

MINUTES OF  
PRESTON LODGE PARENT COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON  
THURSDAY, 4 MAY 2017  
AT PRESTON LODGE HIGH SCHOOL

Present Pauline O'Brien, Parent Representative and Chair  
Lynne Lewis, Parent Representative and Vice Chair  
Saddah Aziz, Parent Representative  
Lynne Russell, Parent Representative  
Pamela Currie, Parent Representative  
Judith McNeill, Parent Representative  
Russell Devine, Parent Representative  
Jean Harper, Parent Representative  
Julie Lowe, Preston Lodge Learning Foundation – Items 1 - 4  
Gavin Clark, Head Teacher  
Jacqui Dunlop, Clerk

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were intimated on behalf of Dawn Yorkston, Colin Yorkston, Malcolm Brydon and Cllr Innes.

2. MINUTES OF 9 MARCH 2017

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 9 March 2017 were a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 1 DECEMBER 2016 BUT NOT ON THE AGENDA

a) Depute Head – Gavin Clark confirmed that Yvonne Binks will remain at Knox Academy up until the Summer. The Parent Council noted disappointment that she had not returned by the initially agreed date of the Easter Holidays.

b) Counselling – Gavin Clark reported that there is a clear system in place and that Preston Lodge offers more counselling than any other secondary school in East Lothian, with appointments given between 1 week and a couple of months and two Counsellors in place. The parent council noted that it would be good to have more Counsellors in place, and perhaps this was something that the Charitable Trust could explore. Gavin Clark confirmed that he would respond directly to the parent who raised the issue.

4. CHARITABLE TRUST

Julie Lowe reported that she is working on the "Friends of Preston Lodge" Event which is to engage with the Alumni. An informal exhibition is planned in school with canapes and wine, along with a tour of the school where the official launch of friends of Preston Lodge will take place. The membership will be free and anyone who has been involved in the school in any capacity will be able to join. It is hoped that the initiative will enhance current links and build relationships with businesses etc. The event takes place on 26 September and some members of the Parent Council agreed that they would be able to volunteer.

Julie hopes to have the social media up and running shortly and tickets for the event will be available through Eventbrite. Following the launch the exhibition will be available for two days for members of the community who wish to drop in.

Gavin Clark noted that at no time will the Friends of Preston Lodge be asked for money, but if people wish to donate they can. Julie Lowe is working on a list of those to contact and any contacts which the parent council knew of should be forwarded onto Julie.

Other initiatives which have taken place are the transformation of the school garden, maths camp and mountain club. The school has also been shortlisted by the Co-Op for funding for a Bicycle Club. The website is nearly ready to launch and bids have been submitted for funding for e-praise, a breakfast club, S1 trip. A fundraising event is taking place in Dunblane with proceeds going to the Charitable Trust, and it is hoped to use this funding to run workshops for girls.

Pauline O'Brien she will be standing down from the Trust as her term has ended and would encourage members of the Parent Council to consider joining the Trust Board as a parent representative.

Julie Lowe was thanked for her update.

#### 5. TRANSITION AND SUPPORT FOR P7s

Gavin Clark reported that an information booklet is produced and that the Film Group are currently making a film for P7s. There is an enhanced transition programme for specific pupils which is well developed. It was agreed that Pam McIntosh would be invited to the next meeting to discuss the transition process, and parental views on how to improve the process would be welcomed. Feedback is currently gathered from the S1s in June and October. It was agreed that a Parent Council representative would speak at the transition evening on 22 June and Judith McNeil agreed to speak on behalf of the Parent Council.

Gavin Clark noted that he had addressed some issues from a parent of the Cockenzie Parent Council and would contact Jacqui McKinnon to see if further input was required. (*Action Gavin Clark*)

#### 6. LONGNIDDRY BUSES

Pauline O'Brien noted that she had emailed Andrew McClelland to ask him to contact the Longniddry parents to explain the procedures for the buses for next term.

Lynne Lewis noted that there was an advert for Vaping at the Longniddry Bus Stop where pupils get picked up and she had contacted Cllr Innes regarding this and it was immediately removed. Pauline O'Brien agreed to contact Cllr Innes to make him aware of the issues surrounding the Longniddry buses. (*Action Pauline O'Brien*)

#### 7. PUPIL EQUITY FUND UPDATE

Gavin Clark confirmed that Preston Lodge will receive £63,000 and the school need to outline it how it will be used by Friday, 12 May. It was agreed that this would go on the Agenda for the June meeting for further discussion.

Gavin Clark noted that a small amount of money is being used to employ staff to identify the gap and inform the decision. It was noted that the £63,000 should be spent in the school year, however it can be carried forward. He noted that the pilot small group tuition was worthwhile and the school have learned a lot and he will report back in September on the impact of the funding, when the exam results are known.

Gavin Clark noted that families will be encouraged to apply for the free school meals, even if they don't take them, as they also get the clothing grant and it is the number of families applying for free school meals which determined the amount of funding available.

#### 8. CHILD EXPLOITATION TRAINING

Lynne Lewis attended the Child Exploitation training. Although it was an interesting workshop it was noted that they were not sure why they were at the training, and no one from the authority was present. Lynne Lewis felt the training was appropriate for secondary school pupils and Gavin Clark noted that there is a currently a good programme run in schools for pupils. Awareness of the Blue Whale social media challenge was also highlighted. The parent council suggested that S6 pupils may be tasked with a project regarding internet awareness for S1 pupils.

#### 9. ADVANCE HIGHER CHOICES

Lynne Lewis asked if it was possible for information on the number of pupils applying for Advance Highers compared with what courses ran. Gavin Clark agreed to get this information for the next meeting. (*Action Gavin Clark*)

It was noted that there is a huge drop off in pupils starting the courses and sitting the exams, and felt that a better option for pupils would be to consider the Open University courses. He noted that universities are increasingly not recognising Advance Higher qualifications.

#### 10. AGM

The AGM will take place on Thursday, 1 June at 7.00 pm at the school. Pauline O'Brien noted that she will be standing down from the Parent Council as she no longer will have a pupil at the school.

Russell Devine and Lynne Lewis are one year through their two-year term.

Colin Yorkston, Dawn Yorkston, Pamela Currie and Saddah Aziz have finished their two-year term and can stand for re-election.

Lynne Russell, Judith McNeill, Jean Harper and Malcolm Bryden joined the parent council throughout the year, and as there is no provision for this in the Constitution, will be due to stand for election at the AGM.

#### 11. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

a) Staff – Gavin Clark noted that they are interviewing for a Business Education teacher, but there are no candidates for the Computing position. Mr Rose has left the school.

- b) Pipe band – Gavin Clark reported that the Pipe Band had beaten George Watsons.
- c) U16 Football – the U16 football team is through to a final.
- d) Parent Council Budget – Gavin Clark noted that this has not been spent and it was agreed that this money would go towards the “Friends of Preston Lodge” event.
- e) Circle of Friends – Saddah Aziz explained about the Circle of Friends initiative and Gavin Clark agreed to arrange for Saddah to meet with Stuart Watt. (*Action Gavin Clark*)
- f) Index for Inclusion - it was agreed that the parent council would purchase a copy of the Index for Inclusion from its budget.
- g) Get Connected Breakfast- Saddah Aziz noted the Get Connected Breakfast taking place on 24 May from 9.30 – 1.00 pm at the Brunton, which is about opportunities for children with additional support needs.
- h) Connected Learning – Saddah Aziz agreed to circulate to the parent council an example positive example of connected learning by the pupils of Elphinstone Primary school.

Date of Next Meeting: 1 June – AGM