

East Linton Primary School Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held 7pm, 12 March, 2019

Present: Trace Ward (Chair), Gill Gardner (Head Teacher), Debbie Stewart, Margaret McKay (Principal Teacher), Leigh Robieson-Cleaver (P7), Bea Taylor (P6 & Playground), Sarah-Jane Nichol-Thompson (P2/P3), Tara Wright (P3), Hazel Reid (Clerk).

Apologies: Lyn Jardine (P1A), Deborah Stitt (P1A), Clare Stuart (P1B & Nursery), Kirsty McKerrow (P4), Lucy Daniels (P3), Nancy Bell (P5), Jane Perkins (Treasurer).

1) Minutes of the previous meeting

These were agreed

2) Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3) Chair's update

Trace attended the recent East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members (ELAPCM) meeting. ELAPCM want to raise awareness amongst parents that all children eligible for free school meals should register for them, as this brings with it Pupil Equity Funding. The school gets money for each child who takes up the offer and there was the feeling that some eligible children may not be enrolled. The amount available per child depends on different factors such as postcode, disability, etc, but should be roughly £1500 over a school year. Gill said that the school could give out information about this and a suggestion was made that a poster could be put up to raise awareness.

Action: Trace to draft poster for Parent Council noticeboard

Also at ELAPCM, it was mentioned that schools may be able to augment PEF funding by accessing attainment funding via Area Partnerships. Bea offered to find out how much money they have to offer.

Action: Bea to get more info at next Area Partnership meeting

Increased take up of School Pay will reduce admin time, and ELAPCM encouraged PC's to remind parents about how to register for School Pay. It is best for the children not to bring cash to school but for their parents to go online and pay for something like school lunches for a whole term.

Action: Trace to put reminders up on PC facebook on School Pay

The warden has been round to clear up dog poo in the school field, although the problems with dog foul are continuing.

**Action: Trace to continue following up with ELC regarding safe access to school field
Tara exploring options for temporary fencing to protect football pitch**

4) Financial report & funding requests

Tara passed on apologies from the treasurer, who has offered to get the accounts ready so that they can go out with the draft minutes.

Action: Jane (Treasurer) to email accounts to Hazel

5) Head Teacher's update

Gill reported that there had been discussion about budgets at the school and she had done a breakdown of what had been spent and for what in 2017–2018.

The total budget usually amounts to £500,000 – £600,000.

For the previous period:

- 94.8% had been spent on staffing
- 0.2% went to staff training
- 2% on energy
- 2.2% had been spent on core supply, i.e. everything else that the school needed which amounted to £13,000. Last year the amount had been £15,600
- East Lothian Council have a “claw back” amount of £16,508 which is returned to them

Gill said that it was important to hold onto funds until they were needed. At the moment it was particularly vital to hold on to what they have now, in case they need to get unexpected supplies – the money has to last until 1 April. Gill also told the meeting that she has to sign off everything – even if more loo rolls were needed, Gill had to approve the purchase.

Bea asked if the school was full in terms of pupil capacity. Gill said that it was not full – for example the number of pupils in each of the two P1 classes is 16 at the moment and the classroom will take up to 25. There are some spaces at every level throughout the school. There is also capacity in some of the rooms used by everyone. For example the library can take a whole class and the music room is the same, as it is a big space with no desks or other furniture. The hall can be problematic – gym lessons are usually held just before lunch and sometimes there is not enough time to set the space up for lunch. The school is keen that the pupils get as much gym as possible and the Community Hall can be used if necessary if there is a conflict in timing.

Gill and Trace have looked at the school’s communication policy and have tried to make it less formal and ‘corporate’.

Action: Gill to share communication policy with PC

Gill reported that she has been advised that the extension to the school is going ahead and the refurbishment is also going ahead and will be done at the same time. Refurbishment will involve improving both insulation and heating as temperature regulation is challenging in the school currently. ELC need to get round a table with all concerned to decide how they are going to handle the extension and the refurbishment.

Bea has spoken to Missy at the Mart. The children will have space in a designated area within a polytunnel for planting seedlings and doing other activities. The Parent Council should support the gardening club with equipment or supplies. A builders’ bag of soil was being delivered to the school to fill and plant up the big planters at the back of the school. Children should be encouraged to bring their parents/carer to school or the Mart at weekends to see what they have been working on.

Gill thanked everyone for liking and following the blog and twitter. The numbers doing this have increased – not so much amongst parents but from other groups, e.g. rangers, and from other schools.

Learning Heroes

Margaret McKay reported that it had been recognised that some sort of system was needed to celebrate all the work that the children have been doing in school. Consequently, the Learning Heroes Initiative has been introduced. This identifies nine Learning Powers that the children should

focus on to become excellent and effective learners and will give them the skills and knowledge they will need in the future. These powers are: independence, respect, responsibility, collaboration, initiative, resilience, perseverance, reflection and aspiration.

Each class was given a Learning Power to discuss and took part in a competition to design a Learning Hero to represent that power. Each week there will a focus on one of the Learning Heroes and one child from each class will receive a Hero of the Week certificate which will be announced at Assembly. At first this will be a trial exercise but already the children love it and are very involved. It will be evaluated before the summer break so that tweaks can be made before next session. The teachers would like the Learning Powers to be discussed at home using the same vocabulary as used at school and want to encourage parents/carers to make the children aware that these powers are used in everyday life. Examples of how a child has used one or more powers at home can be posted on the school blog. A leaflet explaining the Learning Powers has been sent home with every child.

6) Working Group updates

a) Events & fundraising – Easter disco, 28 March

Entry to the disco will be £1. Tickets will need to be pre-sold and a list made of who has bought a ticket so that each child can be ticked off on arrival.

Decorations were discussed – these could be bunting or paper chains but not balloons (plastic). Bea can provide a giant glitterball which could possibly be suspended from the basket ball hook.

The School will supervise P1 to P3 getting changed for the disco and will then take them to the disco. James Clark will run the whole thing – he has disco lights, microphone, etc.

If children want a drink, they will have to go to where it is available and then stay in one place to drink it.

The whole occasion will need to be very well organised and a risk assessment done.

Action: Tara Wright

b) Constitution – parent forum feedback & related discussion

i) One issue raised was that the school accounts cannot be approved in time for an AGM in June. A solution was suggested of having an EGM in September to approve the accounts. P1 and nursery reps could also be confirmed at this meeting.

ii) A question from a parent was regarding how money from the school budget spent in the school? Gill has shared the financial information in her Head Teacher's report.

iii) The Equality Policy doesn't address the issue of associated equality. An example of this would be: if there is a disabled child in the school, who should not be discriminated against, then the parents/carer of that child should equally not be discriminated against.

iv) Separated/divorced parents do not need to be specifically mentioned; that part should be taken out.

c) Playground

Shelving and toys have been organised for the Play Pod. The older children love the activities that they can take part in.

A suggestion was made of organising painting/gardening during the Easter holidays.

Bea had been to an Area Partnership meeting where she learned that another school in East Lothian had recycling bins which had been provided by their Parent Council.

Gill said that there is a compost bin that will be put outside for the children to put things such as banana skins and apple cores in.

d) School development

Already dealt with in Section 5 above, Head Teacher's update. Trace to seek further information from ELC to clarify timing.

7) Parent representative updates

Leigh Robieson-Cleaver said that there was still ongoing discussion about the P7 party and their year book. Funds have been set aside for the year book. Leigh asked if P7 parents could be asked for a contribution towards the year book and if not all the money was used could the surplus go towards the P7 party?

Trace said that she could see no reason why that shouldn't be allowed but she would have to check with Jane Perkins (Treasurer).

8) Any other competent business

If an outdoor classroom was set up it would be good to have it made in sections that could be easily disassembled if it had to be moved for any reason.

Bea asked how the school was going to handle the Friday climate strike. Gill said that if a parent/carer wants to take their child to the event in Edinburgh they would need to write to the school and say that they would be taking their child out of school on Friday.

Tara asked if the school field could be fenced off for football and other activities, just with a metre-high fence?

9) Date of next meeting

30 April, at 7pm in the School

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm