

## Ormiston Primary School Parent Council

Minutes of Meeting held in the school on Tuesday 20 January 2015

**Present:** Alastair McConnachie (Chair), Jim Blane, Lisa Cunningham, Ian Florry, Councillor Jim Gillies, Jill McCaul, Michelle Outerson, Claire Pedder, Sonia Renton, Ian Stewart (Ormiston Grows), David Torrance and Jill Wilson

**In Attendance:** Helen Gardyne (Head Teacher) and Angela Kinnear (Clerk)

### 1. **Welcome and Apologies**

Alastair welcomed everyone to the Meeting. Apologies were received from Rebecca Mitchell, Wendy Thomas and Councillors Donald Grant, Kenny McLeod and Shamin Akhtar.

### 2. **Approval of AGM Minutes held on 18 November 2014**

The Minutes from the last Meeting were approved.

### 3. **Walking Bus**

Ian Stewart from Ormiston Grows attended the meeting to discuss the possibilities of setting up a "Walking Bus" for the children of Ormiston Primary School. Ian had earlier attended the Christmas Shopping Event in November with a survey to gain people's thoughts on setting up a Walking Bus. Ian hoped that the Parent Council could arrange for the survey to be sent out to the wider parent body to get more people interested to come together to discuss and take forward. The Transport Coordinator in East Lothian Council and the Police could also become involved with the project. Ian informed us that Ormiston Grows has funding until the end of March to take this project forward.

The survey results so far indicate that p1-p4 children would be the age group to benefit from the Walking Bus and 28% of people who completed the survey would "possibly" volunteer to help with the Walking Bus. Helen was concerned that quite a few walking routes would need to be set up because of the location of the school within the village and as there was a shortage of time and manpower to put the project in place the help from Ormiston Grows/Ian could be better used to look at making safer walking routes/crossing places for the children and actively look at ways to cut down parents driving children to/from school.

Helen indicated that the school had previously looked into safer routes to use to walk to school and with the help of Ormiston Grows and Ian heat signs could be produced and put onto pavements to indicate safer places to cross the road and routes to follow to school.

Helen suggested that Ian contact her directly at the school to discuss how to take this project forward.

### 4. **Charitable Status**

Claire confirmed that the written statement and application is now ready to be sent to OSCR. She collected the signed trustee forms from Parent Council Members and confirmed she would arrange to send everything out on Friday 23 January 2015.

5. **Fundraising**

Sonia/Jill Mc confirmed that a Parent Council Fundraising Meeting would be held in the Coalgate at 7.30pm on Tuesday 27 January 2015.

It was confirmed that another Film Night shall take place in March (date to be confirmed). The Film Licence shall however require to be renewed beforehand (£78). Claire/Jill W confirmed they would ensure this is paid/renewed. Sonia confirmed she would choose the films and purchase the DVDs.

A tea towel text/email is to be sent out to remind parents that they are still available to purchase.

Sharon Marr has volunteered to take the photographs for the 2016 calendar. It was suggested that these photographs are taken after August.

Breakdown of Fundraising:-

Tea Towels Sales	£443
Film Night	£200
Christmas Shopping Event	£510

6. **Treasurer's Report**

Jill W confirmed that the balance of the Parent Council Account is £2,872.31. It was also noted that we had a further £93 to add to this balance for additional tea towel purchases.

Jill also confirmed that she would be stepping down as the Treasurer once the school breaks up for summer. If anybody is interested in taking on this position, they should let Jill know. Paperwork will also be required to be completed at the Bank to have this change initiated and renewal of nominated officer bearers noted.

7. **Head Teacher's Report**

Helen spoke about the music assembly held before the end of last term by Louise Johnston. All the children in the school took part, even the children from the nursery came along and everybody thought it was a great success. 35 children from P5 and P7 have signed up for further music sessions which shall be held within the school day.

Helen confirmed that she has met with the architect regarding the proposed changes to be made to the front of the school. Funding has been allocated and further plans are to be drawn up to get things moving along. The planned work is hoped to be completed during the summer holidays. She also informed us that a tar path shall be laid during the February holidays around the nursery play area.

A Curriculum evening is to be held in the school on Wednesday 4 March. Both parents and children are welcome to attend. Helen asked us for suggestions of topics to cover, we suggested Read Write Inc/Oxford reading books, learning stories and possibly have some chrome books set up to show parents how we are using these within the school. Further information shall be sent out to parents nearer the time.

The Scots Assembly shall be held in school on Friday 30 January.

Helen is continuing to update the school blog with lots of extremely helpful information for children and parents, she encouraged us all to take a look.

Through the Scottish Government Language Project Helen confirmed that all children within the school, including the nursery shall be learning a second language. As from August 2015 all the children shall be taught French.

8. **Correspondence**

Emails were received from The National Parent Forum of Scotland regarding the Scottish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee and another regarding Membership of the East Lothian Community Rail Partnership from Fa'side Area Partnership. These emails were distributed to the parent council members and also posted on our Facebook page for information purposes.

9. **Parent Information Events**

Unfortunately we have only received 4 responses so Lena Hutton, the Local Community Development Officer confirmed that the Parent Information Events sadly would not take place unless we received more interest to take them forward.

It was suggested that an E-Safety session may be of more interest to parents/carers. During discussion it was decided an information board be available on this subject at the Curriculum Evening to raise awareness. Lena also informed us of a new course "Raising Children with Confidence" – Helen shall look into this. **ACTION: HELEN**

10. **Parent Queries**

It was raised that some of the QR codes are still not working within the Learning Stories. Helen confirmed she would look into this further. **ACTION: HELEN**

As children are continuing to lose their clothes/fitness gear would it be possible to have their names printed on their clothing? Helen confirmed she would contact the printers to query this suggestion. **ACTION: HELEN**

Swimming Lessons are provided to all children within p5/6. The question raised was do all children really benefit from these - can they not be given to younger kids? Helen confirmed that this activity will continue to be offered to this age group but also added that it was not compulsory for your child to attend.

A parent raised a query regarding interschool activities. Helen encouraged parents to come forward and discuss with her any activities they feel their children may be interested taking part in. Attendance at these activities will however depend on cost/availability/numbers and travel arrangements.

Complaints have been received regarding the school text updates. Not all parents are able to contact the school immediately and are therefore missing out on any offers/free tickets which become available. Helen took on board all suggestions for the future.

World Book Day - Obsourne Books - Sponsored Reading Sheets - a percentage of book sales are returned to the school. Helen would look into this but she wasn't keen on asking parents for money through sponsorship.

11. **ELAPCM Update**

School Catering

Many parents have expressed concerns about the reduction in variety, choice and potentially quality arising from the new menu which was created to ensure the anticipated increase in numbers from January 2015 can be catered for due to free school meals. There were also concerns that children wouldn't have enough time to collect and eat their lunch if uptake is high and whether additional staff are to be

provided to deal with lunch. Assurance was given that the menus are analysed to ensure that it meets the Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations which are very tight standards set by the Scottish Government. Very quickly after the menu was introduced it was realised through feedback from schools that Tuesdays were a problem as the choice was limited. This problem was resolved by introducing baked potatoes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Also recruitment is taking place for extra staff required at certain schools to prepare, cook and serve lunches.

A low number of children are not choosing the "healthy" options – some of the new options on the menu have low uptake eg Fish Pie and a planned activity is to be undertaken to give children a taster of some of these dishes.

### Budgets

Education is responsible for around 50% of the overall Council budget. The budget is a three year rolling budget, the end of year one is on 31 March 2015. The level of savings required by primary schools is £200,000 and £600,000 for secondary schools over the three years. To achieve primary school savings it has been necessary to reduce the number of teaches in the nursery setting and replacing these with nursery nurses. Authorities are required by the Scottish Government to keep teacher numbers the same wherever possibly. East Lothian also have an agreement that no teacher can be made redundant. Teachers therefore from a nursery will be moved into positions within schools.

Some of the suggested savings in secondary schools were given by other authorities (not East Lothian Council):-

- Move free school transport to statutory three miles
- Reducing the number of subjects offered at schools at Higher/Advance Higher
- Looking at class sizes
- Charging for music lessons/service
- Exploring flexible working
- Change number of hours young people are taught by teachers
- Close small schools
- Reduction in the number of schools
- Reducing teacher numbers
- Stopping Advance Highers
- Consolidating subjects taught

12. **AOCB**

There was no further current business.

13. **Date of Next Meeting**

17 March 2015