Good morning Barry

We held a Parent Council Meeting yesterday, 21st June.  This was to go over the consultation papers for the proposed closure of Kinbrace Primary.  It was unanimous that everyone was behind the proposal, although I would like to make it clear that not every family was represented at this meeting or had put in feedback separately if they could not attend.  The following points were made.

* FINANCE
  + The cost per head to educate a child seemed ludicrous in the current financial climate
  + Are funds ring fenced for Kinbrace to reopen or would the council have to make further savings?
  + PSA and cleaning time across Highland have been cut, could this lead to further cuts
* STAFFING
  + How would the Head Teacher split her time?  Previously the HT spent 2 days in Kinbrace per week, if this was still the case it would be out of sync if it was considered on how many children attended each school
  + The clerical time for Kinbrace is noted as 16 hours, Helmsdale only has 18 – how is this calculated?
  + Would you manage to recruit someone for Kinbrace?  What would happen if not, would the HT be forced to teach until someone was appointed?
  + Would Helmsdale lose out on time with specialist teachers?  I.e.  ASN, PE, Art (the latter 2 are for CCR and we understand this is not applicable in Kinbrace until there is a child in P4 and above)
  + Would children who attended Kinbrace have the offer of music tuition as they do in Helmsdale?
* CHILDREN
  + Do the children who attend Helmsdale PS and are already settled, who are in the Kinbrace catchment have the choice of continuing their education in Helmsdale?
  + Surely it is more beneficial socially for the children to attend Helmsdale PS
  + Academically the children will always have to work within the same groups for group work / pair work, this allows for no variation and the possibility of one child overpowering the other, stunting their educational growth.  In Helmsdale partners could vary and children may feel more in their comfort zone.
  + How can the children learn competitive sporting etc if there is so few of them
  + Would all children from Helmsdale and Kinbrace not benefit from having one school i.e. better resources?
  + The children could possibly lose out on after school activities
  + Have the children who attended Kinbrace prior to mothballing been asked how they felt it impacted their life / education (these children are now in High School)
* TRANSPORT
  + Whilst those in attendance were sympathetic to the fact that children who would be in that catchment currently have a longer school day due to the travelling, nobody believed it had impacted negatively on them.
  + Will the roads continue to be gritted in winter?

We may have further points to add as some parents have indicated they wish to do so.  I will forward these on in due course.  We are happy for these points to be shared or asked at the meeting tonight.

Chairperson, on behalf of  Helmsdale Primary Parent Council