

MINUTES OF  
PRESTON LODGE PARENT COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON  
THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2017  
AT PRESTON LODGE HIGH SCHOOL

Present Lynne Lewis, Parent Representative and Chair  
Lynne Russell, Parent Representative and Vice Chair  
Colin Yorkston, Parent Representative and Treasurer  
Russell Devine, Parent Representative  
Jean Harper, Parent Representative  
Nicky Stannage, Parent Representative  
Dawn Yorkston, Parent Representative  
Pamela Currie, Parent Representative  
Judith McNeill, Parent Representative  
Cllr Gilbert  
Cllr Bruce  
Gavin Clark, Head Teacher  
Jacqui Dunlop, Clerk

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were intimated on behalf Cllrs O'Donnell and Innes.

2. MINUTES OF 5 OCTOBER 2017

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 5 October 2017 were a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 5 OCTOBER 2017 BUT NOT ON THE AGENDA

- a) Credit Union – Colin Yorkston confirmed that the Credit Union are keen to have the account although Easy Fundraising is not something they would normally do, and they would need to know exactly how much was coming into the account which may be difficult. It was also noted that it is difficult to pay individuals as you would normally have one nominated account such as the school to pay money to. Lynne Lewis agreed to contact Val McIntyre to see if the Easy Fundraising money could be directly into a school account. (*Action Lynne Lewis*)
- b) Longniddry Buses – Lynne Lewis reported that during the October break the Council had written to the parent of Longniddry regarding the changes to the buses in that S5/6 will be getting the service bus. Russell Devine noted that although the new system was happening there was still not enough seats on the bus as pupils were again put off the bus. Concerns were also raised about the crossing of the busy road and pupils were standing on buses which were travelling at 60 mph on the dual carriageway.

It was also noted that the letter stated that if there were concerns then the bus company should be contacted directly. The Parent Council were concerned that the Council would not know the issues relating to the bus company if this was done, and if the Council were paying for the service they should be aware if buses were not turning up and the Council

were being charged for this and paying for a service that they were not getting.

Cllr Gilbert agreed to find out about the contract and if there were any penalties for buses not turning up. *(Action Cllr Gilbert)*

Cllr Bruce agreed to find out if the statistics which the Councillors receive regarding Bus companies could be broken down further. *(Action Cllr Bruce)*

Gavin Clark confirmed that he has asked pupils to tell him if the buses don't turn up and will check with the office if there is any data. *(Action Gavin Clark)*

The Longniddry Parents on the Parent Council agreed to send Gavin Clark an email if they knew if the buses. *(Action Longniddry Parents)*

Cllr Gilbert noted that as part of the Longniddry Road South development that money was set aside for road improvements, although it was agreed that this was at the opposite end of the village and that safety improvements were needed where the pupils were crossing and standing at the very busy road.

Gavin Clark noted that the Council should be checking the contract to ensure that value for money is received. He noted that in the Scottish Borders that the PPP contracts are gone over to ensure that the penalties are collected, noting that a classroom has been out of action and door handles are broken.

### 3. HOMEWORK

Pamela Currie asked for clarification around the homework as in her view, different amounts are given for different subjects, how the school communicates when homework is not being done, what is the school's homework policy. She asked what the expectations were on how much homework pupils should be doing and if pupils were not set homework should they be doing some sort of home study. At the Learning Festival, the Daniel Hay workshop stated that homework has a high impact on learning but is low cost. Homework does not always need to be marked.

There was a discussion on homework with it being noted that schools need to be sensitive to the diverse and complex backgrounds children come from, where the impact of homework on children's learning is debatable.

Gavin Clark noted that the school, like all secondary schools, faces challenges with homework with many different ideas around the merits of, and nature of homework and diverse opinions on homework by teachers.

Analysis had been carried out a few years ago on students on how much homework was being given and he thought that the amount had been reduced since that analysis had taken place. Gavin Clark noted that best classroom practice would be flip learning where the homework was done as preparation for a lesson.

Gavin Clark explained that the current situation was muddy, there is a Homework Policy but it is a bland statement and out of date and it is not particularly useful.

Gavin Clark noted that he could provide information about the expectations for homework

especially in the senior phase, but he was not keen to revamp the Homework Policy at this time but would rather review with each year group how much homework they were receiving.

It was noted that the 3<sup>rd</sup> year homework does not lead pupils into the workload that it is expected in fourth year. Gavin Clark reported that a letter will be issued shortly on additional study group opportunities in the run up to the prelims.

There were inconsistencies across the school regarding pupils not handing in homework with some subjects sending a text to parents, although Gavin Clark noted that this may have to be reviewed as the school may start to incur charges for texting. More use is being made of google classrooms for homework but for parents to access this they need the permission of the pupil. It was noted that one school had employed a person specifically to text parents when homework was not being handed in. Tracking information will identify pupils who are not handing in homework.

#### 4. INSIGHT DATA

Gavin Clark noted that he will share in the Insight Data with the Parent Council, but he wishes to do this following the meeting with East Lothian Council.

#### 5. PUPIL EQUITY FUND SPENDING

Gavin Clark circulated information on the possible spends for the Pupil Equity Fund which will be £63,000 to be spent between December and June. This included:

6-7% Council Topslice – this will be taken by ELC to pay for any additional HR costs associated with new staff being employed.

Attainment Manager - £10,000 – this would be used to manage the project and analysis data and equates to 2 x PT time

Literacy Interventions - £20,000

Tracking and Monitoring - £10,000

Interventions - £5,000

Cultural Capital - £5,000 – the more culturally engaged pupils are the better the learning

Inclusion Fund - £8,500

He noted that this is very much a draft at the moment.

Gavin Clark that the Pupil Equity Fund will be spent on pupils who meet the undernoted criteria:

Free School Meals

Looked After

Bereavement or Loss

SMID 1-3

Young Carers

Additional Support Needs

Colin Yorkston and Pamela Currie noted that they thought the money was specifically at reducing the attainment gap for pupils in poverty and that free school meals was the indicator to be used. Gavin Clark noted that there is a poverty relationship with most of the above characteristics.

The Parent Council noted that it was ironic that the school were going to spend money on an Attainment Manager to look at the statistics rather than spend the money on pupils. Gavin Clark noted that from previous projects like this that processes were required to be in place and that a clear resource was there to manage the data.

Gavin Clark confirmed that the money was predicated on how many S1-S3 pupils claimed free school meals, but the money can be spent as the school sees fit across all year groups. Jean Harper asked if any of the money would be spent on families and Gavin Clark confirmed that some will include work with families.

Pamela Currie suggested that as homework was high impact and low cost could this feature and Gavin Clark confirmed that he would look at parental engagement and learning outwith the classroom.

It was agreed that Parent Council members would feedback their thoughts to Gavin Clark on any other suggestions. (*Action all*)

6. S1 BIG ADVENTURE

Gavin Clark confirmed that the Beach Cleans had been taking place. 40 pupils so far have indicated that they won't attend the S1 Big Adventure, and work is being carried out to find out why.

7. CHARITABLE TRUST

Gavin Clark reported that the next meeting will take place on 9 November.

8. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

- a) Learning Festival – this was held in the school and attended by parents and teachers from across Scotland and had been well received.
- b) Hallowe'en Dance – a successful Dance was held for senior pupils. Pamela Currie asked why there were no events for younger pupils. Gavin Clark reported that there had been a S1 Hallowe'en Party organised by the senior pupils, but it had to be cancelled as not enough tickets were sold. He noted that they will try again to host events aimed at younger pupils.
- c) Maths – one application had been received for the Maths position.
- d) Guidance – there had been an issue with the availability of a guidance teacher, however this has been resolved.

Date of Next Meeting: 7 December 2017