sup> Mar).

Any donations of bric-a-brac, clothing, footwear, books, toys, music items (anything with a resale value) would be welcome. Discussion will take place at the next PC meeting to agree where donations may be dropped off.

**Action: E Brown**

## 6. Treasurer's Report (David Bulloch)

Period 28 Nov 2024 – 29 Jan 2025:	Credit	Debit
Opening Balance	£1395.60	-
Total Income (Art Raffle via Square App)	£110.00	-
Total Expenses (Square App charges)	-	-£1.89
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£1503.71</b>	

The Bank of Scotland where the Parent Council account is currently held has changed the type of account from a Treasurer's account (free of charges) to a Community account, which brings with it a monthly maintenance fee of £4.25 and charges for pretty much everything else. It was agreed to change to Co-Op's Charity & Community account.

**Action: D Bulloch**

In advance of David's Treasurer tenure ending at the summer, he would arrange to have the accounts audited, as part of the OSCR regulations.

**Action: D Bulloch**

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## 7. Pastoral Update (Ian Watson)

### a) University & College Admissions Service (UCAS) update:

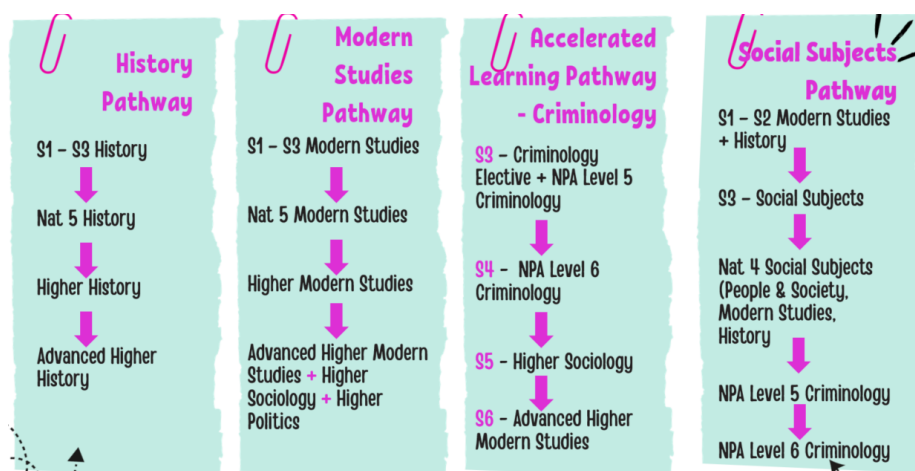
- 85 applications submitted
- 68 responses returned to pupils
- 11 pupils have had final decisions
- 5 pupils have placed firm choices

b) **Subject Choices:** S3 options are complete. Belmont Academy will continue trialling the process for S2 pupils entering S3, whereby pupils have an option to choose 2 additional subjects, with a view to dropping 2 subjects at the end of S3, to give them a bigger variety of choices, so they can experience the course and decide which subjects they will proceed with and which they will drop (2 subjects). S4 going into S5 will complete their subject choices this week.

c) **Introduction to Mock Interviews:** Senior pupils are given the opportunity to participate in a mock interview process. 155 students have submitted applications, with a session running on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb in relation to interview question types and how these should be answered and The Girvan Youth Trust will deliver a presentation in the school on interview techniques, then the interview process will take place on 25<sup>th</sup> Feb. There are 17 groups conducting interviews from a wide range of sectors. The following week, an announcement will be made as to the 'successful applicants'. All participants will receive feedback as to the quality of their application, their delivery and areas for improvement. This has proven to work well for pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem in the past.

## 8. Social Subjects Department Update from Principal Teacher (Lynsey Pollock)

Miss Pollock delivered a presentation to members outlining the learning pathways in the social subjects department, which covers History, Modern Studies, Criminology, Sociology and Politics. There are various pathways for these subjects:



Miss Pollock further explained how the school was trialling Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Social Subjects, with planning, revision, presentation, document analysis, curriculum development and differentiation of resources for different age groups. She gave an example of lesson materials being entered into Chat GPT, with an instruction to make the text accessible for a young person with a reading age of 'enter a range'... and Chat GPT then creates tasks to accompany that text in an appropriate manner suitable to the reading age input.

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Miss Pollock also explained about the 'Lessons Lab Challenge' used across the department whereby pupils and teachers are challenged to reimagine and re-inspire teaching and learning methods. Within the department, one class, for one lesson per week will create new resources and/or use new L&T strategies with that class during the lesson, with an aim to keep the challenge going for as long as the teacher can without using pre-existing materials or repeating L&T strategies. Shared experiences and good practices are shared with colleagues at Department Managers meetings.

## 9. Use of Social Media

Following consultation, the school has taken the decision to disable the school X (formerly Twitter) account and departmental accounts. This social media platform is no longer moderated and this has resulted in some schools receiving unwanted posts in their feed, which can lead to reputational damage. In addition, our footfall has reduced significantly on X, impacting its reach to our school community. We will continue to share and celebrate the many successes of our young people using the school website, ParentsPortal, GroupCall and other social media platforms.

## 10. Head Teachers Update (Kevin Boyd)

### a) Staffing

We have recently appointed:

- Andrew McCrorie, teacher of Geography
- Craig Macmorland, teacher of English
- Daniel Gurney, teacher of D&T.

The advert for a teacher of Mathematics was withdrawn and we will review staffing in the department ahead of next session.

This week, with the support of pupils, staff, SAC colleagues, and members of the Parent Council, we are selecting a permanent DHT (Kintyre House).

Our staffing situation remains fairly settled for this time of the year.

### b) Adverse Weather

I'm pleased to report we have not experienced any significant damage from the recent storm. My thanks to the whole school community for their support last Friday.

### c) Belmont Academy Maths Support (BAMS)

As a result of fundraising activities, kind donations, and allocating funds from the school budget, I'm pleased to report that both BAMS residentials at Dumfries House will be free to young people and their families. Around 31 learners are signed up for this weekend with a second residential to follow in March. We will need to consider funding for future years to enable this tremendous support to be sustainable. My personal thanks to Alison Harvey (PT Maths) and her team for providing this opportunity once again for our young people.

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## d) **Senior Phase Assessment Programme**

N5 assessments were completed prior to the Christmas break and H/AH assessments finished on Monday. A huge thanks to Mrs McCaig DHT, Mrs Slider PT Pupil Support, Mr Dunlop Chief Invigilator, the Invigilation Team, and other key staff for ensuring its smooth delivery.

Once again, I would also like to thank our incredible young people, who have undertaken these assessments with the correct attitude, spirit, and determination.

## 11. Any Other Business

### a) **UWS Foundation Academy**

Emma Brown asked if Belmont Academy were aware of the UWS Foundation Academy initiative, which Mr Watson confirmed Belmont Academy already participates, with Laura McMillan leading on it for the school. There is support for pupils with their UCAS applications and it was noted that the way in which personal statements are to be written next year, will be changing from the current format.

### b) **Parent Members disengaged with Parent Council**

Josephine Docherty raised the point, there were a number of parents had put their names forward to be parent members of the Parent Council, but despite being sent meeting papers, had not attended meetings, nor submitted apologies. The constitution states '*any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without apology or reason will be deemed as lapsed and no longer part of Belmont Academy Parent Council*', therefore it was agreed they would be removed from the distribution list going forward. They are welcome to re-join in subsequent years, should they wish to.

### c) **Volunteers to support Parents' Evenings**

Josephine to send WhatsApp message and email to parent members to seek support to provide hospitality at the forthcoming parents evening events:

- S5/6 – Tue 18 Feb
- S2 – Mon 24 Feb

**Action: J Docherty**

## 12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parent Council will take place on **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 6.30pm** in the **School Library** within Belmont Academy.