

East Linton Primary School Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held 7pm, 30 April, 2019

Present: Trace Ward (Chair), Sarah-Jane Nichol-Thompson (P2/P3), Lorna Park (P2/P7), Deborah Stitt (P1A), Leigh Robieson-Cleaver (p7), Colin Carroll (constitution), Margaret McKay (Principal Teacher), Gill Gardner (HT), Jane Perkins (Treasurer), Leigh Pleasance (nursery am), Nancy Bell (P5), Hazel Reid (Clerk).

Apologies: Tara Wright (P3), Lucy Daniels (P3), Kirsty McKerrow (P4), Bea Taylor (P6 and playground)

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

These are to be circulated and approved as soon as possible.

2. Chair's update

Trace reported that she had attended a joint meeting of the chairs of East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members (ELAPCM). There was discussion about SchoolPay: the costs of processing a cash payment is said to be approximately £8; if more parents were to change to SchoolPay this would save a great deal of money.

A suggestion had been made that perhaps meetings of the ELPSPC might be held on other days of the week and not just always on a Tuesday – it has been run in this way in the past. It was agreed to consider this, perhaps for the next session in the autumn.

Action: Revisit this at the AGM

Next year (2020) is the 140th anniversary of the founding of East Linton Primary School. Some event should be held to celebrate this and Trace encouraged everyone to think of anyone they knew who might be willing to be involved. Trace has been in touch with someone at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who is very happy to come to the school to talk to the children.

Trace has also spoken with the head of Scottish Opera; they are keen to visit the school, perhaps next year, as part of their school outreach programme.

There has been a suggestion that an eco group should be formed. Gill said that the idea was to renew the school's Green Flag status in recognition of the work being done to make the school increasingly eco-focused. She hoped to take the activities associated with Green Flag status forward next year. There is a lot of recycling going on at the school such as eliminating the use of plastic bottles at lunchtime (almost complete) and recycling straws which are being washed and re-purposed. A black compost bin will be available at the back of the school but the base needs to be rat-proofed and bedded down properly.

Action: PC to encourage volunteers to help get the compost bin ready to use

Missy from The Mart, in East Linton and Joanie from The Shed at the Mart spoke to the Parent Council at the meeting. Missy is the project manager for the work that has gone on to restore the 19th century Mart building and to establish the new shop and café. The business has put a huge amount of money into the project and it is hoped that the Mart building will be finished towards the end of May and then be available for events involving the community. They want to get young and old together to be involved in what is going on there.

Joanie looks after the Shed project, which is open to everyone – all ages are encouraged to get involved. They want to start making planters and have found a volunteer who will teach joinery skills. They want to get the children from the school involved in planting seed beds and growing

plants in polytunnels. The Shed is open from 2-4pm on Thursdays. They are trying to source tools and hope to run workshops, making and painting bird boxes, in which the school can become involved.

Both Missy and Joanie are keen to help the local community, and at the same time also need to run the business in order to provide this support.

Gill said that it had always been the intention that the children should get involved with the Mart and learn new skills. She said what was being planned there was a good opportunity for collaboration. She also reported that the school had received a donation of garden tools which had been cleaned and refurbished by inmates at HMP Edinburgh.

3. Finance report

Jane reported that the balance in the account at the end of March was £3,189. The Quiz had brought in a further £1,000. Cheques amounting to £350 were still to go out to cover various costs but even after those payments there would still be about £4,000 in the account. The council needs to think what it will do with the money. There was also another £100 from the Dunsper Council for the P7 Yearbook.

P7 has worked hard raising money – over £400 has been raised so far for the party and they hoped eventually to get £800 or more in total. They are doing a fundraising walk in May. A suggestion was made that the amount that the Parent Council gave P7 for the Yearbook and the party should be consistent, year to year.

Two draws were made for the 50/50 Club. For February the numbers were 13, 20 and 21, while for March the numbers were 7, 9 and 59. For April the numbers were 97, 109 and 44. Jane has designed a leaflet asking those involved in the 50/50 Club to set up a standing order so that any winnings can be paid directly into bank accounts.

4a. Head Teacher's update

Gill described a recent visit by P5 to Ormiston Primary School to see the work they are doing with Digital Tech. She showed us some photos from the day showing digital T-shirts and Lego robots. The Ormiston pupils are also learning coding in school and how to write their own code. The East Linton pupils learned a huge amount and a diary of the day is being written up as a record. Gill is going to get together with P5 to discuss how they should progress what they have learned.

She said that they needed more cameras, just simple digital ones and reported that there was now an iPad in the nursery, making three in the school altogether. Ideally they would like one per classroom.

Margaret McKay talked about the 'Fresh Start' initiative which is a reading support programme for the upper school. She feels that it would really help those who were still having difficulty with reading and writing. The Read, Write, Inc project is very helpful for the younger pupils learning to read and write but the upper school is all about mindset and different kinds of help. The older ones, from P5 upwards need more age-appropriate material. A lot of money has already been spent on workbooks, handbooks, training and reading books for Read, Write, Inc. East Linton Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is around £14,000 currently, and is one avenue to fund Fresh Start and/or provide additional support staff to implement these programmes.

Action: Margaret is going to find out about costs for Fresh Start.

4b. School development planning – self evaluation

Gill asked those present to look at various information sheets, with suggestions from the school, about how to progress teaching and learning. They raised questions about what sort of initiatives should be on the School Improvement Plan. Gill wants the school's thoughts to be shared with

parents. Everyone looked at the sheets and joined in an animated discussion about them. Gill was very grateful for the Parent Council members' comments.

5. Working Group Updates

a) Events and Fundraising: Trace thanked Events and Fundraising for their work on the Easter Disco. Gill mentioned that the British Nutrition Foundation is promoting Healthy Eating during the week 10–14 June. It was hoped to arrange a picnic, during that week, made with healthy food. Lorna from Events and Fundraising was keen to work with the school to help facilitate this. Anyone who is interested in helping is encouraged to get in touch with Lorna and/or Gill.

b) Constitution

Colin Carroll reported that consultation on the revised constitution was now finished and that feedback about it had been incorporated into the revised document. It now needs to be adopted at an EGM which three parents have to request. Deborah Stitt, Leigh Pleasance and Lorna Park made the request and an EGM was arranged for Tuesday 14 May at The Crown in East Linton at 7pm. There must be at least six parents present to vote it through. Colin and his colleagues were thanked for their hard work leading to the revised constitution.

8. Any other competent business

Trace said that she and Gill had had a look at the orchard area outside the school. There are posts and some wire there so it might be possible to modify the existing fence to allow the children safe access to that area. Funding would be needed for wire netting and rationalisation of existing posts. Carrying out these modifications would keep dogs out and ensure safety for the younger pupils. It would also leave the existing grass path at the back unaffected.

Nancy Bell raised a question about access to the play pods. Some children in P5 were unable to get access to the pods.

Lorna Park asked if a new basketball hoop could be provided. One of the nets is very heavy and gets put away at night. A suggestion was made that it should be out and usable and space should be made for it. Gill offered to find out about costs.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be the EGM on 14 May and the AGM will be held on 11 June.

The meeting finished at 8.35 pm.