

MINUTES of

EAST LINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

East Linton Primary School on Thursday 27th October 2016 at 7.00pm

Chair: John Paterson
Treasurer: Brian Whitson
Clerk: Nichola Ma

1. Welcome and Apologies

Attendees: D Russell, J Bell, G Gardner, J Paterson, B Taylor, F O'Sullivan, G Coghlan , T Martin-Berg, A Boyle, C Carroll, S Cleaver-Bundy, R Lowrie, A Hartland, C Bennett, L Dorrian, B Whitson

Apologies: M Veitch, C Nathan, L Daniels

J Paterson opened the meeting and welcomed new attendees. He also made a special welcome to Brian as the new treasurer and a special thank you from the Parent Council to Pam Tannahill for all her work over the past few years as treasurer and her support to fundraise and raise the profile of the Parent Council.

T Martin Berg had suggested a deputy chair to act in John's absence and to succeed him when he leaves at the end of the current academic year. All present agreed and voted that a deputy would be a good idea to take meetings when the Chair is away. John confirmed Like the Chair and Treasurer they will become office bearer.

2. Approval of minutes

Matters arising – F O'Sullivan will action the point that J Paterson was due to action last meeting.

ACTION - Nichola to remove the action relating to a report from B Taylor & F O'Sullivan in advance of the current meeting.

A Boyle gave an update on the suggestion raised by T Martin-Berg at the last meeting about childminders who might be willing to help out taking care of children during Parent Council meetings. In theory they agreed but would need specific details of timings, number of children and ages etc. **ACTION** – A Boyle to find out how many children the childminders can watch and how much they would charge. Hopes to feedback prior to next PC meeting in December so that it can be offered for that meeting.

A brief discussion about the timing of meetings followed. G Gardner confirmed she would rather not have the meetings later as this happened before and they finished really late. 7pm seems to be the optimum time due to other commitments and parents getting the school on time. Ensure agenda and items don't go beyond 8.30pm.

3. Head Teacher report

- Susan has looked at costs of the Play pod and got a quote for £2160 for a 10ft. Shipping container plus £600 for insulation – need to act before March to get funding from Sustaining Dunbar – they will fund up to £1000 which leaves us £1700 short or needing to look at alternative options. Includes transport and delivery and extra costs if drivers are delayed. G Gardner asked for thoughts from the Parent Council and parents present. Can be filled with everyday equipment and play things for the children to use to help support imaginary play.

- At the last cluster meeting there was some input from the planning people at the council, talking about the impact of new housing in the area. The next 4 years would mean an additional 2 classrooms and a new hall to accommodate the increase in population. The council didn't specify where the expansion would take place at this stage but would be somewhere within the school and nursery. Gill would hope to have some consultation and input regarding plans prior to building works starting. Is at least 2 or more years away. Need to be mindful of the expansion plans and the pending playground changes so that these don't clash.

- Gill met with some parents to talk about the homework (HW) policy. Talked about battles of getting HW done at home, how it fits into family life, different types of HW, what parents feel is a priority. Gill is going to get input from children in school and then trim back the policy and re-issue to parents. E.g. setting homework for the week so it's possible to do it at the weekend and it can't be left to the last minute or squeezed into a few days/each night and building in more personalised choice. Lots of good discussion and shared experiences - was great to get interest and feedback from parents/carers. We discussed homework priorities as a staff; reading – right up there at the top, spelling, number skills Accelerated reading (P4 upwards) – Gill agreed to ACTION a short guide for parents to Accelerated Reader for parents.

- J Bell asked about the emphasis on hand-writing. Gill confirmed the school gets involved in BIG writing and children get plenty of opportunity to learn and practise handwriting in the classroom.

- Mrs Gilmore is still unwell – Nursery nurses have been in school on supply this week. Gill has asked for supply again this week and so far it seems to have worked well, unlike previously! Which is good news. Nursery nurses have been

fantastic help. The school welcomes 4 PE students next week working with children up and down the school and a teaching student for days across the year

- Gill met with all staff this week to carry out tracking meetings - Talked through every child across the school maintaining skills in numeracy, literacy and tracking individual difficulties, challenges, progress etc. Mrs Banks and Gill will pick up on every child they feel needs further support.
- In-service day – working parties, tracking for reading, number treasure hunt prior to Xmas, Quality indicators from government – teachers have looked at 3.2 raising attainment and achievement. How do you track the achievements of children out of school? ‘How good is our school?’ As an evaluation tool from Education Scotland. Reviewing the HW policy was one of the things that came out of discussion about this with teaching staff. D Russell and Gill explained the way that evidence needs to be presented to the regulators. Helps to support inspection visits and get prepared and reflect on gaps within the school and things to improve. Guidelines have just been published and new models have been tried over the summer by Education Scotland’s Model. Generally speaking you get 2 weeks’ notice for an inspection. Discussion about the recommendations – authority may come and check if you’ve achieved them over the time period enforced or there may be an ad-hoc visit in the meantime. Sometimes recommendations are made without necessarily grading them or enforcing them – more as an advisory notice. A hard copy of the Booklet is available for parents to borrow if they wish. Gill will invite feedback from parents in due course.

4. Playground (Liz Dorrian)

Liz introduced herself as a local landscape architect who had been asked to look at plans for the school playground, having had years of experience in this area. The Fee was paid for by 4J studios which must be acknowledged. Plans not officially approved yet and were based on lots of consultation with children, the janitor, teachers, parents etc. Long and thorough research was carried out before proposals were drawn up. The plan is also backed up by a written report which includes technical information about space requirements; looking at the appearance of the school not just what the children want. Knew railings were a possibility at the time of the plans and the re-surfacing has now also been done so 2 things have been achieved!

Entrance area – used to be slabs and tarmac – broke up the playground entrance a bit which was more appealing. Would be nice to get that back. Planters at the front – stone ones better than wooden; last longer; more expensive but worth doing. Circa £800 for one but there are ways to make it more affordable, such as getting materials for free and just paying for the labour.

Possibility of re-locating the bike racks – could we perhaps do a survey to see how many are used? ACTION – G Gardner to survey the children about bike rack use. Currently under canopy shelter opposite the nursery which could be put to better use as a shelter for parents and to house the ‘new’ play pod/container.

Liz then explained the area at the back of the playground – developed to rotate use of facilities. Improve the nursery outdoor space which is currently small and has other objects in it. Has facilitated educational needs within the plans too.

Liz recommends reading the report to get a fuller picture of the reasons behind the plans.

ACTION – J Paterson will send report to Nichola to forward and distribute to PC members.

Propose dates for the playground sub-committee to get together in early November. C Nathan, A Hartland, Andy, H McFarlane, L Dorrian agreed to be involved. Bea expressed interest but is already a P1 rep and can’t fulfil both. J Paterson stated it would be good to get regular updates at PC meetings as to the progress of the plans.

ACTION – Liz to get everyone’s email address from John to arrange subcommittee dates.

5. Treasurer’s report

Item	Total	Breakdown	Comment
Opening Balance 1 st September	£2,321.66		
September Income	£1,704.30	£71.00 £1,585.00 £48.00 £0.30	50:50 club Autumn fair Tea towels Interest
September Outgoings	(£193.02)	(£57.02) (£85.00) (£51.00)	Postage for Shoe donation Autumn fair: bouncy castle 50:50 winners (Jul#94, Jul#01, Jul#21, Aug#06)
Closing balance 30 th September	£3,832.94	-	-

Total Movement £1,511.28
September

Pending income

-

-

-

Pending outgoings

(£99.00)

50:50 winner Apr #109

50:50 winner Jun #74

50:50 winner Jun #44

50:50 winner Aug #60

50:50 winner Aug #36

50:50 winner Sep #01

50:50 winner Sep #23

50:50 winner Sep #20

50:50

- October draw (held at meeting 27th Oct, cheques to be issued)
- 17 – Helen Pickles
- 22 – Ros Lowrie
- 77 – Alistair Aitken
- September draw winners (cheques issued 20th October)
- 01 – Lynsay Barker
- 23 – Joan Bell
- 20 – Helen Pickles

ACTION – F O’Sullivan agreed to chase whether Matched Funding can be obtained from any of the high street banks

G Gardner confirmed £1425 of maths resources had already been purchased as an essential teaching aid.

J Paterson asked if everyone was in agreement to fund this from the parent council.
All present agreed

G Gardner also made a WISH LIST request that middle and upper school classes need multiple sets of reading classics such as ‘WAR HORSE’ and CS Lewis; The Lion the witch and the Wardrobe’ to enable more effective learning. Has received some funds from the scholastic society but it won’t be enough to cover the total expense.

ACTION – J Paterson will send the logos round parent council – everyone does a 1, 2, and 3 of their favourites and circulates the results by email in the next week or two.

6. Correspondence

J Paterson ran through the noted correspondence including Recruitment Training¹, the letter from Iain Gray (MSP), the Survey about parental involvement – recommends everyone completes that on-line and the ELAPCM has a meeting on 9th Nov. Sharing the responsibility of attending these will be helpful.

7. AOB

P3 parents evening email distributed today.

Next Parent Council meeting – Monday 5th Dec. **ACTION** – Nichola to arrange school LET

Aileen asked for the minutes to be issued ASAP so that actions can be followed up quickly.

¹ G Gardner explained that if interviewing for a principal post someone from the Parent council will be involved in the recruitment but it has to be someone who's been through Minimum of 6 people to attend across East Lothian. J Paterson intends to attend and offers it to anyone else on the parent council who wishes to go.