

Abbeyhill Parent Council Meeting

Date: 24 March 2021 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Venue: TEAMS

Minutes By: Ali Morris



ITEM	DESCRIPTION		ACTION
	PRESENT		
	Charlene Kay	PC Chair	CK
	Valerie Henry	Acting Head Teacher	VH
	Ali Morris	PC Secretary	AM
	Ann Pratt	PC Treasurer	AP
	Melanie Chuprasova	Parent	MC
	Illyana Nedcova	Artist in Residence Co-ordinator	IN
	Keith Martin	Principal Teacher	KM
	Pauline Sharp	Drummond High School	PS
	Ieuan Woodhouse	P4 Teacher	IW
	Jennifer Graham	Parent	JG
	Liva Svarane	Parent	LS
	Heather Tufferey	Parent	HT
	Heather Rikic	Parent	HR
	LS	Parent	
	Apologies		
	Ruth Punna	Social Media	RP
1.0	Welcome by the Chair		
1.1	Charlene welcomed and thanked all for attending.		
2.0	The Role of the Parent Council		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To promote close cooperation and communication between parents and teachersTo promote equality and fairnessTo study and discuss matters of mutual interest relating to the education and welfare of pupils.To engage in activities which support and advance the education and acities of pupils at the school.Parents in the PC role to represent the wider parent body.		
3.0	Minutes of last meeting		
3.1	<i>Social Justice Library</i> Heather Rikic provided an update: Original plan to use Epic, but as that has been red listed we are now working on getting physical books into the school. The survey last year identified key topics that parents would like to see included. Bullying and gender equality were the two most picked topics, so we will start with these.		

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	<p>We are planning to get a book pack on each topic, appropriate for ages 3-11, and the PC will cover the costs. We'll use these to see the level of interest and manage it, then seek to expand after that.</p> <p>Note the current library is not able to be used due to Covid. But books can go to each class a week at a time and be isolated over the weekend.</p> <p>Charlene noted thanks to Heather for taking this project on. Will be great to see those in the classroom.</p>	
3.2	<p><i>Art Therapist and Play Therapist</i></p> <p>The Art Therapist student (Jemima) has now started and will be with us until the end of the academic year. She comes in on a Weds and Thurs, on Wednesdays working with individuals and Thursdays with a small group from P2. The kids are really enjoying it and she's also getting a lot out of it. School has started her with a small amount of children and are hoping to add a couple of extras. Valerie will be contacting parents individually to discuss.</p> <p>Illie noted we have an opportunity to learn a lot from having Jemima. Requested an opportunity to speak with Jemima or the teachers who are hosting her so we can put together a compelling case to an external funder (most likely the 10 Villages Funding) for a longer term Art therapist in residence. Can ask her tutor too.</p> <p>Abbeyhill has also partnered with Broughton primary to get £4,000 grant funding for a shared Play Therapist. Funding has been approved and the therapist will probably start in the autumn term.</p> <p>Heather Tufferey suggested that we look into having a student Play Therapist come to the school too. Val to contact her link at Queen Margaret University and ask about that.</p>	VH
3.3	<p><i>P7 Sweatshirts</i></p> <p>Ann has received the invoice from Linda but the actual amount that wasn't clear so waiting to hear back from Linda about that. Val to follow up.</p> <p>Last year's sweatshirts were a P7 leaving present. This year it will be a welcome present for current P6s going into P7. There had been some confusion because last year's and this year's were all on one invoice. Next year, Jeanette will order and send invoice straight to Ann. Val to arrange.</p>	VH VH
3.3	<p><i>Janitor's House and playground wall</i></p> <p>We have progress! The Council were going to start removing it after the Easter break, but would cause too much disruption including closing that gate to the playground, so after negotiations the demolition will happen during the summer holidays and be completed by the new term.</p> <p>Val's understanding is that the site will be cleared, though we don't know</p>	

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	if grassed or paved – Val to find out. Val has asked Linda to chase Facilities Management to confirm that the wall has been fixed and assess whether any work is required to deal with it sloping. Val to follow up.	VH VH
4.0	Drummond High School Representative	
4.1	<p>Pauline Sharp introduced herself as the link for all children and parents transitioning to Drummond High School. All families with places at Drummond should have received welcome letters with signposting to Facebook and Twitter so they can follow Drummond news and information.</p> <p>In normal times, P7s get to come to Drummond for three days to get used to the site and try a range of activities. Unfortunately with Covid this is not possible, and there will be a ‘virtual’ visit and set of activities instead. Last year this included a video showing kids around the school and a three day set of activities organised centrally by the Council. It is likely to be similar this year.</p> <p>There’s also normally a breakfast club for Primary 6s to introduce them to the school, as well as a ceilidh and treasure hunt. All of these things have just stopped. Pauline look into how they can make up for some of those things. Parents feel free to email and ask questions.</p> <p>For those moving up to Drummond, there will be approx. 100 children per year group, split into 4 tutor groups of up to 30. They try to find out about groups of children who work well together and place them within the same tutor group, and there is a guarantee that all children will be with some students from their primary school. Children will get 8 minutes every day and 18 minutes on a Friday with their Tutor. They also all have a guidance teacher and a year head.</p> <p>They try and keep families with the same guidance teacher and in the same house. Can also guarantee they’ll be in with some students from their cluster school. If a child feels unsettled in their tutor group then Drummond will look at trying to place them somewhere they feel more comfortable.</p> <p>For those that need it there is an enhanced transition programme, and Support for Learning teachers are liaising with schools to get information about each young person’s needs. Drummond staff start attending Child Planning Meetings from P7 too.</p> <p>When the children arrive in August they will be allocated a buddy, who will help them out for the first couple of weeks.</p>	
5.0	Head Teacher’s report	

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5.1	<p>It's been wonderful having the children back, hearing their voices in the school. The learning focus has been on revisiting core skills of literacy and numeracy. Health and wellbeing are a priority.</p> <p>After Easter children in P1, P4 and P7 will be doing their Scottish National Standardised Assessments. These are a combination of the teacher's professional judgement over the year plus an online assessment which gives a standardised score. Val to put info in Sway newsletter.</p> <p><i>Outdoor classroom</i></p> <p>Mr Woodhouse has been getting kids across the school involved in the outdoor classroom: So far they've planted fruit bushes and been out watering. All the trees and shrubs planted now have some new growth with leaves and branches coming through. P4 have each adopted a tree and its their jobs to look after them and keep a little diary on how they're doing. P1 has planted their planter. The classes are really enthused.</p> <p>Soil has arrived and volunteers helped to get it into the planters. The play boxes for each class have been a massive hit with the kids.</p> <p>The intention for next term is an outdoor learning CAT session for the teachers to look at the outdoor learning vision and aim for the school, plus fire pit training for all teachers. Hopefully by the end of next term, covid allowing, we will be able to invite parents in too.</p> <p>Muddy puddles resources (welly boots and waterproof trousers) are arriving on a daily basis.</p> <p><i>Bikeability</i></p> <p>Shirley from Active Schools has been in and all P6 and P7 kids are now trained in level 1 bikeability. We have a surplus of bikes in the school. In the past these have been raffled/given away to pupils, and we are thinking about doing that again this year.</p> <p><i>Breakfast Club</i></p> <p>We've received the disappointing news that Margaret from Scoosh will not continuing the breakfast club at Abbeyhil. We are seeking to do an alternative through PEF funding. At the moment 3 parents have contacted the school to say they're interested. If you want to use it, even just for a day or a couple of days then it is worth starting up again or letting us know so that we can make a case that it is needed.</p> <p><i>School start and finish times</i></p> <p>The staggered times are not proving to be very effective, as some parents are not wearing masks and/or spending a lot of time socializing in the playground and at the gates. A few pupils have been coming in very early. These actions are increasing the risk for the school community.</p> <p>As a result we will revert back to the pre-Covid times after the Easter</p>	VH

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	<p>break. The drop off and pick up times will be closer together, so the playground will be busier for a short period, but the hope is that it will reduce loitering and reduce the overall risk.</p> <p>Ruth to put out a social media reminder to parents to social distance and wear masks at drop off and pick up times.</p> <p>Ruth can put out social media reminders. Banner on office door – share that. Second banner at back gate? Don't approach parents in the playground but have phoned parents to say request wearing it. Worst scenario is school closes.</p> <p>Going to make it closer together to reduce risks and avoid loitering.</p> <p><i>Vans parking in school access</i></p> <p>Ali raised the issue of vans parking in the access road at the Brand Place entrance, blocking space and making it impossible for waiting parents to social distance. Previously it was believed that this is not adopted road and we cannot prevent people parking there. However as it is also the fire access for the school, Val to double check whether it is adopted and whether we could get double yellow lines put there.</p> <p>Ann queried whether Brand Place, including the narrow pavements, could be included in the Council's Spaces for People programme, which has made a lot of improvements around school accesses across the city. We would need to get in touch with Mark from Safer Schools and the community police officer too. Val to get Mark's contact details and Ann to do some initial research. Jennifer to get the community police officer contact details.</p> <p><i>Mindfulness</i></p> <p>Gary, who has done several mindfulness sessions with children at Abbeyhil, is seeking to develop a school programme and have it approved by CEC. We have a free trial of the programme and teachers in P3-P7 have carried it out. Now doing surveys with the kids of how it went.</p> <p>Assuming the programme is approved, Abbeyhil can then decide whether to buy into it for future sessions. Illie noted that there is a lot of external funding out there and we should be utilizing this wherever possible, and saving school funds for things we cannot get external support for. With a bit of advance notice Mindfulness would be something the Artist in Residence programme can try and do, particularly as Gary also has artists attached to his programme.</p>	<p>RP</p> <p>VH</p> <p>VH, AP, JG</p>
6.0	Chair's Report	
6.1	I attended a Zoom meeting with other parent council chairs, the Edinburgh National Parent Forum of Scotland reps and Maggie Wilson, the NPFS Chair earlier this month. It was good to put a face to the names. Maggie gives feedback to the Covid-19 Education Recovery Group (government	

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	<p>group) so it was good to hear about how that works and that there is a parent voice there. There is a lot of communication between PC chairs and the Edinburgh reps via email groups and many, mostly chairs of high schools, had input for Maggie about how parents were feeling about the amount of in-person school time they were getting once back at school and exams etc. This didn't really apply to us but it is good to know the parent voice is being heard at the government level.</p> <p>One of the Edinburgh NPFS reps attended a Digital Learning meeting recently and fed back the news that the council has been in negotiations with CGI and they have arrived at a 4 year project that provides: 1:1 devices for P6 to S6 and 1:5 devices for P1 to P5. Early Learning is still to be defined. In addition, there will be a network infrastructure review that will ensure that each school has appropriate bandwidth and wireless access points to be able to operate a full Digital Curriculum.</p> <p>We've been doing loads of work on the outdoor classroom, and will update on that separately.</p>	
7.0	Treasurer's report	
7.1	<p>There's been minimal change since the last meeting. We've banked the rest of the calendar money and spent some funds on the outdoor classroom, buying berry bushes, topsoil and wooden planters. Mr Woodhouse has bought some more plants and will be reimbursed for that. The Muddy Puddles kit will be paid for once we get the invoice.</p> <p>The current balance is £15,955.09. Most of this is ring-fenced for different projects, predominantly Artists in Residence, Classroom Garden, Playground upkeep fund, calendar funds, £200/year for the P7 gifts and £200 for the P7 ceilidh.</p> <p>This leaves around £2,000 that is not ringfenced or committed. The funds for the Social Justice Library packs will come from here, and there will be money remaining for other things as they arise.</p>	
8.0	Curator-in-residence's report	
8.1	<p>We have 9 artists this academic year, some of whom are rolled over from last year. We tried and failed with a digital residency during lockdown: we realized quickly that it was just an extra burden on homeschooling, and impossible to ensure every kid got access. So instead projects will start in school after the Easter break.</p> <p>3 of our artists are funded by 10 Villages funding, and two of these are parents.</p> <p>Our Polish artists in residence are funded by the Polish Consulate and administered by Polish Contemporary Art. They bring Polish artists in residence, to work with individual teachers sharing Polish culture etc.</p> <p>The Edinburgh Performing Arts Development Agency has provided</p>	

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	<p>funding for parent Heather Rikic to be our dance/choreographer in residence, working outdoors with every class.</p> <p>We are applying for additional funding from Creative Scotland for our Gardener in residence, Yolanda McKean.</p> <p>The Colony of Artists have been awarded £750 specifically for their projects with the school. We now have a date for the 2021 festival, of 18-19 September. Please save the date!</p> <p>This year, the outdoor classroom will be a key exhibition space for the Colony of Artists weekend. We hope the school will become a hub and the children will have fun dressing all the playground-facing windows. This will be done with Dave Pratt on the James Tytler hot air balloon project (Up, Up and Away). There will also be a mural on this subject on London Road.</p> <p>There is also a speculative application for Illie to undertake PhD research on how the Artist in Residence programme could be rolled out to schools across Scotland. The research would use the unique experience gathered here to seek to roll it out and share it.</p> <p>A parent has been in touch with the PC with idea for art in the garden. Charlene to connect that parent and Illie.</p>	CK
9.0	Outdoor Garden Classroom	
9.1	<p>The new planters have been built and we now have 1 for each class, including the nursery. All the classes are discussing what they want to plant and we'll hopefully buy the seeds for them next week. All the students are getting involved.</p> <p>We have two new apple trees: big thanks to Jennifer and her family who have donated those. It will be wonderful to see them starting to grow apples. Thanks also to the P7s who removed the fence to the wildlife area, it now looks much better.</p> <p>The Muddy Puddles order of 90 pairs of waterproof trousers and 70 pairs of wellies is coming in. This ensures all classes will be able to go out to the park and outdoor classroom, whatever the weather.</p> <p>So far, we have allocated £5,893.00 out of the £9,460 funding, which leaves around £3,500 still to spend. We will brainstorm ways to spend that.</p> <p>It's so exciting to see the kids out there enjoying it, and it looking really different to how it did last year.</p>	
10.0	P1-P3 Forest School	
10.1	<p>A query raised by a parent in relation to next year's P1 class being so large. Would there ever be a thought to make the P1-P3 years have more of a forest school approach, with classes spending the whole day outside?</p>	

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	<p>Val doesn't think it is an option to spend the whole day outside just now, although absolutely for part of the day.</p> <p>Val advised that we are currently allocated 36 children to next year's P1. The max number of children per teacher is 25. If can accommodate the whole group in one classroom, we can do that with two teachers, each with their allocated children. We are anticipating that there is enough space to do this but will have to assess this in more detail.</p> <p>If the numbers in P1 go up any further then we would anticipate they will be split into two classrooms. This will be finalised once numbers are confirmed.</p>	
10.0	School meals provision for special diets	
10.1	A parent has queried what can be done if their child needs a special diet. Val advised that there are gluten free options on Parent Pay. If you are having any trouble with this then please do contact the school and they will help.	
10.0	After school clubs reopening	
10.1	Val advised they hope that after school clubs will be opening again soon. The swimming pool is scheduled to reopen after Easter, and school is hoping to increase the bubbles that staff can go into, including Active Schools. They anticipate that some at least will be opening again after Easter.	
9.0	Any other business	
9.1	<p><i>Easy Fundraising App</i></p> <p>We've had no volunteers to take on the administration of the school's account. Ali to put out a call via email and Ruth to put one out on social media.</p> <p><i>Playground football</i></p> <p>A number of parents have raised that the football in the playground is falling apart. Can it be replaced? Val advised that the school can't encourage cross-bubble play and all footballs should be kept in the class boxes. Val to ensure that the broken one in the playground is binned.</p> <p><i>Elections</i></p> <p>Note that the school won't be used as a polling station this year, so children will be able to come into school as normal.</p>	<p>AM, RP</p> <p>VH</p>
10.0	Date of Next Meeting	
10.1	May 12 th 6:30-8pm.	