



Minutes of Balwearie Parent/Carer Voice AGM

07/09/2026 at Balwearie HS

Present: Jo Mitchell (JM), Lorraine Inglis (co-chairs), Jane Gregson (treasurer), Catherine Lindow (CL) (secretary, minutes), Valerie Rowbotham, Ann Allan, Graeme Patullo (GP), Karen Bell, Kevin Garter, Bronwen Tutty, Alice Melvin (AMe).
From school: Ali Mitchell (AM) (Head), Ally Harlow (AH) (DHT), Taddie Chatikobo & Jack Yuill (School Captains)

Apologies: Cllr. Kathleen Leslie, Cllr. Julie McDougall, Laura Morris

Welcome and introductions	Jo Mitchell welcomed attendees Constitutional changes: Chairs Jo Mitchell and Lorraine Inglis were nominated by Catherine Lindow and seconded by Karen Bell Catherine Lindow was nominated as new secretary by Graeme Patullo and seconded by Kevin Carter Jane Gregson was nominated as new treasurer by Jo Mitchell and seconded by Lorraine Inglis Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
Matters arising	Bite Back 20/30: The organisation (who campaign against junk food sponsorship in schools) is now in direct contact with Zoe Farmer from the HE dept. Use of AI within the school: AH reported that the official guidance on AI is that it can be used as a stimulus but should not be used 'creatively or in marked content'. Further guidance from Qualifications Scotland is expected to be available in due course.

Matters arising
/cont.

Uniform: There has been some consultation on this. While uniform is one criterion on which pupils can be given 'demerits' it will never be a barrier to attendance. Students who have particular circumstances (eg. sensory or financial) can be awarded a digital 'uniform pass' to allow flexibility where appropriate. The new guidance suite holds a bank of pre-loved uniform items (alongside food and period products) which pupils can access. ('Cost of the School Day' bank). The school has offered an adapted uniform to encourage maximum take-up. Going forward, specific ties according to house and yeargroup may be adopted.

Demerits can be given for phone use, disrespect and uniform infringement among other things. Parents will be notified by text as part of the school alert system, the next step being a 'duty call' which will always be made if the young person has been removed from class.

Toilets: are spot cleaned during the school day, and if janitors are notified of specific problems. CCTV covers the general area and additional toilets are to be opened in future. The school is open to further solutions on the ongoing matter of toilet cubicle misuse. There are specific toilets which will always be available for young people who may need better access for medical reasons.

Homework: How can parents best support? AM pointed to various resources that are available to pupils & parents. The school website shows the different subject areas and directs pupils towards ACHIEVE resources which can be accessed at home & which supplement what might be available on TEAMS. ESCOIL and BBC are also signposted. JM recalled maths study support being available in the past, with senior pupils assisting more junior. Learning platform 'Showbie' will be available in future to pupils and includes a parent portal.

Matters arising /cont.	Buses: Concern raised over delays to school arrival when buses were late. AM reported that buses are run by local authority directly and school has little contact. There are various different bus companies involved, further complicating the picture. Teacher bids: These will re-open this term after fundraising paused for Polar Academy focus last term. PCV will liaise with AH. There was discussion of possibly creating a video with the assistance of pupils to demonstrate how money has been used in the past.
School captains	PCV members welcomed new school captains Taddie and Jack. TC and JY described their roles and how they hoped to provide a link between school and pupils. Recruitment for Pupil Voice is underway with each year group to be represented. House teams are also planned. During Pupil Voice focus week, Soc Ed classes are the focus of discussion with opportunities for all classes to feed back.
Co-Chairs' Report	Lottery funds - £10000 donated to Polar Academy last term. Teacher Bids now open for this academic session. Funding: We anticipate a grant of £20000 from the Community Growing Grant led by Suzanne Heggie (Pupil Support) assisted by PCV. PCV publicity: CL had run a table at the S1 Transition Evening in June. Thanks to the school for their support in printing materials for this. It was agreed that the Christmas Concert (16th December) would be a good target for further publicity with the Raffle being re-adopted by PCV and additional publicity around the Lottery. <i>Action: Members to liaise about running raffle/table and developing publicity by 16th Dec</i> A new Instagram account has been added to the PCV social media portfolio – also is on facebook and 'X'.

Co-Chairs' Report
/cont.

Revised Lottery team is in place. Lottery raises approx. £200/month split between school and prizes.

Treasurer's Report

Balwearie Parent & Carer Voice			
Treasurer summary for quarter to 31 July 2026			
Balance brought forward from 30 April 2026:			
Cash in hand:	Float	50.00	
Cash at bank:	Lottery account	41.84	
	Treasurer account	1,842.42	
			1,934.26
Income and expenditure for the quarter:			
Income:			
Lottery proceeds		596.00	
			596.00
Expenses:			
Polar Academy Payment		(1,000.00)	
Annual lottery licence			
Lottery prizes paid out*		(32.96)	
Bank charges		(25.50)	
			(1,058.46)
Closing balance at 31 July 2026			1,471.80
Represented by:			
Cash in hand	Float	50.00	
Cash at bank:	Lottery account	492.25	
	Treasurer account	929.55	
			1,471.80
			0.00
			0.00
*Total prizes payable in period			
Paid in May in relation to April draw		(32.96)	
May draw		(97.88)	
June draw		(96.88)	
July draw		(93.88)	
		(321.60)	
May/Jun/Jul prizes paid post 31/07		288.64	
Prizes donated to school			
		(32.96)	

Treasurer's Report

/cont.

At 6 September End-of-day the lottery account has a balance of £1210.94 and the treasurer account has a balance of £570.36 giving total of £1831.30 when including the £50 float

Notes on quarterly account to 31 July 2026 summary:

- An agreed payment of 1k was made to The Polar Academy from the Treasury Account in May 2026
- Due to summer holidays and handover of lottery process the payment of lottery prizes has not been made for May, June and July draws. A cleaner position will be presented as at the quarter to end October.

General comments:

- Consider single prize each month to make admin simpler (and prize money more meaningful)
- There is no requirement in the council Lottery rules to maintain two accounts. This means we are paying bank account charges of 2 x £51 per year, which seems high given the profit the lottery is generating to the school. Could we discuss a move to a single account or is the current approach preferred for operational reasons?
- Lottery promotion - do a poster/ social media post (including the Balwearie Facebook group with 3k+ members "friends reunited" that gives examples of how money is used with examples from the teacher bids. Make it easy to sign up via a QR code.

Lottery Update

Discussion of the pros and cons of three smaller prizes against one larger prize. A spot vote was taken
– Result was split – was agreed to form a sub-committee for further discussion.

GP expressed surprise at the low tariff of a lottery run in such a large community – Discussion of the challenges of increasing engagement. Posters, branding etc. Could previous winners offer a (possibly anonymous) comment on their win?

Action: sub-committee to be formed to discuss prize configuration and other Lottery matters

**School update from
HT Ali Mitchell**

The group was shown a video on the buildings work in progress.

This work comprises:

Summer 2026 - 13 separate projects completed

- Home Economics refurbishment
- Science Preparation Rooms
- Art room partition
- CDT Machinery
- Running Track re-laid
- Air conditioning programme commenced in C-Block
- C-Block roof
- Assembly hall – on-going

October 2026

- Continuation of C-Block Air conditioning works
- J104 renovation
- J101 conversion to media suite
- Media recording studio

Staffing updates were recapped and updated – AM noted that Balwearie is not finding it difficult to fill posts at moment. Ally Harlow is current staff point of contact for Parent Voice while Steven Robertson covers the buildings improvement work – thanks to Ally for filling this role.

School improvement plan – AM asked for opinions on an AI-generated infographic that aimed to show a condensed and user-friendly snapshot of the improvement plan. Overall impressions were favourable with some reservations expressed over the use of AI in the school's forward-facing publicity.

Exam diet:

Information was shared in the form of tables detailing number of papers sat, successes achieved, breakdown of results and subject areas which had seen significant change (RMPS/H, Business Management/AH and English/AH sitting in top three spots).

School update from HT Ali Mitchell /cont.	Exam diet/cont. • There had been two concerns raised by Qualifications Scotland over potential AI use in curricular materials but neither was upheld after detailed screening. • A table showing Balwearie's performance against similar-sized Fife schools was shown and discussed. Improvements noted in the number of Highers taken (932 against 824 in 2024). AM discussed details of this with the group and explained the focus on this stage of qualifications. It was also noted that additional support needs had not significantly impacted pupil performance. School improvement priorities: • UNCRC/Silver Rights Respecting Schools status is currently being sought – 'a huge piece of work'. • Pupil Voice and pupil leadership • Professional learning for teaching staff eg. BSL, leadership qualifications • Ready to Learn • Learning Partnership Maths – external scrutiny • Cluster primary school staff working together with BHS
AOB	AMe asked about study support sessions which clashed with extra curricular music commitments. AH advised that the staff team would discuss with the hope of varying days of the week when sessions took place.

AOB /cont.	CL asked if the school was seeking funding for library improvements from eg. School Library Improvements Fund. AM replied that no funding would be unwelcome but in particular current focus if possible might be the 'Cost of the School Day' banks as detailed in Matters Arising. <i>Action: Members to keep alert to possible funding pots that PCV might apply for to benefit this</i>
------------------------------	--

Next meeting date: Tuesday 3rd Nov 2026 (online)

Follow the Parent & Carer Voice on Facebook
[facebook.com/BalwearieParentVoice](https://www.facebook.com/BalwearieParentVoice)

New Instagram profile
https://www.instagram.com/balwearie_high_parent_voice/

or on X - x.com/balweariepv