DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 20 January 2015

Present: Elaine Towler Parent (Chair)
May Matthews Parent
Julie Morrison Parent
Ben Nimmo Parent
Elaine Reid Parent
Karen Snodgrass Parent
Lynsey Falconer Staff (Class teacher)

In attendance: Shirley Swinton Head Teacher
Kirsty Murray Depute Head Teacher
Tom Trotter Local Councillor
Mary Benson Clerk

1. Welcome and apologies
Elaine Towler welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jo Lawrence & Lisa Wason.

2 Minutes of meeting of 4 November 2014
The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.

3. Matters arising from the minutes
Website - Drop in sessions have been held today for teachers, who are now feeling more confident about posting items to the website. The Parent Council and School have had separate websites up until now; however it is intended to integrate these more. Minutes will be posted directly on the school website from now on.
The Parent Council advertising banner has the Parent Council website address on it; but the link to the school website will be made more obvious online to help users easily navigate between the two.

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4. Head Teacher’s report
Budget - Mrs Swinton gave an update on finances. The school is within budget.

Staffing - Mrs Swinton gave an update on staffing, including the appointment of a playground supervisor and the recent advert for a maternity cover teaching post.
Curriculum Rationale – At the last meeting, Mrs Swinton spoke about Ethos and Life of the School. At this meeting, the focus was on Haddington Infant School's Curriculum Rationale.

Haddington Infants has a positive ethos with a climate of trust for both staff and pupils. Within this positive learning environment, the Curriculum for Excellence focusses on helping children to become successful learners. The curriculum is delivered in eight subjects (Expressive arts, Health & wellbeing, Languages, Mathematics, Religious & moral education, Science, Social studies, and Technologies). Being an Infant school, the staff have to be highly competent in delivering the basics, particularly in reading, writing and counting; however all curricular areas are important. These are delivered through programmes, which involve both learning in specific subjects, and interdisciplinary learning (where children combine their learning in several subjects). It is very important that the curriculum that the school delivers is current and relevant, so it is regularly reviewed. The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of all staff is important, both through the delivery of the School Development Plan, through personal interests and strengths, and through identifying individual training needs. The school are confident in the strength of their planning and tracking system.

Children are regularly rewarded for good work, with both high achievers and hard workers/good efforts being recognised. Children are nominated for Star Awards, Amazing Author Awards and Maths Marvel Awards by their class teachers. Older children share examples of good work with the younger children to give them something to aspire to as they progress.

At the next meeting, Mrs Swinton will speak to the Parent Council about Interdisciplinary Learning.

School lunches – Since the start of January this year, all children in P1 – P3 have been eligible for a free school meal at lunchtime. There has been a good uptake, with 180 children taking a school dinner today. The current system is working well, with much credit due to the dining hall staff for this.

East Lothian Council has provided 3 new dining tables with chairs (each of which seats 16 children). The new tables make more effective use of the space and together St Mary’s and Haddington Infants have bought three more and may look to replace more of the original tables and chairs over time.

5. Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)

Elaine Towler sent a Freedom of Information request to Police Scotland on behalf of Haddington Infants and King’s Meadow Parent Councils to find out how many fines had been issued for breaches of the TRO. Since the Order was placed a year ago, 11 fines have been issued in Victoria Road and Neilson Park Road. It is hoped that they will act as a deterrent to other drivers. Colin Baird (Transportation, East Lothian Council) is conducting a review of the TRO at present and everyone at the meeting agreed that they would like to see the TRO continue long-term. However, it was noted that although the new barriers at
the bottom of Meadowpark should help reduce parking there, there were still concerns about children crossing the road by the double bend there, which has poor sightlines and can be congested with traffic.

6. School lunches
Following discussions at the last meeting, Elaine Towler had raised school lunches at ELAPCM (East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members). Unfortunately, a representative of School Catering had been unable to attend the meeting, and a written response has been sent out recently within the draft ELAPCM minutes (circulated to all parent reps). School Catering said that there would be no reduction in quality following the change to free school meals for P1-P3. There have been some adjustments to the menu following parental concern at lack of choice on certain days. Baked potatoes are now offered on Tuesday and Thursdays as an alternative to the main and vegetarian choices, however the printed menu does not reflect this. It was agreed that this would be publicised in the school newsletter to make sure that children and parents were aware.

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There was a discussion about helping children to make healthy choices at school dinners. The possibility of taster sessions (where children are encouraged to try a small amount of different menu options) was discussed. Parents felt this would be helpful, especially around the time of the twice yearly menu change or as part of the transition activities from nursery to P1. Dining staff have tried to encourage children to try other menu items during lunchtime, by going round the dinner hall with a little cup full of another dish; but most children were very reluctant to try the food on offer. A bigger tasting event was felt to be too much for the dining staff to take on at this moment in time, with their recent additional workload. All at the meeting agreed that a tasting event was a good idea, but were unsure as to how best to do it. The possibility of additional parent helpers was discussed, but the dining staff would still have to prepare the food, which would be difficult on top of their current commitments.

7. Wider Parent Council/community issues

Haddington & Lammermuir Area Partnership
The next Area Partnership meeting is on 4 February, 7-9pm in Bolton Village Hall. The discussions will focus on the Main Issues Report (MIR) Consultation. The Main Issues Report is available online at https://eastlothianconsultations.co.uk/ and is the first formal stage in preparing the new East Lothian Development Plan. This will affect issues such as house building, school sizes, catchment and expansion and the impact of proposed development on education services. The input of Parent Councils would be valuable at this meeting. The agenda for the meeting has been sent out to all parent reps.
**East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members (ELAPCM)**

Budgets were discussed at the last ELAPCM meeting. Primary schools are required to save £200,000 over three years (the first year ends on 31 March 2015). In order to achieve the first year of budget savings, schools have been required to reduce the number of teachers in nursery by replacing them with nursery nurses from August 2015 (where there is more than one teacher in a nursery). This is particularly challenging for schools such as Haddington Infants, which has 80 nursery children (40 morning and 40 afternoon). From August, one teacher will be responsible for 80 end of year reports and 80 twice yearly parent’s nights. This is on top of the substantial increase in nursery hours from August 2014.

As discussed at ELAPCM, some of the suggestions being considered across the country by other local authorities looking to make cost savings in education include:

- Reducing exam choices in secondary schools
- Reducing the number of teaching hours in primary schools
- Rural school closures
- Class sizes in primary/secondary schools
- School transport levels (increasing the distance from 2 to 3 miles for eligible children)
- Other services (ancillaries/drama/music) – eg charging for music lessons
- Change contracts (work/life balance).

Since Haddington Infants already has large class sizes, parents felt that to increase them further would not be an option. Reducing the number of teaching hours in primaries would also not be supported by the parent council.

There was a strong feeling that there must be other ways to save money within the budget without impacting on education in this way. Issues such as portion size in school lunches were discussed. A P1 child is given the same portion size as a P7, despite the fact that the majority of P1 children will not be able to eat that much, which results in a lot of wastage. The provision of daily puddings for children having school lunches was also felt to be unnecessary, as well as juice when water would be much cheaper and better for the children. Other money saving issues such as cheaper utility providers were also noted.

Councillor Trotter said that difficult decisions would have to be made in order to achieve the required savings, no matter which administration was in power. However, those at the meeting agreed that Education was one of the most important services delivered by the local authority and felt that savings should be identified elsewhere in the overall Council budget in order to safeguard children’s services.

Elaine Towler will feed back the comments to the Education Department.

**8. Any other business/items for next meeting**

*Peter Pan Production* - A note had been sent home in the recent newsletter reminding parents to pay their £1 contribution towards the upcoming production of ‘Peter Pan’. The original note asking for payment had been sent out in the newsletter before Christmas; however many parents had missed it and had still not paid. It was agreed that letters
asking for payment would in future be sent out separately to the newsletter. Any parent who is unsure if they have sent payment for ‘Peter Pan’ can check with the school office.

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Items for next meeting - Anyone with any items for discussion at the next meeting should email them to Elaine Towler.

9. Date of next meeting -
The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 17 March 2015 and the remaining meeting date this session is 2 June 2015.

All meetings will start at 7pm in the staff room and all parents and carers are very welcome to attend.