

Chairperson Annual Report - AGM - 10 September 2019

The past year (session 2018/2019) was a new and challenging experience for me as Chair, likewise for Karen Foubister as secretary and Lianne Henry as Treasurer. Aaron Cowieson took on the role of Vice Chair, however, resigned from this position towards the end of last term as his son was transitioning into Secondary School. He was an asset to the committee and his input was very much appreciated. The parent council has several committee members who have been committed to supporting the parent council and helping where needed. We have 3 local councillors who attend our meetings and have been a good source of information and support. Mr Taylor, Head Teacher, and 2 teacher representatives also attend meetings and their contribution is valuable.

The Parent Council strives to be supportive and encourages parental involvement when required for events and raising awareness of issues that impact them. Like many other Parent Councils, it is a struggle to engage parents, however, I have found that parents have volunteered their time for events and spoken up about issues that impact them. It will be great to further involve parents and see more participation in the future and progressing with a Parent Council social media platform may be an ideal way to keep parents informed and involved. Communication between the school and Parent Council is positive and it is envisaged that this will continue this coming academic year.

During the school term time the Parent Council have met 4-6 weekly, with extra meetings being arranged when there have been events to arrange. I have also attended the bi-annual Parent Council Chair / Head Teacher meetings, which has given me opportunities to network with other schools, share ideas for fundraising, gain greater insight into the chairperson's role and keep updated with any policy / issues that may impact the school. It's an ideal forum to raise awareness and ask questions that matter to parents and the school.

As a Parent Council we have been able to support the school, as well as raise and discuss many school issues over the course of the year,

These issues and topics range from

- Staffing and resources
- School events (parent evenings, school concerts)
- School reporting including the use of Seesaw.
- School inspection
- Internet safety
- New school extension and ideas for playground
- Support for Learning cuts.
- source (community councils) and provided funding towards transport to allow pupils from p5-7 to travel to Kirkwall Arts Theatre to put on an Easter concert - The St Andrews Gathering. This was a fantastic opportunity and experience for the pupils and was thoroughly enjoyed by families, friends and the community.

The Parent Council has held many fundraising events during the past year, and they will continue to raise funds for the school. The funding allows the school to purchase much needed resources, as well provide funding to clubs.

The following is some of the fundraising that has been held this past year:

- Christmas raffle - which raised approx. £700
- Christmas disco - which raised approx. £450
- Christmas card, mugs and tea towels made by pupils - which raised approx. £770
- Individual / group photos by Suzanne Lee - which raised approx. £230
- Spring Raffle - which raised approx. £700
- Family Fun Day - which raised approx. £660

- School Tea towel - total unknown

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(Lianne will have the final totals raised within the treasurer's report)

The Parent Council were gifted approx. £550 from the Holm Youth Club. This money was to be used towards activities for pupils. The money has allowed the Parent Council to provide additional funding towards football, a popular activity and towards the hire of the buses for the Easter concert. I hope that the Parent Council will continue to help pupils to be able to access and take part in school activities.

The family fun day was enjoyed by pupils, family and friends. It brought the school community together, showed off the baking talents of pupils, pupils football skills, the budding stars who entertained the crowds and that Mr Taylor is a great sport when he offered and allowed pupils to throw wet sponges at him. It's is definitely an event that should be held annually, and it was fantastic to see a great turn out. The sun even made an appearance!

The Parent Council, along with teaching staff want to encourage families to be involved and participate in school activities. I hope that there will be more opportunities and creative ways to bring the school community together in the future.

There have been some challenges for the Parent Council and the School, the main one being the cuts to Support for Learning, which saw a reduction in hours and no support being available for pupils in P2 onwards. The school had to make some changes to accommodate this and this included classes being composited and the introduction of a paired reading program. Without a doubt the cuts to Support for Learning has impacted on teaching staff, but they continue to provide positive learning experiences for our children.

In response to the cuts, we generated a parent survey, wrote to MP's and invited Peter Diamond from Education to attend a Parent Council meeting, which he did on 10 June 2019. Support for Learning is now a standing agenda item and it is an action for this next academic year to invite local councillors to the school to observe how the cuts have impacted on the school environment and to highlight why Support for Learning is a vital and necessary part of school life. There is more action needed in order to ensure there are no further cuts to the Support for Learning.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a sincere thanks to my fellow Parent Council members, especially to Rachael Moar and Michelle Morris, who have devoted their time, enthusiasm and commitment to support the school and the Parent Council during the past year. Thank you.

Thanks to Karen, the secretary, for all her minute taking and to Lianne, the treasurer, for all the counting and keeping track of the funds. Also, a personal thank you to you both for your support behind the scenes. It's has been a joint effort to make this past year a successful and enjoyable experience.

Thank you to Mr Taylor for keeping me informed, updated and for being supportive of the Parent Council. And finally, a thank you to Leesa and Julie in the school office for being helpful, listening to me ramble on, answering emails and completing admin tasks.

I hope that the Parent Council can continue to create exciting opportunities for the school, raise well needed money, as well a welcoming new members and volunteers to help in any way that they can.

Alison Reid
Chairperson