



PHS Parent Council 15 September 2025 AGM (In person)

Attendees

Ellie Johnstone, PC Chair (Chair)
Kevin Ryalls, Head Teacher (HT)
David Flynn, Treasurer, FoPHS

Claire Barrett, PC Secretary
Gillian Moran, Events Coordinator

15 parents joined the Parent Council meeting. ***Parent comments and questions are shown in bold italics with answers given below.*** **Actions are in red** and action tracker is at the end of these minutes.

Welcome, Minutes and Actions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Tristan Compton, Dawn Johnstone, Connie Flynn, Kirsty Peebles. The Chair noted that Dawn Johnstone is stepping down as Comms Lead. The Chair expressed our thanks to Dawn who contributed a lot of time and effort to the role over recent years.

Two teachers joined the meeting to cover the two lowest scoring areas from the recent inspection, Parent Leadership and Family Learning. Their slides are included in full at the end of these minutes; a summary is below.

Parent Leadership, Family Support - Neil Hattie (Modern Studies & History Teacher)

The question “The school gives me advice on how to support my child’s learning at home” scored low in the inspection (2.57% strongly agree). It improved in the last inspection (6.60% strongly agree) but still less than half of all families (44%) strongly agree or agree with this statement. This matters because an engaged parental body leads to improvements in behaviour, attendance, confidence and attainment. The target is to raise this to 50% or higher.

Mr Hattie is examining how PHS can improve communication between the school and families:

- **What** is communicated (eg, key deadlines, assessments, expectations of learners),
- **How** it is communicated (eg one platform to communicate with learners and parents)
- **Capacity**, eg tackling barriers, better resources at home, opportunities for parents to be in school, etc.
- **Confidence** in resources we do have. Audit good practice. Crucially, one stop shop for home learning resources (most likely PHS website)

Next steps – feedback is requested from parents; a working group within school will be established; pupils, staff and the wider community will work together to find the best way forward.

Mr Hattie encouraged parents to provide feedback on the issue. A survey will be sent out via Groupcall and/or parents can get in touch directly with Mr Hattie (email: Gw20hattieneil@glow.sch.uk)

Parent Leadership, Family Learning - Katie Walling (Biology Teacher)

The second area of parent leadership looked at the question “The school organises activities where my child and I can learn together”. This scored 0.86% strongly agree in Oct 23, increasing to 1.42% in the latest inspection report.

Dr Walling outlined that we know that working collaboratively with families works. With this in mind, a pilot will be organised where parents and pupils can work together to learn a new skill. Targeted at S1 on 28 January 2026, one parent, one child, with a choice of session, eg cooking, first aid, bike maintenance, etc. The session does not need to be an academic activity, it could be barrista training, dancing or something just for fun.

Dr Walling explained that lots of other schools do something like this. The benefits are breaking down negative attitudes to school, ‘learning families’ improves family relationships, opportunities for fun, parent wellbeing, and engaging with young people around learning. This will be aided by targeted communications to families of learners likely to being PHS lowest 20%.

Dr Walling invited ideas from parents on activities that would be suitable for the sessions, and thoughts on how to encourage participation so that nearly all S1 parents will come along.

Mr Hattie and Mrs Walling were thanked by the HT for covering these topics. **Parents are asked to get in touch with the school with any further ideas** (<mailto:peebleshs@scotborders.gov.uk>)

Headteacher's Update (see slides at end of minutes)

School Vision & Values

The new school vision has been agreed as: One Peebles: our community where we belong, grow and achieve

The new school values have been agreed as: Work hard: Show kindness; Contribute.

The Headteacher and SLT will be holding assemblies and embedding these values to really improve the school through them.

There was a discussion about merits – they have been used patchily in the past - these are being worked on and formalised going forward.

The school is working on a way to measure the impact of the vision and values.

Uniform

There has been a great start and the feedback is that the school is better for it. Key is now to stick with it and keep going.

Exam Results

PHS had a very strong set of results. The Headteacher stressed that results don't define the school or the pupils. However notable positives include very strong S5 attainment and high progression rates from National 5 to Higher and from Higher to Advanced Higher.

However, there are also areas that need attention, such as improving attainment for the lowest attaining 20%, and adding value in S5/6.

The SLT feel they know the students much better now – those who are very strong and those who need a lot more help. Attainment reviews take place (Mr Lee), with a view to making things more consistent. Great progress has been made in a range of courses, through knowing the young people better.

Re the Attainment review spreadsheet - is this just for national qualifications or internal assessments too?

Internal assessments are kept in department but we know from S1 who's likely to need extra help and who's likely to perform really well. This relates to the discussion earlier – what Mr Hattie is working on, getting parents involved in this.

How are pupils assessed during the year? Other than prelims etc?

This varies by subject – mostly a test at the end of a block of learning. Tests are one thing but teachers are assessing all the time by giving pupils opportunities to show what they know.

New School

- Parent & pupil group tour this Friday (19 Sept).
- Tues 22nd Sept to look at vision and values and branding
- Mid-November date tbc – should get 6 weeks' notice. There will be 2 extra days off school.
- Saturday 25 Oct for old school tour TBC
- 13 December for new school tour TBC

There was a discussion about other aspects of the new school:

- Staff very excited about the new school
- Culture and ethos. There is a big new staff room (currently don't have this).
- Will be ready for prelims
- Study periods will be in the new assembly space. This space (auditorium) takes 100 but there is another space at the back of the school
- Move to one morning break instead of the current two. This will work better for new school with open areas but may cause longer queues. Will talk about this.
- All pupil support in one corner of the school. The Glen, Support for Learning, Pastoral, the PSAs and Connect will all be together. The nurture room is like a living room, kitchen, soft seating etc. to learn now to eat and be together.
- A parent made the point that SBC should inform parents that all the left over equipment will be recycled
- School will still try to do an auction for any items suitable but the timing might be difficult
- Parents made points about speed of contractors driving out of car park at 5pm and lack of signage for disabled spaces (these have moved and are not as visible)
- Parents nights for S3, S2, S1. Once the move date is fixed these will be decided. Senior ones will be in the new school.
- Could Community help with the move? HT will ask staff if they would like any help with packing... Or if parents can help with navigating around the school, etc.

- Toilets – there will be 10 toilet corridor blocks: probably 4 girls, 4 boys, 1 staff/visitors and 1 gender-neutral but SBC will confirm if this is ok. There is CCTV in each toilet corridor.
- S6 will have library and reading room area at the top/back. Other than that pupils can use any space/any toilet area.

Appointment of Parent Council Post Holders

The following roles were agreed:

Role	Nomination	Nominated by	Seconded by
Chair	Ellie Johnstone	Claire Barrett	David Flynn
Vice Chair	Tristan Compton	Ellie Johnstone	Gillian Moran
Secretary	Claire Barrett	Rachel Beatton	Helen Garrison
Comms Lead	Heather Ling	Ellie Johnstone	Claire Barrett
Events Coordinator	Gillian Moran	Ellie Johnstone	Claire Barrett

Gillian Foley volunteered to be a generic post holder.

Friends of PHS (FoPHS)

David Flynn (Treasurer) covered FoPHS – the fundraising charity arm of the Parent Council.

The charity provides funding to support school activities, for resources and equipment not provided by council budgets. It also provides the Opportunity Pot which funds sending pupils on trips (whose families cannot afford to do this) to provide equity for pupils. There is a bid process twice per year for teachers to bid for what they want from the charity. Trustees consider these bids and make decisions on them. They also look at external grants to fulfil bids.

The main fundraiser is the PHS Lottery – there are 110 members currently. It’s £6 per ticket, with a quarterly draw to win prizes. Email FriendsofPHS@outlook.com to join.

There are currently five trustees (Headteacher Kevin Ryalls and 4 parents), with two spaces vacant. If you wish to become a trustee you just have to be a parent of a PHS pupil. Meetings are 4 times per year. The Secretary is moving on so the charity will be looking for a new secretary. It just involves taking minutes and putting them on the website. Please get in touch if interested.

AOCB

A number of items were brought up, some were responded to and some noted by the Headteacher:

Has there been progress on risers for iPads?

IT equipment – keyboards & mice in Computing Science are not working well and should be replaced

There are no lockers in the new school – we know there is no space but there is a risk of carrying heavy bags all day

HT responded that pupils can leave items in PE and music, otherwise talk to pastoral. There are always solutions and new ways of working will have to be found in the new school.

What will happen with deposits for lockers/keys?

HT to check

School calendar events not taking place – eg Careers Fair was scheduled for November – need to start planning again so things don’t ‘drop off’ the calendar

What is the planning for 7 x Nat5s?

Teachers have time to start planning for this, part of S1-3 planning to get ready for this.

Vaping on Bonnington Road

HT responded that letters go home when they are caught. Vapes are confiscated and returned to parents. HT and colleagues are out there a lot.

Could Online resources for Physics and Maths please be shared with all automatically – good policy across all departments.

HT will look into this.

N4 graphics – has been a lack of teachers so they have been in assembly hall a lot.

Teacher is back on a phased return so it will get better.

What shoes should pupils wear for PE?

Trainers or any change of shoe is acceptable.

A Parent expressed their good impression of the Support for Learning department during staff absence.

The meeting closed at: 9pm

Next Meeting: 22 October

1. PARENT LEADERSHIP - Mr Hattie



1.3 Parent Leadership

Neil Hattie
Modern Studies and History
Gw20hattieneil@glow.sch.uk



Q18 – “The school gives me advice on how to support my child’s learning at home.”

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don’t Know
Q18. (Oct 23)	2.58%	20.06%	42.12%	25.50%	7.16%
Q18. (Dec 24)	6.60%	37.26%	37.26%	9.43%	7.55%

Problem:

Less than half of families (44%) strongly agree or agree

Why does this matter?

Research evidence shows us that having an engaged parental body, that is willing and able to support their young person’s learning has a range of positive benefits. These include but are not limited to;

- ✓ Improved behaviour
- ✓ Improved attendance
- ✓ Improved confidence
- ✓ Improved attainment



85% of parents want to play an active role in their child’s education. This figure has remained high across all past research and suggests parents’ interest in meaningful participation with their child’s schooling is near universal. **This figure is likely to be higher in PHS.**

How can we fix the problem?

How can we improve **communication** between school and families?

- Communicating key deadlines, assessments and SQA coursework.
- Communicating expectations of learners in specific courses.
- Uniformed approach to communication, where possible.
- Subjects using the same platform to communicate with learners and parents.



How can we fix the problem?

How can we improve **capacity** so that parents who are willing to support **can** support?

- Tackling barriers that exist for some families. Skills/knowledge.
- Promote key terms and language within subject.
- Better resources for at home learning, guides, videos etc.
- More opportunities for parents to be in the school, engaging with staff.
- S6 Digital Ambassadors to host technology sessions.



How can we fix the problem?

How can we inspire **confidence** in our resources and strategies?

- Audit good practice within PHS.
- Promote key terms and language within subject.
- Better resources for at home learning, guides, videos etc.
- More opportunities for parents to be in the school, engaging with staff.
- **Crucially** create a 'one stop shop' for home learning resources. PHS Hub – **most likely PHS website**.



Next Steps

Survey parent body to establish views and preferences on;

- **communication** approaches
- **capacity** issues that prevent engagement
- **good practice** across the school to be emulated

Work in partnership with pupils, staff, wider community to identify best way forward and ensure effective engagement in young people's learning and improve communication between staff and families. **Find a way forward that works for all.**

Working group within the school to be established. Possibly extending to parents and families to be involved.

How do we know we've succeeded?

By June 2026:-

the percentage of PHS parents agreeing or strongly agreeing that "the school gives me advice on how to support my child's learning at home" will increase to 50%.



Any questions/comments

Neil Hattie
Modern Studies and History
Gw20hattieneil@glow.sch.uk

1.3 Parent Leadership

- 1. What is the problem?
- 2. Family Support (Neil Hattie)
- 3. Family Learning (Katie Walling)



1. What is the problem?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Family Support: Q18 – ““The school gives me advice on how to support my child's learning at home.”					
Q18. (Oct 23)	2.58%	20.06%	42.12%	25.50%	7.16%
Q18. (Dec 24)	6.60%	37.26%	37.26%	9.43%	7.55%
Family Learning: Q19 – “The school organises activities where my child and I can learn together.”					
Q19. (Oct 23)	0.86%	9.17%	42.98%	24.64%	18.91%
Q19. (Dec 24)	1.42%	14.62%	43.87%	14.62%	21.70%

1.3 Parent Leadership

Family Support (Neil Hattie)

Family Support - ensure that parents and carers feel more involved in the education of their young people by being able to find support and provide support.



1.3 Parent Leadership

Family Learning (Katie Walling)

Family learning - by way of a family learning pilot, empower parents and carers to support their child's learning, by increasing confidence, engagement, and the intergenerational transfer of skills from parent to child and child to parent.



1. What is the problem?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Family Support: Q18 – ““The school gives me advice on how to support my child's learning at home.”					
Q18. (Oct 23)	2.58%	20.06%	42.12%	25.50%	7.16%
Q18. (Dec 24)	6.60%	37.26%	37.26%	9.43%	7.55%
Family Learning: Q19 – “The school organises activities where my child and I can learn together.”					
Q19. (Oct 23)	0.86%	9.17%	42.98%	24.64%	18.91%
Q19. (Dec 24)	1.42%	14.62%	43.87%	14.62%	21.70%

Family Learning (Katie Walling)

We know...

Working with families should not be confused with ‘doing unto them’ but rather working collaboratively together ‘with them’.
(Nutbrown et al, 2015, p266; Harris and Goodall, 2007).



Family Learning (Katie Walling)

What can we do?

A ‘pilot’ S1 event in which there is an opportunity for **young people to lead and work with parents** in learning a new skill – digital skills, coding, cooking, first aid, storytelling, bike maintenance, horticulture, sports, sewing **in our new school setting**.

Date: Wednesday 28th January; one parent one child, choice of session



Family Learning (Katie Walling)

What benefits have come from similar programmes?

- improvements in family relationships
- “learning families”, in which both adults and children engage in learning and raise aspirations
- breaking down negative attitudes to school and giving parents confidence to re-engage with education.
- **An opportunity for fun, parent wellbeing and to engage with their young teenagers around learning**

Aided by targeted communication to families of learners likely to be in our lowest 20%



Family Learning (Katie Walling)

What do I need from the PTC?

- Ideas for which sessions might be welcomed/ you would enjoy
- Thoughts on how we can encourage participation



3. HEADTEACHER UPDATE

School vision

One Peebles: our community where we belong, grow and achieve.

School values

Work hard
Show kindness
Contribute



Work hard

- Do you know what you need to do to keep improving?
- Do you work the hardest on the things that make the biggest difference?
- Do you have high expectations of yourself especially when faced with challenges?



Show kindness

- Have you noticed when someone might need support and tried to help?
- Have you tried to help someone feel better?
- Have you tried to make others feel included and valued?



Contribute

- Do you add value to our school community?
- Do you bring a helpful and positive approach to everything you do?
- Do you help others to learn, grow and feel part of our community?



SQA positives:-

- We know our target groups better
- S5 attainment vert strong
- N5 to H positive progression 84%
- H to AH positive progression 75%

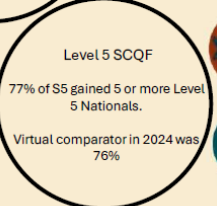
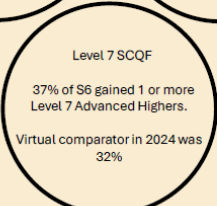
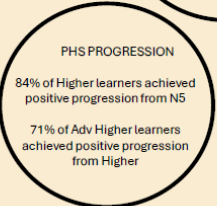
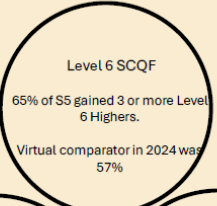
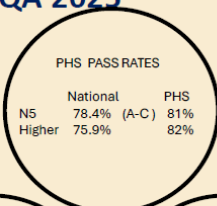


We need to keep working on:-

- 5@ for lowest attaining 20% in general
- Adding value in S5/6
- Attainment Reviews processes
- Making our systems have a more consistent impact



SQA 2025



Uniform

- Great start!



New school

- Parent and pupil group this Friday tbc
- Tuesday 22nd to look at vision and values and branding
- mid November move in
- 25 October for old school tour tbc
- 13 December for new school tour tbc



Please get in touch around any of the issues raised at phspc@outlook.com

Helpful Info/Reminders

Parent Council Meeting Dates for 2025/26	Post Holders
TBD in new session – the first meeting will be in August 2025. This will be the AGM and postholders will be agreed then.	Chair – Ellie Johnstone
	Vice Chair – Tristan Compton
	Secretary – Claire Barrett
	Communications Officer – Dawn Johnstone
	Event Coordinator – Gillian Moran
	Friends of Peebles High School SCIO representative
	Property Working Group Lead – Tristan Compton
	Taskforce Coordinator – post vacant

We welcome interested parents & carers on the Parent Council as general members or working group members. We simply ask that you try to attend meetings regularly. If you would like to be an ordinary member or join a specific working group, please email your details to: phspc@outlook.com

Any parent or carer interested in supporting the Friends of PHS charity with running fundraising activities should get in touch at <mailto:FriendsOfPHS@outlook.com>

Website:
Twitter:

[phsparents.org.uk](https://www.phsparents.org.uk)
[@PHSparents](https://twitter.com/PHSparents)

Facebook:
[@PeeblesHigh](https://www.facebook.com/PeeblesHigh)

PHS Parents – can contact us via Messenger

Parent Council Action tracker 2024/25

Meeting	Item/Issue	Action	Who	Update
Sept 25	Could Online resources for Physics and Maths please be shared with all automatically	HT to look into this	HT	
Sept 25	What will happen with deposits for lockers/keys when we move to the new school?	HT to check	HT	
Mar 25	University Aspirations Group – Medicine parent helper	HT to follow up with replacement for Medicine parent helper	HT	
Mar 25	PC Parent Survey questions	Tristan & Alex to consider questions for the PC parent survey and send to Chair and HT for review.	Tristan Compton/Alex Corbishley	
Mar 25	Duke of Edinburgh Awards presentation	HT to look into why these have not been presented to pupils	HT	
Feb 25	Fundraising (new school)	Bring back list of fundraising ideas (and helpers) to the next PC meeting for discussion.	PC	Meeting agreed for 2 April
Feb 25	Parent FAQs on new school and move	PC (Tristan/Ellie) to send Mr Ryalls the collated FAQs and comments from parents to form basis of communication to parents.	PC	
Nov 24	Smoking/vaping on school bus	Chair to pass this onto HT	HT	
Nov 24	Parent Council Survey	Chair & HT to discuss best timing for 2025 survey	Chair/HT	
Nov 24	Street lighting concern	Chair to contact SBC about faulty street lighting in Craigerne Lane and future plans for lighting around new school	PC Chair	
Nov 24	Career Pathways Resource	Career Pathways resource to be shared on the new school website under Curriculum and/or DYW	Mrs Boyd	Done?
Nov 24	Upcoming Further Inspection	Parent Council will share our enthusiasm for continuity of leadership and feed this into the inspection report/SBC	PC Chair	Done

June 24	Raising awareness of Uni aspirations group	Action: Dawn to send University aspirations letter to Kevin to send out to S4 – S6 parents to encourage uptake amongst that age group.	Dawn/Head	Done
June 24	Attendance at PC meetings. Is there another way we could meet digitally?	Action: Dawn to investigate another digital platform.	Dawn Johnstone	Done