

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

Present Lynne Lewis, Parent Representative and Chair  
Colin Yorkston, Parent Representative and Treasurer  
Nicky Stannage, Parent Representative  
Malcolm Brydon, Parent Representative  
Stacey Graham, Co-opted Teacher Representative  
Julia Robertson, Depute Head  
Cllr Lachlan Bruce  
Jacqui Dunlop, Clerk

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were intimated on behalf of Dawn Yorkston, Russell Devine, Pamela Currie, Jean Harper, Lynne Russell, Gavin Clark, Cllrs O'Donnell, Gilbert and Innes.

2. MINUTES OF 2 NOVEMBER 2017

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 2 November 2017 were a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 2 NOVEMBER 2017 BUT NOT ON THE AGENDA

- a) Credit Union – Lynne Lewis agreed to speak to Val McIntyre regarding the setting up of a bank account with the Credit Union.
- b) Insight Meeting – Julia Robertson confirmed that the meeting with the council will take place on 18 December and the Attainment Review will be discussed at the January Parent Council meeting.

4. OUR S1-S3 CURRICULUM

Julia Robertson circulated a paper in advance on the meeting (cop on file). She explained that the school is consulting with parents, staff and pupils about their views of the S1-S3 curriculum. She noted that discussions had been had with PTs regarding their areas of strength regarding the application of the Principles. The 7 principles were noted as:

- Challenge and Enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and Choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

It was noted that it is easier for some subjects to provide more personalisation and choice.

The parent council members were asked to provide information on what they wanted from the S1-3 curriculum, focussing on what they wanted for their child when they came into S1. Ideas were suggested were:

- Life skills
- Financial awareness
- Transition/next steps from P7
- Choice
- Full spread of options no blind alleys
- Strong basis for enabler subjects – Maths, English
- Progression from primary school
- Opening up opportunities
- Widen horizons
- Range of experiences and development of skills
- How to learn
- Interpreting and challenging tasks that stretch her and help to develop interpersonal skills
- Clear link to what employers want
- Opportunities for making new friends and working in different groups
- Welcoming environment first and foremost
- New experiences and practical 'active learning'
- Opportunities unable to provide in primary
- Broad range of subject to allow her to make an informed choice for her senior phase

It was noted that it is difficult to give both the breadth and the depth of subjects. It was asked what happens when pupils who for example, don't like expressive arts but have to do it. Stacey Graham noted that in S1 pupils enjoy it as they are exposed to different ways of working which they may not have been able to do in primary schools. When they get to S3 they are only required to pick one of the expressive arts if they wish. For subjects such as sciences there has been a change from the initial teaching of Curriculum for Excellence, as they are now taught discretely.

There was a discussion on the PL Challenge. When it was first introduced there was inter-disciplinary learning however, due to restrictions on teaching staff, this is no longer the case. Currently it is held on a Tuesday afternoon and there are discrete projects based on staff availability and interest. It was felt that the PL challenge went on too long and that it lost some of its momentum. Julia Robertson noted that sometimes specialists are brought in to deliver the lessons, but not very often.

Learn to Learn was discussed and the general view was the pupils did not get much out of these lessons as it was taught too early and may be better leaving to S4 when there are exams. Lynne Lewis felt that the school put too much focus on Growth Mindsets when this was only one way to learn when there are many other perspectives.

Julia Robertson noted that there will be further consultations with parents, staff and pupils and that she and Gavin Clark will share the results with the Parent Council.

Julia Robertson explained that East Lothian Council are also looking to changing the number of periods to 33 with each period lasting 50 minutes. There were concerns on this as it was felt

that especially for practical subjects this would limit the teaching time due to the setting up of lessons.

It was agreed that parent council members would send any other thoughts on the S1-3 curriculum to Julia Robertson.

#### 5. LONGNIDDRY BUSES AND BUS STOPS

Lynne Lewis noted that she had contacted both East Lothian Council and the Bus Company following the last meeting when the buses had not shown up on the Friday. There had been contradictory responses from both organisations. Lachlan Bruce had raised the issue at the East Lothian Bus Forum meeting and the Bus company said that that 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year pupils should get the bus on a Friday afternoon from the High Street. There was concern that if this was the case that it had not been communicated to anyone. Lachlan Bruce also noted that the Bus Company had said if the bus was not coming that the driver of the first bus would get off and tell the remaining pupils and that he would then come back for them or let them know if a bus had been delayed.

Lachlan Bruce noted that new legislation is coming which will require school buses to have seatbelts. Currently the bus which is also a public bus, does not have these and will be unlikely to be able to get them. Lachlan Bruce has a meeting arranged with the Roads Department about a road crossing just before the start of the dual carriageway.

Lynne Lewis noted concern about the lack of lighting at the bus stops, the traffic island is also broken. If S5/6 pupils are being asked to cross the road to get the bus they are not visible to traffic and are waiting at a dark bus stop on a very narrow pavement. Lachlan Bruce confirmed he would raise this at his meeting and ask for lights and a crossing. He also noted that he will be asking for the removal of the dual carriageway.

Lynne Lewis noted that she has raised the lighting at the bus stop with the Area Partnership.

It was agreed that Lynne Lewis would continue to chase Andrew McClelland as she has not had a response to her last email. (*Action Lynne Lewis*)

#### 6. BURNS SUPPER

Julie Lowe has emailed asking for parent councils to volunteer at the Burns Supper being held on 25 January. If parents wish to attend the cost is £5 for students, £15/20 per adult. There was a discussion if the evening was to be used as a fundraiser, or to get people to attend the event, as there was an increase in prices which may be prohibitive. Nicky Stannage and Lachlan Bruce noted that they would be happy to volunteer at the event.

#### 7. CHARITABLE TRUST

Colin Torley provided an update of the Charitable Trust Meeting. Calum Stewart had attended the meeting with a proposal to provide pupils in P1 and S2 (Year 1) and P6 and S1 (Year 2) with a Chrome Book. There were two options to fund this, if the trust paid then parents would be asked to make a donation; if the trust did not fund parents would be asked for payment. Colin Torley noted that he is not convinced currently that this would raise attainment for pupils and that there is research being undertaken with the results available soon. The cost would be £36,000 per year for the Trust and Colin felt that no decision should be made until the research

results were available to see what evidence there is on any improvements in attainment. There was also concern that the bandwidth for internet at the school is not good enough.

Calum Stewart had been asked to provide more costings for the Charitable Trust.

Another injection of money had been received which will allow the Development Manager to be employed for the next 4 years. There had also been discussion of reducing the numbers of parent and school representatives from 3 each down to 2 to allow another trustees with Legal and Fundraising skills to be part of the Charitable Trust. Two local councillors are also involved and with the new Councillors in place this is currently being finalised.

## 8. HEAD TEACHERS' REPORT

- a) Christmas Events – parent council members are invited to the Christmas Concert. The Senior Citizens Christmas party is also being on 14 December, and the Senior Dance is being held on 21 December.
- b) S1 Trip to Lagganlia – Currently there are 18 pupils who have indicated they do not wish to attend. Work is being done with these pupils and it is hoped to reduce this number down to about 12. One half of the S1 will attend Monday to Wednesday lunchtime, with the second half going Wednesday lunchtime to Friday. The Staff Team visited Lagganlia last weekend to plan the trip.
- c) Budget – Julia Robertson noted that the budget is challenging and the Business Manager and Gavin Clark have met with Richard Parker from East Lothian Council. She noted that there will be challenges ahead and this will be shared with the Parent Council in January.

The school is currently in a deficit position and there is a proposal to increase teachers' salaries which will have an impact. The biggest cost to the school is salaries and it may be that class sizes, staffing and the promoted post structures will have to be looked at.

The Council is aware of the Charitable Trust but it is written into the trust constitution that if East Lothian Council reduce any funding due to the Trust, then the Trust will cease to exist.

- d) Governance Review – HTs and DHTs met with Fiona Robertson as part of the Governance Review. Heads are not entirely sure what will be the consequences for schools at this stage.
- e) Staffing – Julia Robertson noted that a lot of staff are currently off sick and there is not enough cover staff available to employ, 4 classes were taught in the canteen that day. A new maths teacher will start in January. There is a crisis in staff recruitment across the whole of Scotland.

## 9. AOCB

- a) Area Partnership – Lynne Lewis noted that she will be coming off the parent council at the end of this school year, and as such a new representative will be needed for the Area Partnership.

Date of Next Meeting: 11 January 2018