

East Lothian Council
Services for People, Department of Education
DRAFT

East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members Meeting held on
 Tuesday 1 October 2013, Brunton Hall, Musselburgh

Present:

Pauline O'Brien (Chair), **Val McIntyre** (Principal Officer), **Darrin Nightingale** (Head of Education), **Councillor Shamin Akhtar** (Convenor of the Education Committee), **Gaynor Allen** (Campie PS/Musselburgh Grammar PC), **Susan Begg** (Athelstaneford), **Pamela Bell** (Whitecraig PC), **Joanne Bloomfield** (Stenton PC), Carol Cook [Pencaitland PC] **Tracy Doran** (Whitecraig PC), **Gillian Fordyce** (Musselburgh Burgh PC), **Lorna Forsyth** (West Barns PC), **Bill Gleeson** (Loretto PC), **Lynne Hogg** (Macmerry PC), Jill Jeans [Saltoun PC] **Vikki Johnson** (Musselburgh Burgh PC), **Lauren Johnston Smith** (Prestonpans Infants), **Chris Kelly** (Campie PC), **Adalene Lammie** (Dirleton PC), **Iain Laurie** (Humbie PC), **Mark Lucas** (Gullane PC), **Jane Moffat** (Macmerry PC), **Claire Pedder** (Ormiston PC), **Stacey Russell** (Musselburgh Burgh PC), **Rebecca Salt** (Saltoun PC), Victoria Simpson [Yester PC] **Carol Snow** (NPFS Rep), **Elaine Towler** (Haddington Infants), **Andrew Watson** (Yester PC),] **Mary Benson** (Clerk)

Apologies:

Alex McCrorie, (Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) Elphinstone PC; Dunbar PC; Colin Henderson [Pencaitland PC].

		Action
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Pauline O'Brien welcomed everyone to the East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members Meeting and introductions were carried out round the table.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies and Approval of Minutes</p> <p>Apologies were noted as above. The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.</p>	
3	<p>Update from Darrin Nightingale, Head of Education</p> <p>Place2Be Place2Be provide a therapeutic counselling service at 6 schools within 3 clusters in East Lothian. East Lothian Council is in the process of looking for a future preferred supplier for this service, based on a new specification drawn up by the user group. By the close of business next Thursday (10 October 2013), Darrin will be able to confirm if the service will go out to wide tender or whether there will be an amendment of the existing agreement with Place2Be. Until this matter is resolved, the service will continue to be provided by Place2Be, so that there can be a careful handover to ensure that no youngsters are left without support in the interim. There is a desire to roll the service out to other schools in East Lothian, although due to funding therapeutic counselling could not be offered in every school. The aim is to provide a service in the biggest primary school in each of the three clusters without cover at present.</p> <p>Parent Representative on the Education Committee Following discussions at the last meeting, Val McIntyre has contacted every Parent Council to ask if they would support the idea of a parent representative on the Education Committee, as proposed by the National Parent Forum of Scotland. Less than half of all Parent Councils have responded to date. Of those who have responded, the majority have been in favour. The role of the Education Committee was discussed. Many at the meeting felt that parents</p>	

<p>could have more of an input if they were involved in the Strategy Group, which makes the decisions, rather than the Education Committee, which essentially rubber-stamps them. Parents felt that they were not clear what their role would be on the Education Committee and what a prospective parent member of the Committee would be signing up for. It was agreed that a working group would be set up to discuss the matter further with Darrin. Gaynor Allen, Susan Begg, Chris Kelly, Mark Lucas, Carol Snow and Elaine Towler volunteered for this.</p> <p>Parents also felt that it would be useful for someone to observe the Education Committee and feed back to ELAPCM. The next meeting is Tuesday 26 November, 2-4pm in the Council Chamber in Haddington Town House. No one at the meeting was available to attend, but Val McIntyre will circulate the date by email to all, to see if there are any other parent reps available.</p>	<p>DN, GA SB, CK ML, CS ET</p>
<p>Head Teacher Recruitment</p> <p>There are now only three outstanding Head Teacher appointments to be made, two of which are at short-leet stage and one at long-leet. Darrin praised his team who had worked hard to clear the list of Head Teacher appointments. He also thanked parents who had been involved during the interview process.</p> <p>The Education Authority will be looking at modernising the Head Teacher recruitment process and Darrin will be looking for parent volunteers to discuss this. Parents who wish to be involved must have undertaken the Recruitment & Selection training course.</p>	<p>VM</p>
<p>Council Restructure</p> <p>East Lothian Council's Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) will not have a big impact on schools. Teachers were exempt from the scheme and very few support staff posts are affected, although 4 posts will be lost in the Education Dept at John Muir House.</p>	
<p>Early Years</p> <p>3 and 4 year olds in Scotland are currently entitled to 475 hours a year of pre-school education. Under a Scottish Government initiative, this will increase to 600 hours in 2014, for all three and four year olds and some vulnerable 2 year olds. This will take the form of nursery education and/or childcare. Darrin wants to consult parents as to how to provide the extra 125 hours. An on-line consultation has resulted in 15 replies, although it was reported that there had been some technical difficulties in submitting responses online. Darrin will investigate this. It is intended to publicise this consultation further to get more feedback from nursery parents.</p> <p>A parent rep is sought for a new working group to consider this in further detail. This will involve attending a monthly meeting during the day, with a 12 month commitment. Val McIntyre will advertise for a parent volunteer by email via the Parent Councils.</p>	<p>DN</p>
<p>Teaching Scotland's Future - will be discussed at the next meeting.</p>	
<p>Catchment Areas</p> <p>Catchment Areas have been raised by some schools and this has been discussed within the Education Authority and with Elected Members. There will be no change to existing catchment areas and Alex McCrorie will be sending a response to those concerned explaining the details.</p>	<p>VM VM</p>
<p>Primary Management Review</p> <p>Proposals will be shared with unions and staff at the end of October.</p>	
<p>School Holiday Consultations</p> <p>A parent asked if there was any scope for school holidays to be unified across the Lothians, so that Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian could have the same term and holiday dates. Darrin said he was happy to discuss this with the other local authorities, but noted that it would be impossible to please everyone. Parents are given the right to comment on</p>	

	<p>proposed dates, along with Council staff, unions and teachers, and the recent recommendation to Committee for 2014/15 dates went with the sizeable majority, which was to align with Midlothian. These dates have now been confirmed.</p> <p>Darrin said that Edinburgh publish their dates three years in advance and noted this can be useful for parents. He will discuss the matter with Richard Parker.</p> <p>Darrin was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting.</p>	DN
4	<p>Matters Arising – Pauline O’Brien</p> <p>Format of Meetings A less formal opportunity for Parent Council Members to share and discuss matters was discussed. Parents felt that informal discussions are useful, although the formal discussions were also important. It was agreed that the January meeting of ELAPCM would be half a formal, minuted meeting with the second half as an informal chat session. The sharing of good practice was discussed. It was agreed that last year’s good practice questionnaire to Parent Councils was useful and should be sent out annually. Val will email the questionnaire to all Parent Councils and the results will be discussed at the next meeting in November. The benefits of using online social media to chat with other Parent Councils were debated, but it was agreed on balance that this would not be taken forward at this time.</p> <p>Head Teacher Attendance A parent had asked if Head Teachers should be invited to attend ELAPCM, perhaps on a cluster basis. Parents felt this would not be of use, unless it was for a specific purpose, such as sharing good practice with regards to parental or community involvement. Val will send out a general email to all Parent Councils and Head Teachers about this, so that ELAPCM can invite suitable speakers to attend a future meeting.</p> <p>Roles of Parent Representatives on Strategic Groups / Working Groups There was a discussion about ELAPCM and the roles of parent reps on strategic groups and/or working groups. It was agreed that things need to be formalised and an informal protocol (rather than a formal constitution) for ELAPCM will be drawn up following discussions with a sub-group. Gaynor Allen, Joanne Bloomfield, Adalene Lammie and Carol Snow agreed to form this sub-group with Val recording discussions and feeding back to ELAPCM. Parents on strategic/working groups should feedback to ELAPCM. If parents are unable to attend the ELAPCM meeting, they could produce a short written update, which could be attached to the agenda for background reading prior to the meeting.</p>	<p>VM</p> <p>VM</p> <p>GA, JB AL, CS VM</p>
5	<p>National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) – Carol Snow Carol Snow advertised the National Parent Forum of Scotland’s annual conference on 5 October in Bishopbriggs. The event is free and the theme this year is Health & Wellbeing.</p> <p>The location of the conference was discussed and Carol agreed to raise the question as to whether the event could be run in Edinburgh one year to encourage parents from the east of Scotland to attend.</p> <p>After the last ELAPCM meeting, Carol had asked the NPFS if draft minutes could be made available to parents, rather than waiting several months for them to be approved at the next meeting before circulating them. She has been told that NPFS’s policy is not to circulate</p>	CS

	minutes before they are approved, but they have agreed to circulate a short summary within a couple of weeks of each meeting.	
6	<p>Update from Val McIntyre</p> <p>Minister's Visit – Dunbar Primary School Congratulations to Dunbar Primary's Parent Council who have won in the "Parents as Partners in Learning Award" at The Scottish Education Awards for their parental and community involvement. Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Scottish Government Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages will be visiting the school this Thursday.</p> <p>Parent Council AGM's / Annual Reports / Constitutions / Calendar of Meeting Dates Val thanked all Parent Councils who have sent in copies of their Annual Reports and Constitutions following recent AGMs. She noted that changes to Constitutions must be agreed with the Parent Council, and advertised to the whole parent forum at the school. Parent Councils should also forward copies of their meeting dates for the year to her.</p> <p>Online payments – Ormiston Primary School Ormiston Primary School have been piloting an online payment scheme and the system went live last Monday (23 September). There have been some problems implementing the scheme, particularly with regard to cashless catering. The new system will be reviewed regularly and Val will provide an update at the next meeting. This will become a standing Agenda item.</p> <p>Musselburgh Burgh Primary School Playground Val thanked Musselburgh Burgh Primary School Parent Council for her invitation to a garden party in their playground today, to celebrate the completion of their playground improvement works. Vikki Johnston gave a summary of the work the school, parents and Parent Council had done together to transform their urban playground over the last 8 years. Val said that it had been a massive project, with a fantastic outcome and congratulated the Parent Council on their work on this.</p>	VM
7	<p>Parent Council Matters</p> <p>School Holiday Consultations – see item 2</p>	
8	A.O.B. - none	
9	<p>Future Meeting Dates Wednesday 27 November 2013 – Town House, Haddington Thursday 16 January 2014 – Esk Rooms, Brunton Hall, Musselburgh Tuesday 25 February 2014 – Town House, Haddington Wednesday 23 April 2014 – Esk Rooms, Brunton Hall, Musselburgh Thursday 5 June 2014 – Town House, Haddington</p>	