



**Islay High School
Parent Council
Minutes of meeting held on 29th April 2015
6.30pm**

1. Present: Ailsa Hayes, Mairi McArthur, Iain Hutchison, Cammie Rae, Jess McMillan, Sheila Scott, Stephen Harrison, Janice Carmichael (minutes)

Apologies: Maggie McLellan, Claire Fletcher, Jimmy McCalman

2. Minutes from previous meeting were previously circulated by

e-mail as quite a large document. Minutes were approved by all in attendance.

3. All read through the document provided by AMK. AMK requested that this document is not widely circulated. This is a summary paper to allow further consideration of the proposed Shared Headship and AMK has offered to attend another meeting, if required, to continue the discussion.

Everyone felt we still needed more clarification on the following areas of the document;

1.2 “The appointment of one head teacher responsible for more than one school is reducing duplication and making increasingly effective use of scarce resources and time” - AH - this sounds like the driver is a cost cutting exercise, despite assurances that this was not the case.

1.3 “The Shared Headship policy for Argyll and Bute has taken the learning from Shared Headships arrangements currently in place within the authority as well as those of other authorities across Scotland, who have adopted a similar model. This formally agreed policy allows Education Services to consider the appropriateness of a Shared Headship when a head teacher vacancy arises in any Argyll & Bute schools. The Executive Director of Community Services, on the professional advice from the Head of Education will decide if creating a Shared Headship is more beneficial than advertising for a stand-alone head teacher.”

– however, we are not aware of any other schools in ABC that have a shared head for Primary School and High School.

<insert> communication received from Vice Chair of National Parent Forum post meeting,

I am doing a bit of digging on your behalf and have found a shared head of secondary and primary schools to be fairly uncommon, apart from all through schools (where the full primary progresses to the secondary) and some specialised schools like the Glasgow Gaelic school. It is also quite common in the independent sector but I wouldn't be comfortable using them as an example as they are an entirely different set up. I will keep on with this....

There are a handful of “Joint Campus” but as AMK was at pains to point out, the council are not offering a new build joint campus, just a shared head between two schools. This does not require the same degree of consultation as a Joint Campus. It can only be concluded that the policy to which AMK refers is actually not applicable in our case. This document also states that the Executive Director and Head of Education will decide if creating a Shared Headship is more beneficial. Does this mean the Parents and Parent Council have no say – the decision will be taken away from us?

1.4 Experience from the existing Shared Headship arrangements confirms five key reasons for the continued development of Shared Headships in Argyll and Bute. The feedback from these arrangements is as follows:

- The overall quality of educational experience for learners is positive; including joint learning, enhanced curriculum opportunities and opportunities to interact with peer group pupils;
- Enhance the sustainability and viability of schools;
- Identified pressures associated with undertaking a teaching head teacher role in a small school;
- Improved access to the head teacher for staff and parents, and
- Recruitment difficulties, both within Argyll & Bute and Nationally.

Again, shared headships over primary schools, not high/primary combination. Recruitment difficulties? They have not yet advertised the post of Bowmore Primary School HT so how can they predict this? The post has been vacant since February 2015 and covered by an Acting Head.

AH shared an email from Clare Fletcher “Jura & Keills have just received 11 applicants for the Joint head teacher post after a considerable Facebook campaign and a free advert in TES....Argyll & Bute only use ‘myjobscotland’ for adverts. They need to think out of the box when it comes to recruiting”

2.0 School Role and staffing – The management team looks more like that for a joint campus. There is less staff for Bowmore Primary although they are only down by 2 pupils. 7.97 FTE to 6.53 FTE – why? There is also no

principle teacher. Would the DHT for the Primary School be teaching? If so, would the management duties be removed for them? Too much for DHT.

3.2 A proposed management team structure would be as follows:

- **DHT Secondary** – Senior Phase S4/6 and other duties
- **DHT Secondary/ Transition** – Broad General Education P7/S3 and other duties
- **DHT Primary/Pre5** – Pre 5 and Primary and other duties
- **1 PT Gaelic Education** (3- 18)
- **10 Secondary PT** as at present however this may be reviewed dependent on changing school roll
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Document states - 1 PT for Gaelic Education (3-18) This is not possible unless a Joint Campus. Clarification required on this.

We are not familiar with the Scales given for staff so it is difficult to compare them from 2014/15 to the 2015/16 proposed structure.

This information should be available online or from AMK and can be discussed at the next meeting.

What is the reason for the unfavourable pay scale for the DHT job in the primary compared to those in the secondary? The DHT duties are not clear on this document. Confusion by the wording of DHT Secondary/transition – broad general education P.7/S3 and other duties (is this only during transition or would P.7 be split from primary – part of second level, is this possible?)

DHT Primary – Pre 5 and Primary and other duties (Is this all primary classes, P.7 included)

1 PT for Gaelic Education 3-18 (is this possible if not joint campus – legalities change)

10 Secondary PT – as at present but this may be reviewed dependant on changing school role. Clarification required on the 10 PT's.

Pre 5 – total staffing to be confirmed – why is this not decided?

It seems strange that HMIE have not been consulted when the Primary School have been given a number of areas to improve on.

It also seems that our children's education is being jeopardised as this has not been tried anywhere else – we are guinea pigs.

Bowmore Primary School have lost 1 full time HT and 1 principal teacher and total staffing has been greatly reduced. This will surely have a negative effect on children's education. Bad report from HMIE.

4.0 Benefits – Educational benefits

4.1 Educational Benefits

- A cohesive curriculum from 3- 18 can be put in place to enhance learning at all stages;
- The curriculum can be supported by enhanced specialism of staff; Ensuring effective transition processes for all learners, and
- More effective use of staff and ability to share expertise across 3- 18 learning community.

4.2 Benefits for pupils

- Pupils will access a more cohesive 3-18 curriculum which will be managed by the Shared Head Teacher;
- The pupils in the Primary School will be able to access specialist teachers in some subject areas, and
- Transition will be enhanced from Pre 5 through to S6.

4.3 Benefits for parents

- Access to non class committed Head Teacher;
- Enhanced transition for children;
- Joint school activities can be arranged, and
- Further community involvement.

Most of these benefits are already in place. The curriculum is currently in place for 3 – 18 years, IHS teachers cannot teach primary school children at present and this will remain the same unless teachers with dual teaching qualifications are recruited. The document does not highlight many benefits for Education, Parents, or Pupils and those it does highlight, we feel, many are already in place.

The benefits for teachers are – reduce duplication of management duties leading to more effective use of resources and time, transition greater enhanced, teachers develop their skills across 3 – 18 yrs work and be involved in collegiate activities. Conflicting information from previous meeting (not able to teach unless dual registration) and if required, surely this is something that can be done at present. The teachers have very little spare time on their timetable to fit all this in and it is unlikely that they would share classes often. Again, poses a problem with other primary schools being left out.

The benefits for the Education Service – overcomes difficulties with recruitment and retention, the policy ensures that it can provide a model of headship fit for the 21st century, high quality of education and **retain local community schools**. Surely, this can all be achieved with one HT for Primary and one HT for Secondary. Previous HT of primary school had many

years' service, so no problem with retention there and this post has not been advertised so no evidence of difficulty in recruitment.

Tobermory Joint Campus – extra opportunities for Primary here and does not cause any problems with other Primary Schools in area.

Rothsay – Parents are worried that they are not retaining staff and families are leaving.

The HT resigned recently but this was for personal reasons.

The Primary School scales are very poor – do they have to retain salaries, if change to job description. Conserved salaries and number of years.

Job Adverts should be more widely advertised – why just on Job Scotland?

National Parent Forum for Scotland – Ailsa will contact them for advice as we feel we have a duty to share all information with others. We think this document should be available for other parents as all children in Islay will eventually be attending this Secondary School.

Two parent council members would be on the interview panel and could ensure the HT has the best interest of both schools. Everyone is worried that the Primary School would be left to it and that causes great concerns, especially in light of the bad review recently.

Jess will do a letter to parents giving them a brief update.

Ailsa will contact AMK asking for another meeting stressing once again that this should be open to all parents.

All members of the parent councils expressed the frustration felt at the lack of information being provided and the fact that the authority will not accept that this consultation should be open to all parents on Islay and Jura as all will be affected by the proposal.

Actions:

Jess will do a letter to parents giving them a brief update.

Ailsa will contact AMK asking for another meeting stressing once again that this should be open to all parents.

The following questions to be raised at the next meeting with AMK -

1. Will the DHT with overall responsibility for two nurseries, 65 English stream and 27 Gaelic stream pupils be expected to teach while undertaking all the day-to-day management work in a busy primary school?
2. What is the reason for the unfavourable pay scale for the DHT job in the primary compared to those in the secondary?
3. What has happened to the Principal Teacher post in the primary school? (Much smaller schools than Bowmore Primary have a Principal Teacher in place to support with management)
4. What is the reason for the sharp drop in staffing for the primary school (7.97FTE down to 6.53FTE for a drop of only 2 pupils) Will this drop affect the number of classes in the school?
5. Does the council believe that a drop in staffing numbers, at the same time as a cut in management, is helpful to the primary in the light of its recent unfavourable HMI inspection report and impending re-inspection? Are they not concerned about the effect of these cuts on the children's education and on staff morale?
6. The report states that Bowmore Primary School has had a vacancy for a Head Teacher since February 2015. Does the council accept that this delay has been caused by themselves as they have not even advertised to attempt to fill this post?
7. The report states that the council have had recruitment difficulties; however, a recent advertisement for a Head Teacher for Small Isles and Keills has, aided by a Facebook campaign by parents, attracted 11 applicants. Bowmore Primary Parent Council have already offered to help the council recruit a new Head Teacher in a similar way. Why has the council not even tried to recruit a Head Teacher for Bowmore Primary?
8. Can we see evidence for Shared Head Teacher recruitment and retention?
9. Why PT Gaelic Education (3 – 18) only 27 students in primary?
10. What would the management model look like if Primary and Head Teacher were recruited i.e SHT model was not adopted? Would there still be a reduction on staffing levels?
11. Can we see a list of other schools that have Shared Head for Primary and Secondary. The A&B Council Policy which is quoted in the document only seems to cover Primary Schools – is the policy relevant for this situation?