

Ormiston Parent Council

AGM

10th December 2020

Meeting held on zoom @ 7pm

Attendees:

Chair - Phil Bancroft

Head Teacher - Helen Gardyne

Treasurer - Ian Flory

Class Teacher - Kirsty Dunn

Secretary - Caroline Gray

Pascal Smith, Zoe Baird, Ed Baird, Marianne Sellar, Garrett Brady, Jo Barron, Vicky Marr, Michaela Malone, Lyndsey Richardson

Councilors: Shamim Ahktar and John McMillan

Apologies: Lynsey, Alex Gray

Welcome

Welcome to everyone old and new with thanks for taking the time to join us tonight.

Previous minutes reviewed:

Everyone agrees that they are happy with the previous minutes

Chairs Report

Phil Bancroft sets out the challenges and achievements of the year with the difficulties that the Covid pandemic has presented for the school staff, children and families, recognising too, the additional pressures on members within the parent council to adapt to new circumstances in order to raise funds and juggle changing personal demands of family and work through Covid 19.

He noted despite the pandemic, the welcome new additions to the parent council and the new online fundraising approaches being embraced to make up for lack of other normal fundraising opportunities, particularly the hard work by Ian Flory to establish the Peoples Fundraising platform that is proving very helpful already. Thanks also to Alex Gray for the Covid friendly wooden box he has hand crafted for the parent council.

Special thanks to members of the parent council who are stepping down for all the support they have given over the years.
Shamim Ahktar pays tribute the hardwork and dedication of the school throughout this very difficult year wishing special thanks to be passed to the school staff.

Treasurers Report

Ian Flory set out the year financial records, which are more minimal than usual due to the nature of the year with the pandemic. A sum of £2400 was passed to the school early in the school year for the purchase of more equipment to better support outdoor learning across the full curriculum in Covid 19 circumstances.

Special thanks to Co-op who are regular donators to the Parent Council fund and to the local Zumba who donated £120.

Ian thanked Jo for putting him in touch with a new accountant who is able to help sign off the books after the previous person retired.

John McMillan pays thanks to Ian for the well-managed and clearly set out finances acknowledging the hard work required in the treasury role of any such organisation.

Trustees

Ed Baird and Michaela Malone have agreed to become trustees of the parent council and a show of hands from the group agreed to them taking their roles, joining Phil Bancroft and Sonia Renton.

Head Teacher's Update

Helen Gardyne feeds back the success of the online learning in lockdown earlier in the year. Despite the difficult circumstances, children being able to see each other online really helped everyone stay connected with their teacher and peers and that the return to school classrooms in August was much less anxious for the children than was anticipated.

The school was asked to submit a report to the Scottish Government on their educational provision during lockdown and was subsequently published as a best practice example in one of their publications.

The school is taking part in a SEIC Research School project, which focuses on 'Learners leading Learners'. The school began this last year successfully at level 1 with children working across classrooms with peers but due to Covid this hasn't been able to progress in the

development across the school as would have been hoped due to the limitation in bubble mixing. The first level classes have been using video teaching to attempt this with younger students this year but it hasn't worked as well as the face to face of the previous year. It's hoped that next year they will be able to continue this as before.

The school is close to being accredited as a Lighthouse School with Covid limitations being the reason this hasn't happened yet. They will be the third school in the UK to receive this accreditation, which focuses on the 'Leader in Me' Project.

Teachers Kirsty and Gill have been working on a huge project with Education Scotland to develop a Digital Learning Program that will be shared throughout Scotland.

Kirsty Dunn explained how the money from the parent council has been used to fund resources that have allowed outdoor learning across the whole curriculum to be moved outside and a shift in learning environment has become the new norm for many classes since the return to school in August.

Helen explained that they were going to be working with the Education Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) to explore areas where the school would like to develop their practice with the aspiration of being awarded an excellent grade. This is recognition of the number of high quality experiences in place across the school and the school's desire to be offering sector leading practice across the board. We will update the Parent Council on progress with this once we start working together.

Playground Development Project

Helen shared that as part of the school extension plan there is an allocated funding pot for the development of a new playground. The school has playground leaders who are currently in Primary 5 who have been working with the architects and consulting their fellow pupils about what they would like to see for the new playground.

Lots of discussions have taken place around two main suggested plans which have both taken into account the wishes of the children as much as possible, including key wishes for tunnels, soft spongy material for their knees, things to jump off, artificial grass -for all year round play and a pillars and ropes area.

The children have chosen the second plan as it offers more choices and flexibility in how the space can be used.

The build was originally meant to start in August 2020 but has been delayed for multiple reasons including the Covid 19 pandemic. There is no confirmed start date as yet but it is hoped by next spring there will be more final information.

John McMillan took the opportunity to praise the excellent work being done in the school with particular attention to all the outdoor learning achievements.

He shared that he had recently had contact with David Stevenson of Queen Margaret University who is part of the development of an outdoor learning certification in collaboration with Newhills house, including areas of agriculture development. He welcomed the opportunity to open connections and develop collaboration with the school.

Zoe Baird welcomed the playground plan and added that a list of aspirations of any part of the playground development that could be specifically fundraised for that wasn't included in the council funding would be really helpful for targeting funding streams that require specific targets.

Shamim Ahktar shared her congratulations to the school team on so much inclusion of the children in the development of all these positive changes and for the heroic effort being shown by education staff in what has been such an immensely challenging year.

Michaela Malone and Pascal Smith both praised the school playground plan and thanked school staff for their continued efforts.

After School Club

Garret Brady fed back about the stage of progress with the After School Club. It currently cannot run in the previous set-up with Pencaitlant ASC due to non-mixing of bubbles from different schools, which has left Ormiston with no current service.

Garret has been in touch with Simon Davies, Area Coordinator, with information that council buildings will hopefully begin to open again in the Spring 2021, which will provide better opportunities to establish a permanent Ormiston Club.

It's the intention of the Ormi After-School sub-committee to establish a meeting date in mid to late January with all relevant parties around the table to begin planning the next steps.

The school will forward any new enrolling parents who are interested in the After-school club to the Ormi After School facebook group for up to date information and contacts.

Shamim Ahktar shared that the opening up of council buildings for young people in particular is a high priority and that the After School Club would very much be included in this. She feels that the hurdles to opening a group in Ormiston, really are due to the Covid 19 pandemic at the present

time and that otherwise there is a lot of support to make it happen in the hopeful near future. Vicky from Tranent After-School Club is also very supportive.

Final comments

Vicky Marr– Happy to listen and hear the progress of the group

Phil Bancroft –

Thanked Vicky for all her help and noted that she has excellent connections with the community and hopes she can help with any areas of the community that we are not reaching as a priority in the New Year.

Welcome to Lyndsey Richardson who is moving to the village in 2021 with her child enrolling in the new school year in August. She is keen to join and support the Parent Council and the establishing of an After-School club.

Caroline Gray – Looking forward to working with the parent council as the secretary and shared thanks for all the hard work from the school staff in extra challenging circumstances this year. I don't feel that all in society fully appreciate what you do and have done through the pandemic and I hope that changes in the future. You are an excellent school and we are very proud to have our children attending here.

Kirsty Dunn – Thank you for everyone's kind comments to the school.

Ian Flory – Shared thanks to everyone. Agree with all previous comments. Children are coming home from school having had a great day, which is all you can hope for.

Phil – Thanks to all for coming along tonight and have a good Christmas.