

Parent Council Meeting
4 October 2017 (Meeting 2)

In Attendance

Eva Malone (EM) Chair

Katy Westacott (KXW) Head Teacher

Julie Tait (JT) Secretary

Arlene Davis (AD) School business Manager

Johanna Jenkins (JJK)

Johanna Espey (JE)

Katie Wotherspoon (KW)

Steven Riley-Morrison (SRM)

Joanne Jamieson (JJ)

Ann Moore (AM)

Laura Robertson (LR)

Kasia Banaszewska-Diax (KBD)

Colin James (CJ)

Apologies

Jane Weir (Treasurer)

Gill Lawson

Agenda Items:

1.Welcome and apologies

EM welcomed everybody to the meeting and explained that there were apologies from Gill Lawson and Jane Weir. She also introduced Eilish Robertson from P5 who was representing P5 and thanking the parent council for helping with the Macmillan coffee morning that was held on 29 September 2017. Eilish presented a lovely card from the class and Ms Barbour. Eva and the parent council (PC) thanked Eilish and the P5 class for their thoughtfulness.

2.Action points from previous meeting

At the last meeting, an action point was set for the PC to meet with the pupil council and KW and LR have confirmed a date with the pupil council and will advise on how their meeting went at the next PC meeting.

We also had an action point to complete the minutes and upload them to the website within two weeks to allow all parents the opportunity to access the minutes of the last parent council meeting and this was achieved. EM thanked all involved for reaching the target and Mr O'Connor for his assistance with the minutes upload on the website.

EM advised that the PC section of the Website needed a bit of work to finalise and was lacking information. EM has previously asked the PC for assistance and has now also asked parents for their ideas and contributions to see what can be accomplished. It is currently a work in progress and will hopefully be finalised soon. All contributions are welcome.

EM contributed to the September newsletter and would like to contribute to each newsletter going forward but requires some notice of when the newsletters go out to the parents.

EM will also work on the space at reception for the PC board. She plans to do this on Fridays when she has time to update the board with information.

KXW has advised that although the school had planned to upload class letters to the school website that after further discussion this is now deemed not appropriate; as it allows members of the public to be aware of where the children are and what they could be doing. Therefore, in order to still be able to communicate to parents she has advised that a closed private twitter account will be opened to allow class letters and news to be shared. There will be no photos or videos of children posted to this account. All parents will be encouraged to have a twitter account.

EM advised that the Facebook description has now been updated and notification posted of a membership review. The parents of the children who had left the school removed themselves as part of the process. EM asked the question, when should parents be removed? They may wish to keep up a short-term interest in the school after their child has left and JE suggested four weeks as a guideline as that is what the nurseries do when P1 children transition to school. This is under consideration at present and all thoughts are welcome regarding this process.

EM spoke about the draft letter she had composed for councillors and circulated to PC for approval, the content involved inviting local councillors to attend PC meetings, learn about the school, the challenges the school faces and how recent investment has helped the school. All members were in agreement that the letter can go to the councillors in the local community and KW also suggested that it should go to the local MP.

Fr Deeley was contacted in relation to the opening of the hall and as a result some of the local parishioners attended the opening celebrations and provided positive feedback in relation to the event.

KXW sent funding requests to the parent council however the pricing is based on last year events. She requested if they can be approved in principle and has provided upper limited pricing amounts so there should not be a big increase on any of the funding requests. EM will circulate to PC to approve.

The spooky walk match funding sponsorship has been approved by Chris Tait's employers and information will be communicated to all as soon as the details have been finalised.

JW is looking into gift aid and putting this on the spooky walk forms; gift aid is a UK tax incentive that enables tax effective giving by individuals to charities.

AM was tasked with speaking to Fr Deeley in relation to the Ceilidh that he is planning, AM advised that Fr Deeley is just back from holidays so she will ask him about his intentions regarding the ceilidh. AM will report back before the next meeting, in case assistance is required.

3. PC Chair update

EM confirmed it has been a busy time since the last PC meeting. Parents in the school community including PC members have supported the school:

-with the fundraising at Tesco (9th Sept)

-celebrations in relation to the opening of the new gym hall (14th & 15th Sept)

-Macmillan coffee morning (29th Sept)

Some parents have asked EM to clarify if the construction company and builders were thanked at the opening of the gym hall. KXW has clarified that she thanked all teams involved and thanked them on numerous occasions for all their good work and effort.

EM thanked Ms Barbour, the school and children for the Macmillan coffee morning as a big effort was made in the organisation of the event and everybody felt welcome and it was a lovely opportunity to chat with other parents and teachers. The school and the PC have received positive feedback in relation to these events and it has created a positive vibe about the school.

EM has met with Mr O'Connor to upload the minutes onto the website and make some changes to the information provided. The website is updated on Fridays (for information purposes)

Bookings have been made for upcoming PC meetings/let applications completed and EM has advised that as a PC we hold Public Liability Insurance, details of which she received by post. Eva will scan and circulate to PC members.

A PC update was provided to contribute to the September newsletter. The FB site is being managed and monitored and used to communicate with the parent body.

EM has circulated a Fair Funding Briefing & Consultation to PC members and also an online safety workshop/O2 parent workshop where they come in and set up an online safety workshop. Some PC members showed interest as it is an important topic and KXW suggested inviting other schools along if we were hosting an event as this is topical and maybe of interest to other parents in the community.

EM thanked JJK for taking the time to go through the PC cupboard and create an asset register, we now know the correct number of cups/coffee/teabags etc and other items that we have and can stock up accordingly.

Communication – A pupil funding request was sent to the PC to request funds to enhance the school fish tank. EM acted upon the request communicating with PC members and the school regarding this funding request. The funding request was ultimately recalled by the school. EM suggested going forward consideration needs to be given to the correct communication channels for pupil requests. However, JJ contacted Deep Sea World to ask for support and guidance and they gave up their time and came to the school, donated some equipment and fish accessories. As a result the fish has a new home without the need for funds from the PC. EM also requested that KXW directly email members of the parent council to save time and speed up communication. It will also help with prioritisation for EM although EM is happy to be cc'd in on the email if KXW would like to do this.

Still focusing on communication, it was agreed that there must be clear communication and distinction between school and PC events and who is leading and where help is required. There was

confusion with the opening of the gym hall where PC members thought at the last minute that they were required to help with the set up on Thursday morning. KXW advised that the gym hall was set up on the Wednesday night and was unsure why there was confusion however going forward clear communication is the key.

4. Treasurer update

Unfortunately, the treasurer was unable to make the meeting at the last minute, so was unable to provide an update. However, JW is currently looking into the gift aid and the PC have received a remittance slip from city of Edinburgh council for £494.20 and this in the PC bank account.

5. Edinburgh Airport Community Board funding application

KW has been leading this project with LR assisting and there are a number of key aims that the project is aiming to achieve with the focus on developing the outdoor space. The costing needs to be completed for this project and researched with various quotes being obtained and suppliers will need to be contacted who might donate shrubs/plants and be involved in the project.

AD has advised that w/c 2nd October 2017 a new form has been issued by Edinburgh Council for outdoor space developments in schools and there are a lot of new considerations. Assessments/safety considerations/ quotes all need to be completed/obtained and the form approval obtained before any grant can be submitted. As a result, this additional approval process will delay the application and this has imposed time constraints on the application. It has been agreed that KW is happy to drive forward but will need to wait for the next funding round.

KW will work on it meantime, CJ advised that Crammond had got the funding approved and if anybody has a contact at that primary school that they might be prepared to share their application.

AD also advised that if contractors are used from the approved city of Edinburgh council for schools list that VAT is not payable. This is a considerable saving and needs to be considered. AD will provide a list of the contractors on the list.

6. Spooky Walk

JJ updated everybody present on the progress of the organisation of the Spooky Walk

The Scottish fire and rescue service/local fire station have agreed to a P1-P3 to visit, this will only change if there is a red alert.

Tesco will donate the apples.

The shops in South Queensferry such as The Little Parlour, Once upon a Time will donate marshmallows like last year and a quiz will be organised with clues in shops windows, nothing too hard as we need to consider the weather may not be good and the walk may have to be done quickly. JJ will organise with KXW.

There will be 4 prizes, it has been agreed that these will be book vouchers. 4 x £10 vouchers and EM will arrange to purchase these vouchers. The prizes will be divided between the two best pumpkins and the two best fancy dressed. Fr Deeley may pick the best pumpkin again however this to be confirmed.

The pathway on the ferry glen will be decorated for the children.

Party Bags will be ordered for 120 kids (numbers confirmed by KXW) and will contain items such as apples, bouncy balls, bubbles squashems etc and the budget for this is £120-£140. The children loved the party bags last year and the party so further party bags will be organised in line with last year. KXW has advised that the school is promoting a healthy policy and if the bags could have some healthy options that would be appreciated. The PC have taken this on board.

As previously mentioned JW is reviewing gift aid for the sponsor forms.

SRM is making posters for promoting the event.

Counting of money is a priority and a deadline will be put on the form to return the sponsorship form by and the funds will be counted and banked in line with the PC guidelines agree at the last meeting. However, deadlines can only be reached if funds and forms can be handed in on time.

The funds raised will be put towards a number of projects for the children rather than a specific item, so there will be no item referenced to on the sponsor forms this year.

Helpers are always welcome and letters will be sent asking for any parents who would like to join in the fun and help to let JJ know and come along and join in the fun. All help is appreciated and the more funds raised the better as every £1=£3

7. PC Photo

EM suggested that the PC photo be taken tonight, however due to time constraints and missing PC members this was postponed to the next meeting.

8. Parent Pay

EM advised that concerns around Parent Pay had been raised by some parents. EM put these concerns to AD, the business manager for the school, and AD advised that she is happy to answer all queries and meet parents that have any concerns. EM will email AD with queries and AD will respond accordingly.

This is a positive initiative that has been rolled out across Edinburgh schools and St Margaret's school are slightly behind in implementing the process. Some PC members have heard positive feedback from other schools that have implemented this system.

If parents do not wish to engage with this initiative, there is an alternative process - parents will receive a letter from the school with a specific barcode which they take to a local store and they can make payments through this system however AD the business manager will explain this process to interested parents. Despite this process all details need to be entered on a system like any online shopping process so although the process is completed in a shop, basic information does need to be uploaded to the system and if parents are unable to do, the school will still need to input the data; however, AD will explain this to the parents who have queries in relation to the process. AD has made it clear that bank details do not need to be saved on the system they can be inputted each time a payment is required.

AD has advised that all guidelines in office can be passed to parents and that parents can use ipads in school to do assist with the set up if they would like some assistance and need to setup an account.

If an account is set up it allows parents to have an account facility to pay for school meals, trips and also to receive communication from the school, therefore cutting out the chance that the letter in the school bag does not reach the parents. The intention is that it will be a vital way for the school to communicate with all parents in a more efficient manner and the school plan is for the process to go live on 30th October 2017.

AD has advised that she had globally disabled texting as there is a 6p charge for notifications/texts so email is the better option so there are no charges.

To assist parents to understand this new process the school are prepared to do some workshops, and help parents in any way they can. There is an open-door policy, if any parents would like advice or assistance please contact the school who are happy to help.

9. Head teacher update

KXW has advised that the norovirus is something requiring attention and that the children need to wash their hands properly. JE advised of the reasons why it spreads so quickly and the best ways to avoid it spreading. EM asked if all children know how to wash their hands properly as although they wash their hands they may need to be reminded of the correct process.

Prompt exclusion is required if vomiting occurs and checking the relationship between class teacher and class mates needs to be considered together with protecting any equipment used. The school want to avoid cancelling trips and events and it has also been noted that if siblings have not been sick but somebody in the house has that they should also not attend school for 48 hours.

10 Wrap around care and P7 Transitions

Wrap around care and P7 transition were deferred to next meeting due to the time constraints, however KXW has advised that she has been and is working on P7 transitions in the background and will update the PC at the next meeting.

AOB

Questions

EM has asked about school photos. In the past the school has organised the photographs, but no photos were taken last year. KXW advised that the school had forgotten about photos last year. The school will organise a photographer this year however they are happy for suggestions for a photographer to come from parents.

EM asked how much had been raised for the Macmillan coffee morning – no confirmation on funds was available. Amounts will be in newsletter for all parents/carers to see.

JJ asked if a card could be provided to Starbucks as a thank you from the children.

EM advised that a parent had suggested a regular dress down day, set day, e.g. first Friday of every month, opt in for those that want to and they can make a donation if they want to. The regular slot may also help children that like routine. It may also help with fundraising. The school will support this dress down day once a month if parents are in agreement and support this idea. KXW advised

that the pupil council had also raised the idea as a method to raise money for their chosen charities and that maybe the days could be shared.

AD as business manager will respond to any queries put forward by EM on behalf of parents and parents are welcome to put these questions forward direct to AD and AD is available to offer one to one support to all parents.

It has also been noted that dogs have been left directly beside the school gate and that some children are afraid to come into the school and parents have complained. Please can all parents be mindful in relation to their dogs and other children and parents and not leave their dogs directly tied up beside the school gates.

Action Points

KW and LR to update PC visit to pupil council

AM will advise PC of Fr Deeley response to ceilidh intentions

EM will arrange scanning and circulating copy of public liability insurance to members.

JW to look into gift aid and update at next meeting

AD will provide a list of the contractors on the Edinburgh council approved list.

AD to respond to list of questions provided by EM in relation to parent pay and to also provide some information to parents who would like to come forward with any questions

EM will arrange to purchase 4 x £10 book vouchers for prizes for the spooky walk.

PC photo to be taken at the next meeting

KXW to advice PC in relation to P7 transition

KXW to provide update on school photos and how much raised by the coffee morning

KXW to speak to Ms Barbour ref thank you card from P5