

# BELMONT ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting  
Wed 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 6.30pm  
Conference/e-Learning Room



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## PRESENT:

**Parent Members:** Susan Bell (Chair), Josephine Docherty (Secretary), Karen Harley, Karen McGimpsey, Lesley Strain, Lisa Morrison, Lyssa McCartney

**Staff Members:** Kevin Boyd (Head Teacher), Graeme McLean (Depute Head Teacher), Lynsey Pollock (Principal Teacher)

**Pupil Members:** Caitlin M, Ross N (School Captains)

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## 1. Welcome & Apologies

Chair, Susan Bell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and intimated apologies on behalf of David Codling, Emma Brown, Heather Knox, Jonathan Hagen, Kirsty Thomson, Lorna Russell, Pamela Gray, Rosemary Logie, David Bulloch and Ian Watson.

## 2. Minutes of Last Meeting (27 February 2024) / Matters Arising

The Minute of the last meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 was approved by Graeme McLean and seconded by Lyssa McCartney, as a true record of that meeting.

### Matters Arising from last Meeting:

- £120 prize-giving cheque – there is no record of this being received within the school – Susan to liaise with Treasurer, David Bulloch to cancel cheque at bank and re-issue replacement. **ACTION: S Bell**
- Belmont's Got Talent Event – Graeme has not spoken to colleagues yet to determine if this fund-raising idea is an option before the summer holidays. He will progress by next meeting. **ACTION: G McLean**
- Card-reader – a new card reader has been ordered from the bank, for use at future events, recognising fewer people are carrying cash.
- Film Club – see detail under BFF item 8 below.
- Consultation on school holiday options 2025/26 – the preferred option voted by parent members was Option 2 - Schools will be **closed on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> and Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026**. In-service day on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February and re-open to pupils on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026; plus Schools will be **closed on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May** and re-open to pupils on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2026. (This was also the option preferred by teaching staff and is the option which SA education authority will opt for). It was noted that pupils do not have an opportunity to vote – Mr Boyd said he'd query this with the education authority. **ACTION: K Boyd**

## 3. School Captain's Update (Ross N & Caitlin M)

- This week, senior pupils have participated in '**Spirit Week**', a different theme for each day (decades day, white lie, wear it pink, funky hats & shoes, PJ day) with pupils paying a £5 participation fee for the full week. Monies raised will go to the Prom Fund and will be used towards the cost of the band, so the cost of individual tickets may be reduced.
- A **Bake Sale** took place on 28 Mar, raising £150 and there will be a **karaoke event** on Fri 29 Mar (lunchtime), with each pupil contributing £1 entry fee. This money will go to the Prom Fund also. Once fundraising events are completed, final arrangements will be made for Senior Prom, which will take place at Brig o' Doon, with a ticket price confirmed.
- Yearbooks** have been ordered.
- Leavers' hoodies** are due to arrive w/c 1 April.

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- e) **Senior Barbeque** will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> April.
- f) **Teacher Awards Ceremony** – senior pupils have proposed to carry out a half hour ceremony on Wed 17 April (after school) to give them an opportunity to thank their teachers for their support during their time at Belmont Academy – there will be a variety of awards. In addition, senior students have printed postcards with a photo of senior pupils and there will be a handwritten message added and given to teachers, to say “thank you”.

Mr Boyd had spoken to senior pupils and offered to make a HT contribution to Prom that could become an annual tradition – he awaits a response. **ACTION: School Captains**

Mr Boyd expressed thanks to both Caitlin and Ross and their Captaincy/Leadership Team, who have been true ambassadors for the school. It was appreciated that new ideas introduced by this year’s senior pupils were mindful of the impact on the whole school.

There had been a request for a sponsored walk on Thu afternoon this week, but given the busyness of March for teaching staff, trying to complete assignment work etc, the sponsored walk was not approved. The lunchtime karaoke was approved and was seen as an appropriate compromise.

Mr Boyd commended the idea of a Teachers Award Ceremony suggested by the senior pupils, he was unaware of any other school where this took place.

Mr Boyd explained there would be a **Leavers Event** organised within the school, to give recognition to **S4 and S5 pupils** due to end their school journey; pupils will be issued with certificates and there will be hospitality laid on.

Parent Council Members thanked Caitlin and Ross for their contribution to the school and for their regular, informative updates at PC Meetings; they wished them both every success for the future.

## 4. Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer, David Bulloch submitted apologies – no update provided.

## 5. Pastoral Update

Mr Watson sent apologies for the meeting. Pastoral update incorporated within the Head Teacher’s report (below).

## 6. Head Teacher Update (Kevin Boyd)

### a) Staffing

Since our last meeting in February we have appointed the following member of staff:

- Jennifer Donaghy Teacher of HE (NQT at Loudoun Academy).

I can also confirm following my last update that Jennifer Clark, Teacher of English (Forfar Academy), will take up post on Monday, 20 May.

Today, Mrs Flanagan and I were interviewing for the post of Acting PT Guidance (Cumbrae House). Due to illness, one applicant is still to be interviewed on Wednesday, 17 April.

I am pleased to share that our current staffing levels remain to be reasonably healthy, although we have some temporary staffing challenges with the Guidance team at the moment.

### b) Options Process

The options process is now complete and Mrs Flanagan DHT has started the important task of creating the whole school timetable for next session. We have submitted bids for nine NQTs

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and will find out how many we have been allocated in the middle of May. There is a small number of NQTs who have indicated that South Ayrshire is their first-choice local authority, so we are anticipating that we will only be allocated a few.

### c) **Study Support (Senior Phase)**

We have utilised funding to deliver an extensive programme of supported study sessions this term. In addition, we held an extremely successful S4 targeted N5 Maths residential at Dumfries House two weeks ago. Mr McLean has also organised our Easter School programme which can be viewed on the school website.

Mr McLean DHT oversees this programme and he will share information in relation to study support for Senior Phase students, including our plans for the Easter School programme.

### d) **Young Musician**

Belmont Academy's Young Musician competition took place on Tuesday, 19 March. Leon (S1) won the Junior section and Maria (S6) won the Senior Young Musician. Both young people represented Belmont Academy last night at the South Ayrshire Music service Young Musician of the Year final with Maria winning the Senior Young Musician of the Year. She will progress to the National Final on Sunday, 26 May at the Royal Conservatoire. In addition, our Belmont Academy Woodwind Ensemble will represent South Ayrshire at the National Final along with South Ayrshire's Schools' Brass Ensemble, which also contains two of our pupils.

### e) **SCQF School Ambassador programme – Belmont upgraded to Gold**

The SCQF School Ambassador programme offers schools the opportunity to learn more about the benefits of the SCQF and the wider ways in which it supports learners such as recognising wider achievement, developing Senior Phase learning pathways in line with the Developing the Young Workforce strategy and giving equality between vocational and academic qualifications.

Our SCQF journey began in 2018 when we received School Ambassador staff training. We then successfully applied to upgrade to the new tiered system receiving Bronze in 2022 and Silver in 2023. We received communication that our recent application to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) team has been accepted and we are now recognised at GOLD standard. The application highlighted all the partnership working we do across the school community to enhance the learning experience and awareness of pathways for our young people including the widening of the course choices available to our young people.

This award recognises the hard work and dedication we have done, and will continue to do, to get it right for our young people and ensure that they have suitable pathways to achieve success in, and beyond, Belmont Academy. We are the 13<sup>th</sup> school in Scotland to receive the SCQF Gold award. Thank you to our SCQF Pupil Ambassador Team and Miss Macmillan (DYW Coordinator) who have worked tirelessly to create resources, information stands, Theme of the Week and Pupil Training sessions. We are now planning a recruitment drive to extend the SCQF Pupil Ambassador team for next session.

### f) **COPFS Schools Public Speaking Competition 2024**

Miss Pollock provided the following update on this year's Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service public speaking competition 2024.

The competition is open to S2 or S3 teams.

#### Format

- There are two members per team.

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- Each team member has 5 minutes to speak on an issue selected by the COPFS.
- Once a team has finished both speeches, they will face rounds of questioning from their fellow competitors and judges – this was one of the biggest challenges for our young people. They had to build confidence in not only answering the questions directed at them well, but also thinking of good questions to ask as they listened to other speeches.

## First Round

- There were 12 teams from across Ayrshire. The Ayrshire round was held at the Grange Academy.
- We had two teams:
  - Evan Gibson
  - Alesha Hendren
  - Evie MacLeod
  - Antonia Micallef-Eynaud
- The topic was 'Does technology only improve things for those who can afford it'.
- Both teams did brilliantly.
- The Team of Evie and Antonia won.
- Evan and Alesha very much enjoyed the experience and asked us to seek out more public speaking opportunities. We have approached the Modern Studies Network to arrange a SAC Speechmaking Competition. It will run during study leave.

## Sheriffdom Round

- There were 3 Teams: Belmont, St. Josephs (Kilmarnock) and St Ninians (Giffnock)
- Held at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court – the kids did their speeches from the witness box.
- There were 3 judges – Sheriff Nicky Patrick, Assistant Procurator Fiscal (North Strathclyde) Alistair Duncan and Chief Inspector Judith MacGregor
- The topic was 'Does Pretty Privilege Exist'.
- We won!

## National Final

- There will be two teams: Belmont Academy and Trinity High
- We found out the topic today 'Disability is not inability'.
- It will be held on the 23rd of April at Paisley Sheriff Court.

## g) Key Dates

Date	Event
Thursday, 28 March 2024	School closes at 2.30pm for Easter break
Monday, 15 April 2024	Pupils return to school after the Easter break
Friday, 19 April 2024	S6 Leavers' Trip
Monday, 22 April 2024	SQA Examinations start
Thursday, 2 May	In-service day
Friday, 3 May	S1-3 Rewards Day

## 7. Belmont Funding Futures (BFF) Update (Susan Bell)

### a) Cinema Night

It had been suggested to hold a cinema night within the school tonight (27 Mar) with a view to charging a small entry fee and sale of refreshments, to raise funds for the end of term awards trips. However, Susan explained that local film group, Iris, had no capacity for this date (end April first possibility), plus there would be an outlay cost of £400 (to advertise and provide the

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appropriate licence). Following discussion, it was agreed that a survey should be conducted amongst the school's young people to gauge if they'd be interested in participating and determine what film they may wish to watch (bearing in mind age classification), as it may not be cost effective to hold the event if the licence alone costs £400. Mr Boyd agreed to liaise with Mrs Flannigan and Mrs McCaig to ask them to survey S1-3 (recognising many of the S4-6 would be out of school in the coming weeks). **ACTION: K Boyd**

## b) Alternative fund-raising ideas

Other fund-raising ideas put forward included:

- Colour run event
- Enterprise opportunity – pupils granted a budget and they in turn develop a product which could be sold for profit
- Gaming competition
- Dance event/music demo by Scottish DJ & Music Producer, Ewan McVicar (ex Belmont Pupil)

Susan will liaise with Deputy Chair, Emma Brown, who was not present at the meeting.

**ACTION: S Bell**

## 8. Any Other Business

a) **Astro pitches** – Following media reports of health risks relating to the rubber crumb used on artificial 3G sports pitches, Mr Boyd was asked if the education authority had made any declarations in this respect. Mr Boyd was unaware of these media reports; he agreed to liaise with his council colleagues to determine if they have taken any decision regarding an approach to this news. He did mention that Belmont's astro pitches were newly laid last summer and he did hope that if there were any concerns, hopefully it may be in relation to older materials used, but he honestly didn't know about it, so would ask the question and revert back. **ACTION: K Boyd**

b) **Vaping detectors** – There were reports of other schools installing vaping detectors, Mr Boyd was asked if Belmont Academy would be doing similar. Mr Boyd was aware of another school who had decided to install detectors in toilet areas or areas where it is known, young people are congregating to vape. The cost of detectors is expensive (£1000 for 3 detectors) and Belmont did not see this as a priority at this stage. The school has had incidences of anti-social behaviour with holes being kicked in walls within the school building and each time it's costing circa £200 - £300 to repair. In an effort to tackle this, 365° CCTV cameras are being installed at the school in an effort to catch the culprits, or the installation be enough of a deterrent - these have been costly out of the budget. He reckoned that the price of vaping detectors would reduce, as there will no doubt be a market for them and he thought that Belmont would possibly opt to install them in the new school term (once the school budget is confirmed).

## 9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parent Council will take place on **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024** at **6.30pm** in the **Conference/e-Learning Room** within Belmont Academy.