

Parent Council Meeting Minutes 7 March 2016

Introductions

Apologies: April Wallace, Katie Campbell, Dawn Thomson, Eric Jackson, Jude Thompson, Helen Muir, Rachel Liddle.

Attendees: Orla Irwin, Mrs Forsyth, Mr McIntyre, Charlie Goldsmith, Melanie Ruxton, Neil Gibson, Andrew Ho, Kerry Courtney, Lorraine Cowie, Anne Scott, Dorothy-Ann Newlands.

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Confirmed as fine. Issue raised about using names in minutes. Generally agreed names are fine as would be too confusing to read otherwise. Keep minutes concise.

Agreed Mel would chair in the absence of Dawn.

2. Update from Head Teacher

Management and Staffing

Confirmed Miss O'Leary hired as a mid-year appointment and Mrs Porteous is now on a permanent contract.

Mr McIntyre stated that interviews for next session have just taken place. You interview for a City of Edinburgh 'pool' so you are not interviewing directly for your school. Neil queried how teachers were matched with a school. Mr McIntyre – teacher puts down preferences, can be based on a number of things. Where they live, what type of school they would like to get experience in, etc.

Confirmed the school was looking at a 15/16 class structure – total numbers for the school 430 by August. 3 x P1s and 3 x P2s. However, it is important to note that these numbers and classes are preliminary and subject to change.

Kerry queried how P6 would work? Mr McIntyre confirmed that, at the moment, it looked like 2 x P6s which would mean a re-shuffle but smaller classes. Pros and cons for both.

Kerry queried how many more teachers would be required? It was confirmed that with classes rising from 14 to 16 potentially, two more teachers would be required.

Kerry – P6 and P7 in the same block? Mr McIntyre – potentially yes, but keen to avoid the new extension being seen as an upper school space only. Everyone wants a 'turn' in the new building. Mr McIntyre emphasised that with spare classrooms currently, there were plenty of options to consider.

Lorraine queried if the school would ever be classed as full – some schools in Edinburgh already saying this. Mr McIntyre confirmed that wouldn't really ever be the case, especially

with the new building. Mrs Forsyth mentioned that we're lucky with the space the school has, space for a library, IT suite etc. Not all schools have this.

Charlie brought up the issue of the dining hall being busy. Mr McIntyre – can look at split breaks, moving clubs, extend dining hall etc. But wouldn't want to lose wildlife garden. Split breaks could work but lose having all of the staff in the staff room at the same time, colleague discussion etc. Pros and cons.

School environment

P1 classroom tiles lined with asbestos (not dangerous unless disturbed, safety procedures followed) but painters did disturb the tiles. Experts came in, took out carpets and cleaned thoroughly. Was a very scientific service, did 2 air tests. Company involved is paying for three brand new carpets. Mr McIntyre emphasised he was very comfortable with how the work was done as he had been kept informed at every step.

Roof leaking – needs to be considered. Cost difference between patching it and properly fixing it. Elaine O'Donnell, Business Manager is currently progressing this, but we don't have a time scale for it yet.

New chairs for P1 classroom and P3s and P5s have new furniture. Revamp of foyer coming and general internal refresh.

Dorothy mentioned she had seen a large amount of water coming from what looked like the gutters – so much that she noticed it straight away. Could they be over-flowing? Noted by Mr McIntyre.

School playground

Had a visit from Thomas from Scotplay about the lines and design of the school playground – still need parent volunteers for this. Funding available, Thomas would help with application. Max £10k, if school puts in £3.5k – so £13.5k total, great amount to improve playground, costs more than you would imagine. Mr McIntyre – would parent council help with the £3.5k?

Orla – £800 agreed at start of the year, would this be on top of that? [clarified later]
Charlie – are you still looking for parents? Mrs Forsyth – yes, good to get an outside perspective.

Lorraine mentioned uneven tarmac. Mr McIntyre mentioned this was attempted to be fixed but bad weather meant the company couldn't finish. On the 'to do' list, not forgotten about. Thomas from Scotplay mentioned the playground was in a good condition for painting. Lots of things you can do, even a quick Google search gives lots of exciting ideas. From a world map to 'random' circles that the children can use in lots of different ways.

Orla questioned whether there was a deadline for the funding? Clarified no but would ideally like to do the work over the summer holiday.

Mel questioned if the Parent Council should discuss their contribution or just agree now to give the contribution for the funding. Mel – in principle, everyone agrees it's a good idea, will bring up under fundraising.

Whole school show – gathering pace. Response letter received from Sir David Attenborough!

Safer streets – Mrs Forsyth brought up 'Living Streets Travel Tracker' – kids logged on, walked together and got points for it. An incentive to walk. Points increased the further away you walked from.

Charlie queried what the incentive for the kids was? Clarified it was house points. Orla questioned how long it would run for? Mrs Forsyth stated it was up to the kids but certainly for the first few weeks. Mel mentioned it would be worth getting in touch with Chris Thompson and Mrs Forsyth said that she had already been in touch with him. Chris Thompson is the schools and project coordinator for Living Streets who run the travel tracker. Mel mentioned that badges could be given out. Charlie asked if she should put something about this in the newsletter, but Mrs Forsyth said she would put something out separately.

Troublesome side street not closing – lollipop person would be good here. Has been asked for before and rejected. Dorothy raised the fact that safer streets might result in a lollipop person if the side street gets busier perhaps? Mrs Forsyth – potentially but been requested and rejected before. Some parents have been discussing taking on the 'lollipop' role.

Back to safer streets – Mrs Forsyth clarified that if you are caught on the street you get a warning the first time, then a £60 fine.

3. Recruitment and selection training.

Refer to Dawn's email.

Dorothy said training doesn't expire and anyone from parent council could do it.

Mel mentioned putting it in the newsletter. Would be good to get some fresh perspective.

Dorothy – you learn a lot about what happens in a school.

Agreed to carry forward.

4. Fundraising update, including uniform – Melanie, Kerry

Kerry – uniforms all online now, working fine. Mrs Forsyth mentioned forms in office as well.

Kerry – people seems to be finding it easier and quicker. Mrs Forsyth mentioned that parents don't seem to get an email when order out but Kerry said she was sure they got something.

Discussion around delivery costs/getting uniforms delivered to the school and how they would be given out, especially for P1 mums over the summer. Some might club together but P1 mums probably would pay delivery given they are ordering everything in one go. Give as much info as possible in info session in May, parents could order before school closes for summer.

Art show – Mel. Dawn asked Mel to present costs for art exhibition. Kids would work on three different types of art and they would be presented at the summer fair. Costs –
A4 canvas – 75p each
Frames - £1.50 each
Clay – no cost as yet.

Problem with finding display walls, costly to hire.
P/C would cover £500 for materials if school would cover cost for pencils/paints etc. Agreed this was fine.

Mel clarified it was £400 to hire walls. Not sure if good or expensive. Royal High donating some.

Bottom line – £800-£1k to set up but would at least cover costs with sale of artwork.
Discussion around how to display work, perhaps not need to display walls – could use benches etc. To be confirmed.

All agreed it was a great idea, and agreed costs were fine. Agreed to call it a ‘donation’ for the artwork, not a cost.

5. North West Meeting

Carry forward

6. Safer Streets

Discussed under point 2

7. Current financial position

Andrew confirmed –

Money in

£464 for hoodies

£55.20 for rag bag

£6.76 for yellow moon

Money out

£476

£7,252 in bank

£3k agreed funding to claimed by the school

Question of playground designs raised – give £3.5k to school? Show of hands – all agreed.

£2k sitting in bank – amount P/C committed to spend on an annual basis.

8. Newsletter update

Charlie confirmed it was almost finished and would be out this week. Agreed Yellow Moon would be flagged up but needed to clarify code so school would receive funds. Andrew to check who the £6.76 came from, they would have code.

9. AOB

Neil passed out Survey Monkey for comment. Discussion around putting more info before questions but as it is an information gathering exercise it was agreed to leave the questions and put out as is.

Neil to set up survey, send link to Mr McIntyre who would put out in a parentmail (88% coverage). Would also send home paper copies.

Agreed to give short deadline for return of questionnaires. Agreed to put in newsletter this week 'Look out for survey' etc.

Mr McIntyre – World Book Day – raised £168.

Mr McIntyre – Food Bank up and running, great initial response and keen to keep it going. Spread the word.

Mel – is there a section of the library under construction, limited access to 'endangered animals' section. Mr McIntyre to look into this.

Kerry – does library need second hand books? Mr McIntyre – advice when it was refurbished was to keep stock new, competing with iPads, Kindles etc. But potentially donate and school could pass on.

Gala quiz – Friday 18 March. Get your tickets!