

Minutes of the AGM of the Parent Forum

Wednesday, 27 September 2017

The meeting of the Parent Forum was attended by 7 members of the Parent Forum and 7 members of the Parent Council.

In attendance: Lucy Henderson; Sarah Cavanagh.

Welcome by Billy Samuel (Chair)

The Chair opened the meeting and began by recognising the input and support provided by Mrs Henderson, it having been almost a year to the date that she had commenced her Acting Head Teacher role. Mrs Henderson has now secured a permanent Head Teacher post at Kirkliston Primary, and the Chair wished her every success in her new role.

Introduction (Chair)

The Chair explained that the Parent Forum AGM is for all parents of the School. The Parent Council is the Parent voice and provides two-way communication between parents and the School. Meetings often deal with matters relating to policy and the School ethos, along with other day to day matters. The Parent Council is not involved in fundraising; there is a separate PTA in the School.

The Parent Council has 16 parent places, with the option for co-opted members from the wider community and a representative from the PTA also attending. The Chair represents the School at the North West Locality Group (consisting of the Parent Council chairs for the 33 Primary Schools and 8 High Schools in the area) and has also been elected to attend the Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP) meetings as the Primary School representative for the North West Locality – this is a formal City of Edinburgh Council meeting.

Annual Review of the Parent Council (Chair)

The Chair provided an overview of some of the topics that the Parent Council had been engaged in during the last school:

- **Interaction with City of Edinburgh Council** – predominantly in relation to the Building Works within the school, completion of Grounds Development and the new Nursery; but also in relation to ongoing maintenance (such as improvements to the boy's toilets) and wider topics (such as the impact of proposed housing developments on school catchment areas).
- **Support the school** – for example in relation to Senior Management recruitment (in 2016/17 the appointment of a Deputy Head Teacher).
- **Topical issues** – support the thinking around “1 in 5 Poverty” agenda, active travel and school dinners, amongst various topics.

Key Initiatives of 2017-18 : Active Travel (Sarah Campbell, Parent Council Member)

Sarah provided an overview of the planned efforts of the Active Travel Sub Group.

The main aims of the Sub Group are to:

- Fit into the Active School Programme
- Consider commitments that can support the wider climate change agenda
- Promote safety around the school
- Promote health and well-being
- Try and find ways to tackle some of the parking and traffic problems around the school
- Encourage positive action
- Link in with the “One Planet” pupil groups with the school

Sarah then outlined some planned activities, including Travel to School surveys, promoting cycling and walking to and from school, and looking for ways for more efficient use of cars, taxis and public transport.

Parent Forum members were asked for their views in the meeting. One parent advocated the idea of a “walking bus” perhaps supported by p7 pupils; but another parent queried the practicality where children would be walking from North Gyle across Glasgow Road. The Chair confirmed that at this stage the key focus was to better understand the issues and devising solutions; which would be options rather than mandatory. Another parent voiced concerns regarding the speed of cars entering Manse Street. The Chair noted that the removal of 20 mph signs outside schools (where the whole road is now 20 mph) had been raised recently at CCwP and a pilot of variable speed monitoring was planned for Roseburn. The Chair also noted that he and Mrs Henderson had met recently with the Chair and Secretary of the Corstorphine Community Council (CCC) and would both be attending a meeting on parking/traffic issues that the CCC is chairing in October 2017.

Key Initiatives of 2017-18 : Active Travel (Sue McVey, Parent Council Member)

Sue provided an overview of the planned efforts of the School Meals Sub Group.

Sue outlined that the aims of the Sub Group were that:

- Parents have value for money and the knowledge that children are comfortably eating a healthy and tasty meal in pleasant surroundings.
- Children want school meals.

As a first step in understanding views, Sue outlined that they are in the process of surveying parents, children and staff.

One parent sought clarification as to whether we had any preconceived views. The Chair explained that we are not going into the exercise with a fixed notion of what needs improved. There has been anecdotal evidence of areas for improvement, but we want to have a more considered opinion before taking any next steps. The Chair further explained that he had sought views from other Parent Council chairs, and this would also be incorporated, although recognising that there are different contractual models for catering depending on particular schools (e.g. those schools supported by PFI/PPP arrangements have different set ups).

Approval of Accounts (Elinor Waterston, Treasurer)

The Parent Council is awarded a sum of money from the Council each year, dependant on the School role. The balance of this money is typically donated to the School. This year we have £1,345 of available funds.

It was agreed that the Auditor, Andy Goodman, should continue in the role. Andy is a former Parent Council member and the Chair expressed its thanks to him for his on-going help.

Election of new members

The following five members of the Parent Council were re-elected, as required by the Constitution: Billy Samuel (Chair), Elinor Waterston (Treasurer), Jen Farrar, Karine Masting and Angela Lawson.

The Chair noted that Kay Barclay and Kirsty Moore had stood down from the Parent Council. The Chair thanked them for their contribution.

This now means that there are now currently 5 vacancies on the Parent Council. This includes the post of Vice-Chair, which remains unfilled.

Parents were encouraged to consider joining the Parent Council. Although parents with specific skills are welcomed for their input in detailed discussions, all parents are qualified and very welcome to join the Parent Council. It is not a big commitment; usually there are 6 meetings per session. Parents are also welcome to get involved in particular topics, e.g. to support a Parent Council sub-group, without the requirement to formally join the Parent Council. There were no volunteers.

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One parent asked as to whether parents were able to input into the nature of school trips. The Chair noted that in most instances, any queries should be raised with the class teacher in the first instance, and that if matters are not resolved to everyone's satisfaction or they are more serious in nature, then parents should then reach out to the school management team. The Chair noted that the Parent Council is also there to consider if there is a broader parent perspective that needs considered.

Closing Address (Chair)

The Chair thanked members of the Parent Council for all their work in support of the School over the past year. Mrs Henderson thanked the Chair and the Parent Council members for their support, noting that she particularly welcomed the solutions-focused approach that was adopted.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parent Council will be on 22 November 2017 at 7.15pm in the staffroom.