

East Linton Primary School Parent Council

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting held 7pm, 19th November, 2020

Present: Lyn Jardine (Chair), Jane Perkins (Treasurer), Becca Bell (P1), Kirsty MacFarlane (P1/2), Tara Wright (P2/3), Evie Thomas (P3), Kathryn Neill (P4), Leigh Pleasance (P5), Kirsteen Roberts (P7), Gill Gardner (Head Teacher), Margaret McKay (Principal Teacher/P6), Heather McDonald (P7), Lucy Hutchison (P1), Anna Lockhart (P3).

Apologies: None received.

1) Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2020 were approved.

2) Chair's update including matters arising from previous minutes

Lyn started by offering thanks to Trace Ward for the work she had undertaken as previous Chair of the Parent Council and that she would pass on the Parent Council's best wishes to her when next in contact with her.

Lyn also recognised the huge efforts that the whole staff team, under the leadership of Gill, had achieved throughout the pandemic so far. From the hugely stressful situation of lockdown and supporting all the kids and parents while home-schooling, to the smooth transition back to school in August, Lyn expressed gratitude for everything that had been done and that we were all remarkably fortunate to have such a brilliant team.

Parent Council were advised that we had received resignation of Hazel Reid as Clerk. Lyn advised that we were currently seeking new clerk and that the current minute secretary of Dunpender Community Council had been suggested. A concern was raised at a previous clerk with close involvement with Dunpender CC meant that relationships were not entirely trusting. Lyn will discuss this specifically with the individual to ensure there are no conflicts of interest going forward and stressed that things had moved on considerably since then for everyone concerned.

Lyn highlighted to the group that she'd gotten involved, nominally as Parent Council representative, in a couple of local sustainability initiatives. Local Good Food Alliance and East Linton Community Garden Group. Parent Council agreed that this was a positive alignment and happy for Lyn to continue to do this work and report back on progress.

3) Financial report

Jane Perkins said that the balance of the account at end-October was £2,854.59 with £532 owed or to be cashed in 50/50 winnings so about £2,322.59 available in the account in practice to use. Clarification was made that the Parent Council Budget from East Lothian Council, held by the School was notified recently as £212 for the financial year to March 2021. A decision would be required as to what to do with any funds remaining at the end of the year which is likely. In addition, it was confirmed that the fees for Clerk are met centrally by East Lothian Council.

Jane advised there is 1 new member to the 50/50 Club and the draws were made as follows:

January - 29,54,73

February - 46,61,82

March - 45,65,99

April - 9,33,62

May - 13,18,32

June - 8,25,109

July - 27,53,73

August - 12,16,60

September - 34,75,84

October - 25,55,81

4) Head Teacher's update

Gill started her report by expressing her heartfelt thanks to her team, the parents and the children for all their hard work and support since lockdown. She highlighted that the team had been exceptional in ensuring a really positive transition back to school campus. She stressed the messages of support from parents had been very welcomed and that the kids had been absolutely brilliant taking everything in their stride over the last few months.

The school's Improvement Plan reflects the work that has gone into it over the last couple of years with feedback from the Council really positive, highlighting how robust the plan is and that work will be ongoing for this and the next iteration of it.

Reporting on the plans for school expansion and upgrade, Gill highlighted that Covid had obviously had a significant impact on progress. However, since estimates had been received for the works, it is clear that the budget that had been established for the works does not stretch to cover the essential works. She has been in further discussions with Learning Estates and East Linton Primary requirements will be highlighted in the learning estates review that is being carried out and will be put before Council for approval in due course. Lyn asked that Gill obtain a timescale for the review being completed and which Council meeting it is due to be put to.

Following a request for any questions, Margaret wished it recorded that the excellent work of the team since lockdown was in part due to Gill and her ability to motivate everyone and safely lead the return to school.

There was a question about how consistency of mask wearing by parents at drop off and pick-up time could be improved. It was agreed that we try a joint statement from school and parent council to stress the need to build on the positive position that we are in and that we are all responsible for taking steps to ensure a positive example to the kids.

5) Future meeting schedule

Having not had a meeting since January, it was agreed necessary to try to re-establish a routine to be able to meet the needs of the various initiatives and pieces of work going forward. Lyn will look to schedule 6 weekly meetings again but if anything urgent comes up we could seek to convene meetings online relatively quickly.

6) Any other business

A request had been received for funding toward the P7 yearbooks. A donation of £150 had been received from Dunder CC and it was agreed that we fund the remainder. Lyn to confirm to Jill Taylor.

All Parent Councils had received guidance from the Council that all queries from parents on school building works should go through the Head Teacher. This ensures that the staff managing developing the works etc are enabled to focus on that work and not be diverted by dealing with queries. All Head Teachers are regularly updated and can contact the team directly.

Gill highlighted the schools desire to make the approach towards Christmas as positive for everyone as possible. A film of the Brunton Theatre's panto will be shown to the whole school and P1-3 children will also be able to watch The White Film. In addition, there will be a party for each class.

A request for funding from Parent Council for Christmas crackers and cookies for each child was approved, along with meeting the cost of food for the parties. The total cost of this is £260.

Gill discussed how P7's annual camp is being replaced with an Awesome Week towards the end of April. This will consist of outdoor education for 4 days activities around East Linton itself. The cost of £98 is cost neutral to the council but reflects the need for higher supervision levels. It was agreed the PC cover the initial 10% deposits for all children and a small group to be convened by Leigh will consider fundraising opportunities for various school activities and report back to the next meeting.

Heather highlighted an initiative to build language skills and asked if any parents had connections with businesses that might be interested in assisting with understanding how languages are used within work. She advised that there will be a specific request out to all parents as soon as possible.

One of parents unfortunately dropped out of the meeting due to care for child but followed up questions with Headteacher and Chair. Question in relation to nursery allocation of days and lack of consistency in meals and the imbalance of gender split between cohorts. Gill has fed back that these issues have been raised with the Council and she's awaiting feedback.

Comment made on lack of clarity on use of Google Classroom and its how parents are not informed directly that there are assignments etc to which Gill responded that Classroom is only really there as back up in case we have to go back into lockdown but some classes were using it for some homework – which is the only element parents need to look for, the chat is only for conversations as they would have been in class. If this doesn't work, parents can ask for notification of electronic homework on paper.

In relation to P3 and P2/3 there has been comment made by parents of P3 children in P2/3 that the focus of the class is too much on P2 and that the close collaboration between P3 pupils was not as close as it had been previously. Gill advised she has conducted formal observations and can guarantee that there is a clear differentiation in terms of teaching, tasks, content for the different year groups in P2/3 and a clear identify between the P2s and P3s in the class. She also added that all staff P1-3 have discussed planning together, submitting their plans for year and term to Headteacher and that there are other measures in place to ensure they have a shared understanding and judgement of what learning looks like at various points within these stages. Furthermore, these are

detailed on the improvement plan. Gill also reassures that Mrs Peck and Mrs McPheat are always happy to discuss individual progress if parents are worried and that they should contact the school as soon as possible.