

East Linton Primary School – Parent Council
General Meeting
22nd January 2022, 7pm online

Present: Lyn Jardine (Chair), Gill Gardner (Head Teacher), Margaret McKay (Principal Teacher/P7), Evie Thomas (P4), Leigh Pleasance (P6), Vera Hoban (Dunpender Community Council), Miss Tait(P2)

Anne Hunter (minutes)

East Lothian Council:

Neil Craik-Collins	– School Estates
Peter Forsyth	– Project Manager, Growth and Sustainability
Graeme Marsden	– Planning Obligation Officer
Ed Hendrikson	– Team Manager, Active Business Unit
Sam Williams	– Team Manager, Design and Programme Management

Apologies: Becca Bell (P2), Innes Jardine (Treasurer)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Introductions were made to P6 pupils Martha Shaw, Hannah Christison, Evie Wilkie, and Lily Nichol-Thompson. They introduced themselves and expressed their interest in swimming (Martha and Hannah), drawing (Lily – prizewinner for Fen the Fox road safety mascot) and motocross (Evie).

2. Declarations of Interests

None.

3. P6 Presentation

Before Christmas P6 were involved in projects relating to Enterprise and The Circular Economy. Evie described the train project which involved research followed by creation of stop motion animation adverts to encourage, more environmentally friendly, train travel. Although they didn't win the competition they entered they were proud of the work they had done. Martha described how they made recycled paper from scrap and using that paper wrote a letter to the First Minister about the environment and reducing plastic usage. The letter was shown first in an online video along with letters from other children throughout Scotland. Hannah talked about the circular economy challenge and reuse. This involved online meetings with local businesses, including Viridor, and the creation of eco-friendly side shows. It is hoped that a visit to Viridor will be possible once Covid guidance allows. Lily talked about spreading the word on the climate emergency through art with drawings featuring in the High Street phone box which was visited by a local MSP. Lily and Evie gave a presentation at assembly last Friday and their posters which confirm everyone sees things in different ways and that it's okay to be different are displayed in the school and welcomed by pupils and staff. They would like to set up a club to encourage people to be who they want to be and to support mental health and wellbeing. It was discussed that although there are things we all find challenging, it is important to celebrate the things we enjoy and can do well. A dress up/down day called 'Dress to Express' is coming up so that everyone can show their individuality. The children were thanked for a clear and organised presentation and congratulated on the confidence shown in presenting to adults and their

amazing work. People shared their experiences of working with people who have dyslexia and acknowledged it was not a barrier to a successful future. The posters will be shared on the Parent Council Twitter feed.

4. Apologies and Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December were approved.

5. Finance Report

The bank account signatories are not finalised as yet but should be in place before the next meeting which will allow 50/50 club cheques and cheques due to the school to be written.

6. Funding Requests

Nothing this month.

7. Chair's Update

Lyn Jardine reported that other parent council chairs have been enquiring about P7 residential weeks. Gill Gardner confirmed that would not be possible this year and that an adventure week with kayaking and climbing will take place at the end of March with activities within walking or cycling distance of East Linton. Margaret McKay reported that P5/6/7 are working towards their John Muir Award with Roger Powell, East Lothian Council Senior Countryside Ranger. There is also a P5/6/7 visit planned to John Muir's Birthplace which will be closed to the public to allow exclusive access.

8. Head Teacher's Update

Gill Gardner reported that Covid cases seem to be dropping with two this week as opposed to the normal half a dozen or so. The levels seen have not caused massive disruption and the school continues to operate at the highest level of guidance while keeping the normal and important things such as fantastic learning going. Hot meals will be available again in the lunch hall from Monday. Development work is ongoing including meetings with the quality improvement officer. Conversations about the progress of each pupil are also underway. Although guidance is still that only essential visitors are allowed there have been visits recently from specialist teachers. A PGDE teaching student joins us in P6 from Monday and a work experience person starts on Tuesdays in nursery later in the month. The updated Behaviour policy will be circulated prior to the next meeting and the mobile phone policy is being updated to include watches.

9. Fundraising

Becca Bell informed the meeting by mail that the fundraising group of herself Kirsten Snodgrass and Evie Thomas had discussed the possibility of a parent survey and Spring/Summer Fair.

Possible survey questions were:-

- How many fundraising events/campaigns would you like to see the parent council run per year? 2-3, 4-5, more?
- Which of the following types of events do you prefer? Sport events, sponsored events, selling events, adult/social events i.e pub quiz, or other?

- Would you find it motivating to know what the school needs, an annual financial target or are you not bothered?
- Does school fundraising add to financial pressure at home?
- Are there any specific types of events that you would like to see the parent council run, or that you have heard of elsewhere?
- Please fill out details if you would like to help with any events?

It was agreed to progress with the survey but that context was required as to why parents' opinion was being sought and this could include how much has been spent previously, on what and how important this has been to the school. This information will be collated from the school and the parent council accounts by Gill Gardner and Lyn Jardine.

The Spring/Summer fair was discussed but may not be possible under current guidelines. This will be discussed further by Gill Gardner and Lyn Jardine.

A question was raised about the sale of the cookbooks and Gill Gardner committed to check the current situation.

10. Council meeting – new school

The attendees from East Lothian Council introduced themselves.

Graeme Marsden - planning obligations officer helping deliver school extensions and schools.

Neil Craik-Collins – responsible for the curriculum and school estate development.

Sam Williams – architect involved in school extensions and new schools.

Ed Hendrikson – concerned with the sporting areas within park and the open space.

Peter Forsyth – involved in transport integration, the rail halt, parking and access to school.

Neil Craik-Collins reported on a healthy response from East Linton in the two rounds of consultation making up the Learning Estate Review. Analysis of responses should be complete by the end of this month and the next stage is a Learning Estate Improvement Strategy followed by a plan which should tie up the East Lothian Council plan and the Strategy from the Scottish Government. The project is at an early stage and views are being sought on how to take forward this important development which is an opportunity for the community to build something that addresses wider needs than education.

Graeme Marsden talked about the report that went before ELC in December. ELC were concerned that an extension would not deliver a high quality teaching and learning environment and would not be future proofed for any required expansion so requested a replacement school be considered. The condition and suitability of the existing school is Cat C with a number of issues requiring significant investment. On current projections taking into account the new Stuart Milne development and natural fluctuation the school roll will breach the current 8 class capacity at start of 2024. Even with a new school being built a temporary classroom will be required at that point. The location of a new school in the park is suggested due to it being in the heart of village, easily accessible and safe to access on foot. The council own the land occupied by the football pitch which was placed into the education account to be in place should expansion be required. An alternative site has not been considered as ELC has no other land around East Linton and finding suitable land is challenging due to planning constraints and local heritage constraints and scheduled ancient monuments.

The three proposed layouts were presented and can be seen on the following webpage: https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/16833/east_lothian_council. It was highlighted that the building mass shown in the diagrams is not based on any specific design but is on an indicative scale drawn from the 9-10 class building currently planned in Whitecraig. The aim is that the school should be available for community use outside of school hours. In all cases the original part of the existing school building will be retained but no decision has been taken on future use. All options show echelon parking occupying a section of Memorial Park however the central location should allow the parking allocation to be minimal. The impact on the existing trees will be minimised. In all options the War Memorial Monument will be unaffected. During construction there will be a temporary loss of most facilities within the park though this could be phased depending on the option chosen and the location of construction work. There is a requirement to replace the existing facilities but feedback will be sought on how and where these will be sited. Construction will take at least 18 months with the earliest completion date being summer 2025. A consultation period will last from 1st to 28th February with the website link - <http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/east-linton-ps>

Lyn Jardine thanked the ELC attendees for the presentation and confirmed that the Parent Council are aware that there will be a difficult balancing act due to the fact that the school needs may be different from the community need with respect to the park and committed to working with Dunsper Community Council (DCC). She asked how extensively the consultation would be publicised in East Linton and the surrounding areas. Graeme Marsden confirmed that a website has been set up, there will be banners in the village and that they have been in touch with interest groups such as the tennis, bowling and football clubs. There will be representation at the meeting of DCC on 3rd February. Word will also be spread on social media and a drop-in morning session will take place at The Mart in mid-February.

Vera Hoban stressed that details of the consultation will need to reach the whole community and that not everyone is tech-savvy and won't look at anything online. Residents she has spoken to were unaware of the plan to build in the park within the conservation area. She questioned if there could be a presentation in the Village Hall with a Q and A session. Neil Craik-Collins confirmed this was unlikely as consultation training does not recommend this approach however Graeme Marsden committed to raising it at a meeting on Friday 28th and further detail would be reported to the DCC meeting.

Evie Thomas reinforced that closing the only green space for 18 months for constructions would be difficult for children and residents. Sam Williams confirmed depending on the site agreed and the location for school it may be possible to phase things to keep something available.

Guests were asked about thoughts on the remaining part of the existing school. Graeme Marsden confirmed that no decision had been made but it is not listed although it is located in the conservation area. Retaining this part and incorporating it into a new school on the existing site was investigated but rejected as it would require a temporary school in the park during construction which would come at a significant cost. ELC are looking for feedback on how it can be used.

Ed Hendrikson confirmed that the sporting facilities are protected under planning and so must be re-provided. He also referred to the well-used open space full of mature trees forming the green heart of East Linton and expressed a desire that ELC want to understand importance of this community space. Sam Williams stated that it will be a difficult decision and recognised the

beautiful and important park which is used 24x7. She confirmed that ELC don't want to provide anything that makes community unhappy and encouraged participants to put their points on the consultation so they can be taken into account.

Peter Forsyth recognised that difficult choices would have to be made by community. He also highlighted that there would be massive disruption for a long time while the station and the school were under construction. The community would need to try and make it the most positive outcome for East Linton for all the years to come but that not everyone will be happy but it is a start point to a conversation.

Lyn Jardine thanked the ELC colleagues for their attendance and will encourage parents to get involved in the consultation and will look to work collaboratively with DCC to ensure a broad range of views are represented.

Everyone agreed that a new school is needed and it will be a good opportunity but recognised that staff and pupils love the existing school and will be sad to see it go. Nobody wants to see a big box in the middle of the park so involvement in design is crucial. There was a discussion over whether 'The Platypus' (glass cases of stuffed animals in school) would be moving to the new school and Gill Gardner confirmed that platypus and friends may be going on long term loan to 5 Sisters Zoo.

11. AOB

Nothing

12. Next meeting

Thursday 10/03/2022 – 7pm – online via Google meet

28th Apr (Neil Morland to chair meeting)

9th Jun (AGM)