

Abbeyhill Primary School

Parent Council Meeting- Minutes

Wednesday 29th January 2014

Present: Chris Byrne (Chair), Charlotte Intihar (VC), Di Falck (Treasurer), John Dallas, Sandra Stewart (Headteacher), Lynsey Stewart, Nino Smith, David Montelongo, Janina Costa, Neil Hargraves.

Apologies: Lisa Tansey (VC), Linda Watt, Caitlyn McDiarmid.

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were agreed.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Co-opted members/office bearers

Amine Mourad has stepped down from the role of Secretary due to time pressures. He will continue to assist the gardens and grounds sub-group.

Treasurer's report

Funds for the scooter park have been disbursed and it has been ordered and paid for. Possible sites for installation will be investigated.

There was a discussion about the need to tighten procedures concerning ordering. VAT could have been saved on the scooter park by ordering it through a council-approved supplier via the school. It may be possible to cancel the cheque that has been issued. Chris Byrne will investigate this possibility.

Di Falck will issue a cheque for £500 to the school for books.

School Travel Plan

Sandra Stewart suggested a parental meeting in order for road safety officers to report to parents on the progress of the school travel plan, and to consult parents on the eventual shape of the road safety charter. Sandra Stewart and Charlotte Intihar will arrange a time to meet Caitlyn McDiarmid and the road safety officers to begin this process. Agenda item 8 will be held over until the next meeting.

The remaining action points will be held over to the next meeting for discussion with the participation of Lisa Tansey and Linda Watt.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chris Byrne will attend the local area Consultative Committee of Parents on 11th February.

The Old Town Community Council has been disbanded, therefore exploring links with this body will be discontinued for the present.

A proposal concerning extending an invitation to members of Edinburgh City Council will be considered in detail at the next meeting (see also item 7).

There was discussion about the need to recruit a new member to the Parent Council who could help to liaise with and co-ordinate the Gardens and Grounds volunteers, and to pick up the work of the sub-group. Sandra Stewart is to advertise for such a co-ordinator in the next issue of the newsletter.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Scooter pods have been purchased.

Funds of £1,907.67 remain.

5. REPORTS FROM PARENT COUNCIL SUB-GROUPS

a. Events:

Charlotte Intihar proposed combining the forthcoming International Day with Sport Relief as a spring event. This was discussed, and it was agreed that Sports Relief would be celebrated as a smaller event on 21 March (a.m) within the school, with the principal focus on International Day on 28 March (p.m). The International Day event will be primarily cultural, and would raise funds for the school itself, but could incorporate a sport/games element for the children.

It was however proposed that for Health Week in June there be a Commonwealth Games theme, which would focus on sports/games but also with an international component.

b. Gardens and Grounds

See agenda item 3.

6. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

Sandra Stewart reported on the following:

- The success of the Christmas events, which raised more than £1000.
- The selection of Abbeyhill as a trial school for Generation Science workshops, which have been held for P3-P7 classes.
- P6/7 will attend a caricature workshop on 6th February.
- P1-7 will be attending the pantomime on 6th February. This has been funded by PriceWaterhouseCooper. Sandra Stewart will draft a letter expressing gratitude.
- NSPCC will be leading assemblies on the subject of Childline on 28th February.
- Drama Workshops will be held for some classes on 10th March.
- There will be a cake sale held in the school on 31st January.

Visit to Education Committee

Sandra Stewart and Chris Byrne will visit the Education Committee at City Chambers on 10th February to discuss the findings of the recent inspection. Sandra Stewart will place a link to the Council Blog discussing Abbeyhill's inspection in the next newsletter.

Hours for Nursery Pupils

Sandra Stewart will be attending a meeting on 6th February in order to discuss how the increase in provision from 475 to 600 hours will be implemented in August. Currently tests are underway experimenting with extending the sessions to 3 hours and 10 minutes. Nursery parents have already been invited to complete a survey. There was a discussion concerning the potential erosion of nursery staff's ability to perform key tasks such as preparing, discussing and reflecting on the nursery sessions, and also on tidying and setting up time. There was a concern expressed that provision will be reduced in quality as a result. Sandra Stewart will report on the findings of these tests and their implications when they are completed.

Art and Design

It was announced that Ron Cowie, the Education Scotland advisor on Art and Design, will be visiting the school on 7th February. He was impressed by what he saw of pupils' work on display during the inspection. Sandra Stewart also announced that she has been co-opted onto the working party on Art and Design, and will attend a meeting of this group on 4th March.

7. PARENTS' SUGGESTIONS

Possible Use for Janitor's House

John Dallas proposed a potential plan of action for the derelict Janitor's house, in order to prevent the possibility of the Council selling the house commercially. It was suggested that a third-party agency could be formed as a charitable trust which would then be in a position to access funds and to negotiate with the council for the sale of the property. The proposed purpose of this agency would be to establish a Community Arts Centre, a resource that could be shared between the pupils of Abbeyhill and the community. It was pointed out that this would tap into the existing strong connections of the Abbeyhill area with the arts, and would also build on (and reinforce) the school's growing strength in this area. This idea was received enthusiastically. A working group of the Parents Council (Sandra Stewart, Chris Byrne, John Dallas) will be formed to look into the practicalities of this proposal, while John Dallas agreed to make consultations with professionals in the field of community development. A date for their first meeting will be agreed. It was also agreed that it is important to invite councillors to future meetings of the Parents Council in order to carry this forward, once the plans are more fully formed.

Artist in Residence

Chris Byrne forwarded the proposal of a parent to raise funds for the purpose of appointing an artist-in-residence. Sandra Stewart endorsed this idea, and it was agreed that she would discuss this

proposal with the parent in order to advance it further. It was agreed that this matched very well a number of initiatives and developments that had been raised in this meeting thus far.

Swimming Pool

A parent had raised the question of the blue shoe covers used in the swimming pool, and specifically how old they were. Sandra Stewart confirmed that they were relatively new and were hygienic. This issue raised the question of how far users of the swimming pool should be made to pay for such items. It was noticed that after one of the classes held by Aquatic Learning for babies there are soiled nappies left behind. This kind of maintenance imposes a burden on the school, given that they receive no benefit from the classes themselves.

8. SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

See agenda item 2.

9. CEC EDUCATION COMMITTEE VISIT

See agenda item 6.

10. A.O.B.

A list of dates of PTC training courses was circulated. Any member of the Parent Council was encouraged to contact the Chair if they were interested in attending any of these courses, which are all free of charge.

It was pointed out by Sandra Stewart that training will need to be carried out for recruitment of senior staff by 2 members before Easter, which is when the advertisement for her successor will be posted. There is a course at Liberton High School on 5th February from 6-9 pm. Chris Byrne will send the booking form to anyone interested.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 19th March at 6.30 pm.