



Leith Walk Primary School

Parent Council Meeting

Minutes

6.30pm Monday 27th August 2018

Location: Drummond Community High School

Present: Claire Ritchie (Chair), Rachel Guatelli (Vice-Chair), Anne Houliston (Head Teacher) , Arran Finlay (Senior Education Officer, Edinburgh Council), Susan Dunn (DHT), Will Walker (Treasurer), Katrina Walker (Secretary), Marion Donaldson (Councillor), Kaz Bauer, Shona MacColl-Mooney, Karen Hartnup, Vicky Konieczny, Laragh Quinney, Roy Spiers, Julie Duran, Lucia Hidalgo-Lozano, Dominika Gadomski, Alla Kuslii, Carmen Luque, Alessandro

Apologies, Briony Antonopoulos, Kim McDonagh, Christina Hinds

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

Actions are in **red**.

Minutes and actions from last meeting: AGM 28 May 2018

Rights Respecting Schools: Following the last meeting and call out for help with the scheme, there were no volunteers from parents and carers. A further request for help should be made.

Action Point: Katrina to make further request for help on Facebook

Tuck Shop: Dominika has volunteered to help Shona and the P7s to run this on a weekly basis.

After school clubs: Following the change in booking of lets at schools, the Parent Council is waiting to hear about how we can go ahead with running after school clubs. This was to be discussed further in the meeting (see below) as a separate issue.

Head Teacher's Report (Anne Houliston)

Welcome to the two new probationers, Mr Woodhouse and Miss Young.

Miss Rowland is acting Principle Teacher until October.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Leadership of change

Priorities

* Vision, Values and Aims – Miss Wilson is going to work with the Rights Respecting School children's group. Mrs Grantham, Mrs Maclaren will work with the children as well and the school would like some parental input in addition to this.

* Leadership of all – Anne is working with the staff about what they would like to get involved with and this should be finalised shortly. This should tie in with the teams for the playground and fundraising so that there is a designated member of staff participating in these groups. Katrina asked if we could be informed which members of staff would be leading on which topic along with a photo so that parents can identify the staff in the playground. Anne agreed to include this.

Action Point: Anne to confirm the teachers leading on certain topics

* Curriculum/Learning and Teaching – The school is currently looking at what makes us unique and what would we like to learn about as a school. The idea is that the school can set its individual priorities and interests so that we can reflect our particular community.

* Parental Engagement/Communication – Looking to set up a group to create a policy going forward. Volunteers for this group would be appreciated.

Class Dojo was discussed as this was a particularly successful method of communication with parents. Arran confirmed that she will ask the council for an update on this but there are currently no plans to get this added. Anne added that Class Reps might be something that come out in the communication group.

Action Point: Arran to confirm the update on Class Dojo from the Council

There was a consultation on Learning and Teaching/PEF last term but this will be reopened to get feedback from parents and carers. The school is looking to employ an Early Years Practitioner and two Pupil Support Officers – one for emotional health and wellbeing and one for family support/nurture. Shona asked about Seasons for Growth and this was discussed but Anne confirmed that there is currently only one member of staff trained in this and two are needed.

Julie asked about PSAs and how many we currently have. Anne responded that we have had an increase and there will be around 6, although it was not yet quite clear as to exactly how many hours of PSA support there will be as these were not 6 full time roles. She confirmed that some children have one to one support and there are others who are more general. There has been a drop in the predicted number of children at the school although the exact figures will be known at the September schools census. Anne confirmed that Susan would be dealing with Additional Support Needs across the school this year and will be carrying out a review of what would be needed.

Quality Indicator 2.7 Partnerships

Playground and Fundraising Committee: The school is looking for volunteers

Basement: Cala have our contact details on record and we will keep in touch with them about help/money.

Chair's Report (Claire Ritchie)

Charity status: The Parent Council will be registered shortly.

Parent council communications: Could a notice be sent out to the whole school with our contact details (email address, Facebook page) to alert all parents as to how to keep in touch? Following the GDPR

change, our distribution list has been started again and we would like to get all the new parents' details too.

Action Point: Claire and Rachel to email the office with a note to send out to the whole school.

Notice boards outside on the railings: It is felt that more permanent boards at the different entrances to the school would be really beneficial as many parents do not see the notice boards in the playground. Karen researched the options and found that we need listed building consent and appropriate boards to comply with the rules which are always more expensive. It was agreed that an A4 sized board would be enough so that different weekly notices could be put in. It was thought that the Facilities Management team might be able to organise something.

Action Point: Anne to contact Murdo about A4 notice boards for the railings.

Fundraising committee side group: It was agreed that this should be set up to plan for the year ahead and be kept separate from the Parent Council meetings.

Treasurer's Report (Will Walker)

It was discussed that the financial year runs from June to end of May so whilst there school year has only just started, June is included in this year's accounts. It was a good month in June with the Sports Day bake sale and Leith Gala Day raising just over £900. There were expenses that came out of the account out in July which had been committed at the end of last session, including the bike racks, P7 hoodies and the Book Festival. Will also confirmed the anticipated expenses based on previous years (see included spreadsheet).

In particular, it was noted that the Parent Council has set aside library funds of approx. £1000 and the Parent Council asked Anne if there are any requests that the school has for spending this money. Examples given were a library management system, magazine subscriptions, fiction/non-fiction books etc. There was also discussion of the Parent Council potentially funding books for classes with Arran citing the example of the Parent Council being able to source books cheaply through the Book People that the school would not have access to through their procurement system.

The Parent Council asked if the school had any projects that they would like help fundraising for or if they could put forward a top ten wish list so that the Parent Council could choose a couple of items to focus on in the year ahead.

Action Point: Anne to come back with a wish list from the school to be discussed at the next meeting.

Garden Committee Report (Karen Hartnup)

Following the cancellation of the installation of the temporary sandpit, Karen advised that we urgently need to spend the final sum of Leith Decides money totalling £376.61. There is an additional £34.36 remaining from the money we put aside for the playground, but £43.90 had been spend on semi permeable membrane for the sandpit which no longer has a use and cannot be returned

Any purchases made with the Leith Decides funds will have to be:

1) consistent with the requirements of the grant i.e a) new project, b) non curricular

2) consistent with the themes of the application, which were: a) recording the weather, b) investigating the weather, c) playground play in the form of a sandpit (but unfortunately it cannot be used for loose parts because this was a subject of another council grant, as was the greenhouse)

3) completed quickly, given that the project is long overdue.

Suggestions were put forward including microscopes to study mini-beasts, further compost bins, water butts, a willow tunnel, a Stevenson shelter for weather equipment, an insect hotel, bird house.

Vicky asked whether there are guidelines as to what counts as a big project in the playground and therefore would need a paid inspection by the Council.

Action Point: Anne to clarify which playground projects would need inspection

Loose Parts Play (Karen Hartnup)

Karen asked if an audit should be carried out of loose parts play so that we could know if items need to be replaced. Children have mentioned that many things are broken. Anne advised that a teacher has signed up for this under the Leadership for all heading and that this will be carried out.

Lets and After School Clubs (Julie Duran)

The Parent Council expressed their concerns about the new system of lets. Anne had advised prior to the meeting that the 32 hours that the school receives of free, out-of-hours lets would be needed for the Winter Fair and parent consultation evenings etc and could not be budgeted for Parent Council meetings. This means that there is no provision for Parent Council meetings in the school at the normal times (last Monday of each month from 6.30 – 8pm). Arran confirmed that local high schools are able to host parent council meetings for free and as they are still part of our community, they could be used instead. It was felt strongly by the Parent Council that having our meeting out of the school would be a barrier to many parents who might need to take a bus to attend, that it would restrict the ability to go and look at certain rooms/retrieve information etc during a meeting that had all been done in the past. In order to feel connected to the school it was felt that it was important to be allowed to be in the school.

There was some confusion as to whether lets could be doubled up e.g. when the Scouts are using Leith Walk Primary on a Tuesday evening, would it be possible for the Parent Council to use the building at the same time for free?

Action Point: Arran to confirm with the lets team as to whether it would be possible for the Parent Council to use the school for free when it is open for another activity.

The new lets situation also impacts on after school clubs. The Parent Council confirmed that they were keen to improve the provision of after school clubs, but this might not be possible if the hire of the rooms is prohibitively expensive. The example we have already had with the French club is that they could not be run based on their current price if they were asked to pay the room hire cost. It had been difficult to fill all the spaces at the current low price so anything higher would be seen as an issue, and only better off families would be able to afford to use these educational clubs. Arran confirmed the understanding that if any after school provider was a registered business, they would be asked to pay the room hire charge. Julie asked whether the lets will cause further disparity between more deprived areas and more affluent areas as the more affluent areas might be able to fund after school clubs in a way that others will not.

Julie reported back that she had been in touch with Bruntsfield Primary School whose Parent Council organises an extensive range of after school clubs. They have been very helpful in outlining how this is made possible and the role that the school plays in providing suitable rooms. It was felt that it would be interesting to see how more established after school clubs adapt to the new rules.

Action Point: Julie to check with Bruntsfield as to what changes they will need to make in order to keep providing after school clubs.

Marion reported on the reason that these charges needed to be made by the council. She confirmed that £106 million needed to be cut from the council budget, and since one third of budget is education the council had faced a huge challenge in deciding which areas would impact least on the children. This was not considered an ideal situation by the Council, but a necessary one given the budget restrictions.

Julie expressed an interest in holding an after school 'fair' to gather views about what type of after school options should be run. As an initial starting point, it was suggested that a survey might be taken at the bake sale on 7th September to gather views on whether there was demand for music/languages/homework and library clubs for example. It was also asked whether we could get feedback from the school about which spaces might be available to use.

Action Point: Julie to put together a sheet to gather views at the bake sale.

Action Point: Anne to report back on which spaces might be usable for after school clubs.

Science Week (Julie Duran)

Julie requested that school have a Science Week this year. She had made contact with a variety of parties (e.g. the Science Festival) who had expressed an interest in working with the school and perhaps using the school to host some rehearsals prior to the Festival starting. There appear to be a number of grants and a lot of support to tap in to.

Anne advised that Miss Rowlands is the new contact for science so Julie will get in direct contact with her to discuss further what funding can be accessed.

Action Point: Julie to speak to Miss Rowlands about taking Science Week further.

Use of Space at LWPS

A longer term plan for the use of space in the school was discussed and this follows on from the survey that went out in the previous session. Anne advised that the survey would be put out again and that this feedback would go into the plan for the school. Arran advised that we need to get the Facilities Management/Asset team and invite them round in the next few weeks so that they could let the school know which rooms it would be possible to renovate and reuse again. This should be seen as a long term project that may take a couple of years to complete.

AOB

Rachel asked whether the Asset team could look at the **puddle at the front entrance gate** as it is not a good first impression to jump over to gain access to the school.

Action Point: Anne to raise this with the Asset team.

Volunteers were asked for to run the **bake sale** on 7th September. Dominika, Kaz, Rachel and Alla all offered to be involved.

Shona asked for an update about **buddies** would be finalised as a lot of the P6s were excited about this and it is felt that it is important for P1s to feel integrated into the wider school as soon as possible. There was a lot of support for the buddy system by the Parent Council. Anne advised that these would be finalised within in the next few days.

Meeting finished 8.15 pm.

Next meeting – Monday 24th September 2018

