



## Leith Walk Primary School

### Parent Council Meeting

#### Minutes

6.30pm Mon 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018

**Present:** Claire Ritchie (Chair), Rachel Guatelli (Vice-Chair), Maria Gowans (Acting Head Teacher), Arran Finlay (Senior Education Officer, Edinburgh Council), Susan Dunn (DHT), (Acting Principal Teacher), Katrina Walker (Secretary), Will Walker (Treasurer), Roy Spiers, Shona MacColl-Mooney, Karen Hartnup, Andrew Megaughin, Christina Hinds, Vicky Konieczny, Laragh Quinney

**Apologies:** Annette Megaughin-Helder, Dominika Gadowski, Marion Donaldson (Councillor), Alla Kuslii, Briony Antonopoulos, Alana Rowland

(Apologies if some names are misspelled or missing from the list.)

Actions are in **red**.

#### Drummond Representatives

The two Head Girls from Drummond had asked to attend the meeting so that they could share their positive experience at the school with its feeder primaries. They described the school and invited questions from the parents.

They explained that Drummond has less than 400 students and 48 in the sixth form this year. As it is a small school, everyone knows everyone including the teachers knowing all the pupils by name. They feel as though it is like a second home. Whilst it is small, it is a very diverse school and everyone is open to meeting people from new backgrounds. This openness means that there is very little bullying.

It was acknowledged that Drummond has had a negative reputation in the past, but they are keen to turn this around. They did feel that there has been a difference in perception of the school with the open days as more parents and children are coming in to see the school and see all the facilities it has, for example seeing the 6 science labs. There has been an idea that the school is small so the resources are not good, but when parents and carers see what is inside, they are impressed.

It was asked about responsibilities in the school and the girls responded that in the 6<sup>th</sup> Year, there are 3 main roles: prefects, heads of house and heads of school. Students are required to fill out a form and apply for the roles and teachers write an academic reference. There is a panel interview in order to fill the roles, so the process is quite formal and a good experience for all involved students.

It was asked whether there were restrictions to the subjects that could be studied as the pupil numbers were small, but the girls explained that (as with other Edinburgh schools), if you wish to do Advanced

Highers that the school doesn't offer, then pupils will be taxed to another school. In terms of after school activities, all the after school clubs are currently free. Recently some pupils got a group together in order to get a new club running from the Active Schools co-ordinator and this was organised for them. Drama is offered as well and there have been pupils who have gone on to act in TV shows.

The discussion was summarised to say that the experience of the Head Girls was that there was good continuity from staff throughout their school journey and real support for the pupils. Drummond is very welcoming place and will try and support all its pupils to achieve their potential.

### **Minutes and from last meeting**

Action Point: Karen to invite the FoMP to a school assembly – unfortunately no one was available to attend but they would be there at the Winter Fair with a stand to gather opinions.

Action Point: Karen to supply John Lewis contact to Alana who will get in touch with John Lewis to ask for support with the Wi-Fi hubs – this has been done.

Action Point: Karen to send the application list of items that was applied for to Susan and Maria so that they can consult and decide what would be the most useful for the school. – Susan suggested that a weather station would be great. Vicky asked about the tires which are still at the school as these might incur a cost to dispose of them and there was a positive response to the suggestion that we could make planters out of them. There was support for softening the playground with planting. Various suggestions were discussed and it was agreed that willow is good for tires. Granton Hub have a wild flower nursery that we might be able to contact. Edinburgh University have done a project of sprinkling wild flowers.

**Action Point: Susan and Maria to take a look at the potential for planters in the playground.**

**Action Point: Susan to ask about the Edinburgh University wild flower project through her contact.**

It was reported that Mrs Elliott-Gibson had asked if children could use the tires as seats and it was felt that this could be possible too.

In summary, it was thought it would be helpful to have costings to see how much we could afford to buy including the weather station, items for bug hotel, plants (including willow) and soil.

**Action Point: Karen to cost the above items and send it round.**

It was asked whether there was any progress on the outdoor tap. It was discussed that the delay on this might be tied to an asbestos survey.

**Action Point: Outdoor tap - Arran to speak to Murdo about this.**

### **Head Teacher's Report (Maria Gowans and Arran Finlay)**

Learning and teaching: Meta cognition is being looked at. This means that the children are learning about the tools and skills they need in order to learn, eg curiosity, creativity, perseverance, teamwork etc. This was discussed in an assembly and then followed up in class. These strategies will be started to be implemented from January. There will be a homework task coming out next week.

Staffing: P1 Mrs Grantham is still off but Michael Cairney will be here until the rest of this term. Closing date for the 3 nursery early years practitioners is early this week so they will hopefully be in post next term.

Aladdin's Cave: People have been round to look at the decoration, flooring etc and so making this a reusable room is still happening. It is hoped that the room will be usable by the summer term.

Head teacher position: Maria has agreed to stay with the school beyond Christmas into 2019.

Communications group: It was discussed that this will be picked up in January. Andrew, Laragh and Julie Duran are all keen to be involved. Claire also happy to be involved if needed.

## **Chair's Report**

Winter Fair - The main focus for the Parent Council was Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December for the Winter Fair. Some staff had volunteered to help on the day and Maria and Susan offered to be the cake competition judges. The Let confirmation was not officially confirmed but Mr Inglis was ready to be in the school building and also would clear the gym area in advance. Will has the floats all ordered to be collected the following day and Rachel had volunteered to do cash and carry run also.

Offer of parental help - Claire asked if there was anything else parents can do to help in the school. Maria suggested that there might be more items to go down into the basement from Aladdin's Cave and that a date would be agreed for after the Winter Fair for this to be done.

Purchase of wifi hubs and other equipment - Arran confirmed that she had asked the Council again for the list of schools that will be checked for equipment. There are 22 schools in the cycle with 5 planned before Christmas but as we have not heard yet, it is unlikely that we will be one of those 5. Once the visit has happened, it will be clear how many wifi hubs will be needed in the school and therefore how much support the parent council will need to give. There has also been a quote carried out for a permanent projector and remote controlled screen for the gym hall so that there aren't cables running across the floor etc.

Library trolley – There was concern that a library trolley was missing but it was reported that this might be in the nursery.

Valentine's bingo – Claire would like to reinstate this as a social event at the school. It was decided that this should be planned for the week before the school break (6<sup>th</sup> Feb – Wed). Andrew confirmed that he is very happy to be the caller.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Call for any costs incurred by anyone

## **Garden Committee**

Rachel asked for permission to go in and refresh the loose parts play and Maria is happy for this to happen.

One parent had requested for a bench to be installed at the back door for any carers that had mobility issues at pick up. The children would probably also like an extra bench and the idea of a 'buddy bench' was briefly discussed. There was general support for a new bench to be installed.

## **AOB**

PVGs- It was confirmed that there is a city wide problem with PVGs being processed quickly and a big back log with Disclosure Scotland. Jennifer is waiting for approval to be able to sign off on the PVG applications (no one in the school is able to at present) but there may be the possibility of the roaming business manager to come in and sign off on the PVGs that we have sitting ready in the office but can't be sent out yet.

Kaz asked if there was a time when they could come in and plant bulbs soon with the kids. Tuesdays or Friday mornings are good and there are over 300 bulbs that need to go in. Susan and Maria to confirm.

**Meeting Finished: 8.10**

**Next meeting: Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019, 6.30pm**