**Inverurie Academy Parent Council**

**Minute of Meeting**

**Wednesday 2nd September**

**7pm – Meeting Room**

**Attendees** - Jane Taylor, Samantha Tribe, Howie Stewart, Valerie Napier, Sam Grant, Shona Strachan, Elizabeth Watt, Fergus Boyle, Tracey Skene, Neil Skene, Councillor Bryan Stuart, Linda Evans (H/T) Pauline Fraser (DHT), Dawn Lynch (DHT), Katie Arthur (DHT)

**Apologies** – Gordon Brebner, Judy White, Elaine Ball, Maureen Stansfield, Councillor Martin Kitts-Hayes

Neil – interim Chair – welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Approval of Minute - 12th May 2015**

Proposed by Shona and Seconded by Sam.

**Matters Arising from Previous Minute**

* Aberdeenshire Council is awaiting advice on European Funding for the new Academy
* SPTC Training – “Parent Council Essentials” was held in school on 23rd June
* Kellands Primary School Parent Council will be hosting SPTC training event - Parent Council Essentials 2 - date TBC

**Election of Office Bearers**

Neil volunteered to remain as Chair and Howie agreed to remain in the post of Treasurer. They were elected unopposed. As no-one wished to take on the role of Secretary permanently, it was agreed that this responsibility would be rotated at each meeting. Elizabeth agreed to take the Minute for this meeting.

**School Report**

**Exam results** – The statistical analysis of exam results has changed at a National level this year taking into account the principals of CfE and the new qualifications. The analysis includes factors such as positive post school destinations, it focusses on literacy and numeracy in particular, analysing attainment according to ability, and looking at deprivation factors (closing the gap). The report will be presented to the Parent Council in November when areas of concern and success will be discussed.

An enormous amount of reflective work has already been done and the school is delighted to report an upward trend of raising attainment for the third year in a row, especially with S5 Higher results (the gold standard/University entry).

Nat 4 results are holding steady with the vast majority of pupils achieving a pass.

Nat 5 results are either holding steady or slightly improved in the majority of subject areas.

Higher results are improved again in S5, although a little disappointing in S6. However, even taking this into consideration, overall Higher awards are up. The school is continuing to look at ways to motivate pupils to achieve their potential in S6. They will be assisted by Universities as the system of offering pupils unconditional offers is changing to one where this offer could be revoked if pupils do not attain passes in their S6 subjects.

Advanced Highers success remained steady with a few dips caused by some pupils dropping out right at the end of the course. Small numbers make statistical analysis difficult but the results will be discussed with the Principal Teachers of subject areas to look at each element of the test papers to consider how learning can be enhanced. If required, Improvement Plans are being tweaked at Faculty level. The National ‘Insight’ database is being updated for our review at school, authority and national level.

**Staffing** – This is an issue for our area and the whole north east of Scotland. Lots of work is being done at Authority level to look at recruitment and retention of staff. Interviews have been taking place by teams of Senior school staff across the authority through the summer holidays for a number of subject areas that are proving problematic for many schools. Agency recruitment is being considered using teaching staff from England and Ireland but they will only be able to teach if they are GTC registered.

Our situation is pretty positive. We are running with vacancies in Business, Computing, English, History, Drama, Modern Studies, Technical and PE. However, we have managed to secure specialist supply staff for these vacancies. We have appointed teachers to fill vacancies in Business, Computing, Drama, and Technical. There are interviews scheduled for the History, Modern Studies posts and PE posts.

We have had a number of retirements and changes to staff in Guidance effecting Selbie and Crichie Houses and parents have been informed of these changes. Changes in SfL staffing are also being worked through.

Owing to illness and a move over the summer, there is a vacancy in the office and two in the technician team. This is a challenge but everyone is making every effort to continue to provide the full range of services.

Adverts for posts in our school are attracting a good number of applications – we are definitely seen as an appealing place to work! We are hopeful that all recruitment processes will be completed by the end of term.

**Uniform Policy** – The teaching staff noticed a rise in the number of school uniform breaches towards the end of last term and it seems that the same approach was not being taken on each occasion. This term has started with a focus on existing uniform policy to make sure a consistent approach is achieved and the school is working with parents/families that have challenges in providing uniform. So far things are looking good and standards are high. School uniform policy is reviewed every 6 years by parents, pupils and staff and the next review is due in 3 years. The School Crest is not a logo but a Chartered Crest and must be visible on outer uniform. Jeans and leggings are not part of the uniform but treggings are acceptable. A note has been issued to each pupil to explain the policy.

**Mobile phones** – School policy is that pupils should keep their phones switched off and in their bags during class time.

**Pupil timetables** – A major technical issue was experienced towards the end of last term with the management information system and on two occasions, just as the school began on the new timetable, all data on the timetables was lost due to a system failure. The school worked closely with the National SEEMiS team to re-establish back-ups etc but this was huge issue for us to manage. Six schools in Scotland were effected in the same way. Despite a massive amount of work over the summer there have been a small number of bugs still evident in the system, so timetables are being produced with blanks. The system doesn’t allow you to enter “vacancy” or the name of a teacher recruited but not yet formally on the school roll. In addition to this, a large number of pupils have decided to change levels or subjects as a result of their exam results which has made the situation more complicated than usual due to the system glitches. Mel Wilson, who has taken up post from Lee Menzies, has been working tirelessly with the new administration assistant and co-ordinator to resolve the situation. It appears that all glitches are now out of the system but both the school and the authority will be monitoring this carefully. SEEMiS are scrutinising their provision carefully and are working alongside the school to analyse the entire system. As a result of this almost unheard of complication, the school has altered their timelines and processes for the coming year so this problem will not recur. None of our hearts would take it!

**Improvement Plan** - Learning and Teaching is at the heart of the school improvement plan and the Learning and Teaching Expectations have been launched this term. Pauline Fraser, DHT has been leading on the development of this strategy over the last session. A consultation process was undertaken involving all pupils and staff. Staff, school and House Councils were given an opportunity to add or remove clauses. A similar consultation process was held with all pupils via assemblies and class representatives. The agreed Learning and Teaching Expectations have been produced onto posters. These are displayed in every teaching area and they will be included in the next version of the Homework Planner. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are explained by teachers at the beginning of each lesson.

**New School** – Linda has attended initial meetings to discuss how the space for the new building will be utilised and she plans to visit other new build schools to learn from their experiences. The agreement on the funding of the project is still being discussed.

**Secretary’s Report** – N/A

**Treasurer’s Report** – Attached – closing balance - £1696.69

**Review of Constitution** – It was decided that this would be reviewed by everyone before the next meeting and comments should be forwarded to the Chair. Neil proposed that consideration be given to introducing the role of Vice-Chair and this will be discussed further at the next meeting. It was decided to ask everyone around the table if they would like to be elected as members of the Parent Council. Only parents elected from the Parent Forum to the Parent Council are entitled to cast a vote on issues discussed at Parent Council meetings. No limit has been set on the number of people who can be elected to the PC and this would mean that anyone who would like to join will be able to add their names to the list at a future meeting. Those that agreed to volunteer for this role were - Samantha Tribe, Valerie Napier, Sam Grant, Shona Strachan, Elizabeth Watt, Fergus Boyle and Tracey Skene. The School House Captains and Vice House Captains will be co-opted onto the PC to report the pupils’ perspective as agreed at the School Council. The local Councillor will also be co-opted onto the Council and invited along to each PC meeting.

**AOCB**

**Home Economics – National 5 Attainment** – Candidates did not achieve the results they expected and the results of some of the assessment information the pupils had achieved in school bore little correlation to the final results they achieved. The school have been analysing all available data and in dialogue with the SQA. Verification visits had taken place during the course delivery and the assessment and delivery standards of the Units sampled were concordant with national standards. There is no ‘appeal’ system any more but there is a post results service. Mrs Fraser, Depute and SQA co-ordinator confirmed that has been made use of where the criteria have been met but results will not be known for a few weeks. A request was made to determine if results across Aberdeenshire were similar. Linda confirmed that initial analysis at school level and in her meeting with Head of Secondary Schools revealed there had been no emerging pattern of results in this course being problematic across Aberdeenshire. Headteachers and officers are still reviewing incoming data and she will continue with the investigation into the possible reasons behind this disappointing course result. Secondary Headteachers meet on a regular basis and share information, pooling resources where necessary. Linda confirmed she would be raising this again in the meeting the following day. The teacher, Faculty and School are determined to resolve this issue and ensure that it is rectified. Once the school has completed its analysis aletter will be issued to parents to explain the outcome of these investigations.

**Tracking & Monitoring & Attainment** – this will be a topic for discussion at a future PC committee meeting.

**Website** – Pauline Fraser is about to start the process of improving the information available on the website and will also receive assistance from the Council. Daily Bulletins and information on extra-curricular opportunities at lunchtime and after school will be added.

**Funding** – Discussion on seeking alternative forms of funding from local and national organisations to assist with the purchase of specific items or support for particular initiatives. Suggestion made to complete an application form for funding from the Garioch Charities Shop to support the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Other funds could be obtained through “Grants for School” - [www.grants4schools.info/](http://www.grants4schools.info/) .

**Meal Ticket prices** – increase in cost could have been better notified by the catering service as there had been some confusion over increase in costs at the start of term.

**Telephone numbers from school** – There has been a problem with the call forwarding system as it has caused different numbers to be used by the school when calling out. This has been confusing for parents receiving calls but this issue has been resolved and only a single number will now be used by the school to contact parents.

**Clocks on corridors** – Could consideration be given to providing clocks at various points around the school estate as not every child wears a watch? Following discussion, it was agreed that the five minute warning bell would be a more effective timekeeping tool.

**Careers advice** - Ruth Berry available at lunchtimes in library representing World of Work

**Developing Young Workforce** – Elizabeth gave a brief update on an event she attended when representing the Scottish Parent Teacher Council - [www.sptc.info/](http://www.sptc.info/) - at the AECC recently. You can find out more about the initiative here - [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/dyw/](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/dyw/) .The aim of the initiative is to ensure that all young people leave school and go onto a positive destination ie further education, to begin an apprenticeship, to a permanent job etc. as there are many pathways to success. Mel Wilson is co-ordinating the school’s response to this strategy and consideration is being given to presenting more information to parents at an Open Evening where this initiative could be explained more fully in addition to the Career Ready Programme. Consideration could also be given to creating a direct link between those companies invited along to Careers Evenings and the opportunities identified in different business sectors in this region through the Regional Skills Assessments and the Skills Investment Plans.

**Date of the next meeting** – Thursday 19th November

Neil thanked everyone for their contributions and the meeting closed at 9pm.