

Dalry School Council

Annual General Meeting - 12th November 2020 (Zoom)

Present: Ian Johnston (Chair), Sarah Ade (Primary sub-group chair),
Stewart Gibson, Anne McEwan
In attendance: Mr Smith, Mrs Gillies, Mr Scrimshaw
Apologies noted: Kevin Wilson-Smith, Claire Johnston

1. Minutes of previous AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM, held on Thursday 7th November 2019, were circulated previously. Acceptance was proposed by IJ, seconded by SA and accepted nem con..

2. Membership

IJ, SA, SG are all happy to continue as members. Since nothing has been heard to the contrary, it is presumed that Lorraine Ishak, Jane McQueen and CJ are also happy to continue.

Andrea Ramsey resigned membership when her son left Dalry Secondary at the end of 2019/20. The parent council is deeply grateful to her for her service over the years, including time as Chair.

3. Office bearers

IJ expressed willingness to serve as chair for one more year, since his son leaves the school at the end of 2021/22. Nobody else expressed any interest in the role, so IJ was reappointed.

SA was confirmed as Chair of the Primary sub-group for another year.

4. Chair's Report

Despite a strong start, with the highest PC membership in years, it has proved impossible to hold business meetings during the year. One planned for January 2020 was postponed to allow the HMIE inspection report for the secondary to arrive and had to be cancelled because of the COVID-19 lockdown. An online meeting tentatively planned for May/June never took place because the rate of change in government and council policy made it impossible to have any firm basis for discussions. We will hold further meetings by Zoom until face-to-face becomes a possibility again.

The chair has been deluged with information from DGC, often with a request to pass it onto parents. Since - like all other PCs - we have no list of parents and their contact details, he has suggested vigorously to DGC that, as they have these contact details, they should be responsible for sending out important information directly.

Overall the Chair has found the council attitude to PCs to be grudging, unhelpful and penny-pinching. The Dumfries and Galloway Parent and Carer Forum (DGPCF) which is, despite its name, a forum for PC chairs, has been far more helpful and useful.

The chair looks forward to rebuilding and expanding the work of the PC when some semblance of normality returns.

At this point the AGM ended.

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Business Meeting - 12th November 2020 (Zoom)

Present: Ian Johnston (Chair), Sarah Ade (Primary sub-group chair),
Stewart Gibson

In attendance: Mr Smith, Mrs Gillies, Mr Scrimshaw

Apologies noted: Kevin Wilson-Smith, Claire Johnston

1. Primary Report (Mr Scrimshaw)

Current staffing: Julie Moore (nursery manager); Yvonne Peacock and Chrissy Rob? (nursery nurses); Miss Sey (P1/2); Mrs Muir (P3/4/5); Miss Shields (P6/7); Mrs Rothwell, Miss Harper, Mrs Newbery (LSAs).

Numbers are healthy, with 58 in the primary and 11 in the nursery. The Primary 6/7 is at the permitted limit for composite classes, so any arrivals in either year will necessitate a reconfiguration.

A lot of changes had to be made for the autumn return to school, but things are settling down now, and the children are coping well and making good progress in rebuilding the school community.

Indoors PE is now allowed again and, with risk assessment, started this week. The end room, previously a storage space/ nurture room has been rebuilt as lunch room for nursery children.

Outside the poly-tunnel has gone, replaced by a new shed. A new trimtrail has been installed with funding from Friends of Dalry School (FODS), and a traversing wall funded mainly by parent Nick Pugh is proving very popular.

Support from parents throughout the COVID crisis has been absolutely overwhelming.

Question from K W-S (via SA): *Any chance of a soft start/finish to enable nursery/primary to start or end together? Staggered timings are difficult for parents who have to collect children from both settings, particularly in bad weather.*

This is difficult because of the different hours for the two setting. Mr Scrimshaw will consult with the education officer and early years team to find out if anything can be done

2 Secondary Report (Mr Smith)

The full report is online at the secondary school website (www.dalrysecondary.info). Chair's selected highlights :

Mr McFarlane has stepped down as PS support. Mrs Atchison and Mr Fleming will job share the role - details are yet to be settled. A youth worker is in school to offer emotional support and practical support on Mondays.

The SQA accepted school assessments in lieu of exams with very few changes. Following the HMIE inspection early in the year there is a focus on developing monitoring/tracking and keeping the pace of learning up across all subjects as well as recovering from the disruption of COVID-19.

Heidi Bartholemew has left after many years in her admin support role and Kirsty Kay has taken over.

The current role is 38 with 9 starters in S1. Mr Scrimshaw added that there are 14 in P7 at Dalry, and 6 Kells and he expects most to transfer to Dalry Secondary, so the outlook for P1 in 2021/22 is cautiously good.

Comment from Chair: *As an academic at the Open University, he found the speed of transition to online teaching and the quality of provision very impressive.*

Comment from SG: *All parents found it seamless.*

Question from Chair: *What are the plans for parents evenings*

An alternative to traditional parents evenings is shortly to be tried at CDHS, using a mixture of written report and telephone contact opportunities. A system based on that will be used at Dalry Secondary, though the small size of the school may make it simpler.

(Mr Scrimshaw) At the primary a proforma is being used to report on general issues - settling in, well-being and so on - with the possibility of telephone discussions though having only one outside line makes this tricky.

3 AOCB

Brochures: COVID-19 halted the distribution of the secondary brochure produced by SA last year. Mr Scrimshaw is happy to distribute them to P7 parents at Dalry and Kells primaries. The Chair met Gillian Brydson last spring and she agreed that primary school sin the CDHS catchment area could distribute them if the PCs approved, so he will renew discussions with the PCs at Crossmichael, Hardgate, Springholm and Castle Douglas primaries.

4. Date of next meeting

Thursday 10th December at 7pm, by Zoom.