



Hermitage Academy Parent Council AGM  
7 September 2020  
Zoom 7pm-8pm

**Attending**

HAPC:		Year Rep	
Kathleen Daly Vice Chair	KD		X
Elizabeth Lambert, Secretary	EL		X
Stella Kinloch, Treasurer	SK		X
Jo Gaughan	JO	S2	X
Nanette Clark	NC	S3	X
Claire Walker	CW	S5	X
Tracey Niblock	TN	S2	X
Thomas Dennett	TD	S1	X
Philip Hartley	PH	S1	X
Lisa Johnstone	LJ	S1	X
Robert Williamson, HT	RW		X

Agenda Item	Actions
<p><b>1. Welcome &amp; Apologies</b> The meeting was opened by KD on behalf of the Chair DH (apologies )</p>	
<p><b>2. Chairperson's Report</b> Appendix A</p>	
<p><b>3. Treasurer's Report</b> As 2019</p>	
<p><b>4. Nomination and Election of Office Bearers</b> Chairperson – Lisa Johnstone N.JG S. TN Vice-Chairperson – Thomas Dennett N. EL S. NC Treasurer – Philip Hartley N KD S CW Secretary - Elizabeth Lambert N KD. S. SK</p> <p><b>5. Nominations were taken for year reps and there being no objections were elected as follows:</b>  <b>S1 Ruth Munro/Angela Bakker</b>  <b>S2 Philip Hartley /Thomas Dennett/Lois Smith</b>  <b>S3 Joanne Gaughan/Tracey Niblock/Carla Dobbin</b>  <b>S4 Elizabeth Lambert/Nanette Clark</b>  <b>S5 Lisa Johnstone/Kathleen Daly</b>  <b>S6 Claire Walker</b></p>	
<p><b>6. AOB</b> Thanks were expressed by LJ on behalf of the committee to Donna Hicks for the significant contribution she had made during her time as chair. Also to the other members who had left Stella Kinloch, Val Reynard and Sue McCallum for all they had done to bring about improvements to the school under very challenging conditions. I hope we (the new committee) will carry on the good work they started. I looked forward to working with the new members.</p>	

## Chairperson's Report

I was delighted to be voted in as Chair of the Parent Council in September 2019 having been a member of the PC for the previous 3 years. Looking back on those years Hermitage Academy has seen considerable positive change, and much of this was, in part due to the strength of the Parent voice. I've always been keen to look forward to our next goals and challenges, but sometimes you need to look back just to see how far we've actually come. Four years ago, Hermitage Academy pupils were not taught national 5 courses. Instead, the 2 year Higher model, which was unpopular with the majority of pupils and parents, was in place. Some changes followed with National 5 exams being introduced but only a maximum of 6 subjects could be studied. Most schools in Scotland offered 7 subjects.

The arrival of Mr Williamson in 2017 brought a sense of hope that further change would be possible. Many improvements have been made since then, but the main changes were around the curriculum and the increase to 7 National 5 courses in S4. These changes have no doubt been challenging for the teaching staff and we acknowledge the invaluable role they've played in making this work.

The review of i-time saw a further change to the curriculum and the more recent move towards the house system has been welcomed as a positive development for the school. The PC would like to recognise the roles Mr Hotchkiss and MS Kennedy have played in this and are grateful for their efforts.

From August 2019 to Feb, our main focus was on two work streams that had been identified as key priorities' from the parent

The first working group was around the theme of communication and was made up of representatives from the PC along with Mr Munro, Depute HT and Rachel from the school office. A strategy was formed and work progressed quickly. We looked at how best we could support the school in their communication strategies. The first improvement to come from this was the acceptance and use of the Xpressions app as the main way of communicating key information to parents. This work is still ongoing and suggests from Parents are most welcome.

The second working group was looking at the use of the formal library space in the school. The PC had various ideas of how this space could be used and the Working Group met a few times with Mrs Muir, Depute HT, to take forward ideas. Not much progress was made during these months and this piece of work is still outstanding. Next year's committee will need to think about how they take this forward.

March 2020 arrived and we found ourselves in the most strange of circumstances with schools closing their doors due to COVID 19. The workstreams that I just mentioned ground to a halt. Mr Williamson continued to communicate regularly with the PC allowing us to be better informed to answer questions and concerns raised by the Parent Forum. Home learning became a new and probably not very welcome concept to us all. It was particularly challenging for our young people who were used to being in social groupings for learning. I was particularly impressed by the teachers who took the time to video record lessons or talk through PowerPoint presentations rather than just posting them in Google Classroom. There were a few examples of teachers using Google Meets to interact with pupils which was appreciated.

The SQA exams this year were cancelled so our pupils were awarded results in accordance with Teacher's predicted grades. This was a very unsettling time for pupils and parents. Sadly, our new S1s missed out on the transition days at HA however it was generally felt by

parents that the transition material and videos, prepared by Mr Munro and others, was of a high standard and beneficial to pupils and parents.

During lockdown PC members supported by members of the Parents Forum, were involved in packing food parcels for vulnerable and shielding members of our community. Hours of voluntary work went into this and I'd really like to thank everyone involved

The next challenge was around blended learning and what the new term would look like in August. Mr Williamson regularly communicated with the PC who were invited to look at the new "socially distant" set-up. Following the announcement from Deputy First Minister John Swinney that schools should re-open in August as normal, blended learning was put on the back-burner.

These challenges around the current Covid situation remain. The situation is subject to change. How HA responds is the bit we are most interested in as we want the best for our Children and our School.

Just at the point when I didn't think that the situation could get any worse Mr Williamson announced his plan to retire at the end of 2020. One thing is for sure, he'll never forget his last year in the job. I know I speak for the PC when I say it has been a pleasure working with Mr Williamson. He has made a significant, positive contribution in the time he has been at HA and we are all very sorry to see him go. We wish him the very best for his retirement.

I am stepping down as Chair of the PC as are some of the other committee members I think it would be great to encourage new people to take on some of the roles. I'd like to thank this year's PC for their hard work and support particularly Kathleen, Elizabeth and Stella. I wish the new committee the very best of luck.

Thank you and best wishes, Donna Hicks.