

Corstorphine Primary School Parent Council
*Corstorphine Primary School, High Street, Corstorphine
Edinburgh, EH12 7SY*

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting

Thursday, 22 January 2015

Present: Jennifer Ross (Head Teacher)
Billy Samuel (Deputy Chair)
Sarah Cavanagh (Staff Rep.)
Kay Barclay (Parent Member)
Shona Richardson (Staff Rep.)
Jennifer Farrar (Parent Member)
Kirsty Moore (Parent Member)
Kirsty MacDonald (Staff Rep)
Carol Christie (Parent Member)
Elinor Waterston (Treasurer)
Cllr. P. Edie
Anne Kiely (Early Years Manager)
Jane Rough (Early Years Manager)

In attendance: Karen Ladomery (Clerk)

1. **Apologies:** Audrey McColl, Moira McDonald, Aleks Tomczyk, Gillian Farrell, Karine Masting, Lesley Mason and Bill Halliday

2. **Nursery Update** (Anne Kiely and Jane Rough, Early Years Manager)

As announced in September 2014, City of Edinburgh Council has allocated funds made available by the Scottish Government to replace and/or expand existing Early Years provision within 5 locations in the city. This includes the replacement of the existing Corstorphine Nursery building (maintaining the existing 50/50 provision). It is anticipated that the building will not cause disruption to existing nursery pupils and it is scheduled for completion in April 2016. Anne and Jane provided an overview of the design of the new Nursery at James Gillespie's School as an example of how the new design might look. The funding available will also cover the design and build of the exterior Nursery space.

The next step will be to create a Working Group to meet shortly, which will include the Head Teacher and a representative from the Parent Council. It was also agreed that it would be a good idea to include a representative from Project Play on the Working Group.

3. **Minutes of last Parent Council Meetings (4 December 2014) and Matters Arising**

The minutes were approved as read.

Ground Development. The request for funding for leaflet distribution (£185) was no longer needed. An alternative source of funding had been found.

4. Financial Update.

Appointment of Treasurer. Elinor Waterston was appointed Treasurer (she was formerly the Auditor). Andy Goodman, who was the previous Treasurer, will now become the Auditor.

Action – Elinor Waterston – to liaise with Andy Goodman regarding updating the bank signatories

Funding Requests. Mrs. Ross requested funding for the forthcoming Book Week which will be run across the whole School. It is a project designed to develop creativity, and the funding would be for 2 class sets of books and art materials. It was agreed to donate £1,000.

5. Updates from Parent Council sub-groups

Grounds Development. Copies of update provided by Gilly Herbert were circulated to Parent Council members. The Architect has now been confirmed and has visited the School. Initial designs will be presented on 26 January. The project is in the middle of applying for many grants and other sources of finance and progress is excellent.

Action: Billy Samuel – to advise Gilly Herbert of the expected date for completion of the new nursery of April 2016.

The next scheduled update will be on 19 March 2015 by Project Play.

Parents' Focus Group

Ms Doran, Ms McCullough and Ms Miller have been researching the Life Skills project for pupils and are about to create a plan for each stage of primary education. It was proposed that the Parent Focus Group meet with the teacher representatives, once the draft plan has been prepared, to provide input / comment

Action: Gillian Farrell – to liaise with Mrs Ross / Ms Doran

The next scheduled update (Life Skills agenda) will be on 19 March 2015.

School Policy Group.

Mrs. Ross was asked to provide a progress update against the 14/15 Improvement Plan:

There are many projects going on at the same time within the School. Over the past year there have been staffing challenges and there is currently a city-wide shortage of supply teachers. This shortage means that management time is being reduced which is putting pressure on the Improvement Plan. However the plans are pretty much on schedule despite this. Curriculum development has taken place in the expressive arts with pupil journeys throughout the School in skills and experience within art, drama, art and music. Staff are currently being trained in creative dance.

The philosophy “Bounce Back” is being embedded in the School. This involves creating peer mediators in the playground and training them in conflict resolution skills. The aim is to develop resilience in young people and works using key core values, circle time and stories. Pupils learn how to respond to challenges in a non-threatening way.

In addition to “Bounce Back”, the School is also focussing on creating confident staff and children. Staff and parents are being trained on how to raise children with confidence. This training has a very high parental uptake and is a six week course.

The Nursery is developing outdoor learning in the wider environment with one forest walk per term. Unfortunately, the IT experiences planned are not taking place due a current lack of internet connection within the Nursery. The Business Manager is currently looking into this situation and the Parent Council would be very willing to write to the Council in support of this matter being resolved urgently.

Action: Billy Samuel – to raise issue of the lack of Nursery internet connection with the Council

6. 15/16 Budget

The School has no major challenges arising from the new Budget. Staffing has been protected.

7. Head Teacher’s Report (Mrs. Ross)

P1 Intake. There are currently requests from 88 catchment children, although this would normally include a number of children who would ultimately request to defer entry. City of Edinburgh Council has set an intake of 18 classes for the coming year. As things stand, this will mean 85 children in 3 classes of 25, 25 and 35.

School Values. The School Values have now been in place for 9 years and have been very effective. Mrs. Ross feels that it would now be a good time to consult the school community once again on these values. It was decided not to undergo a process of drawing up new values and starting from scratch, but to approach parents and ask for feedback and views on the current values.

Dining Room Tables. The Council has agreed to fund the purchase of new dining room tables. Mrs. Ross thanked the Parent Council for all its hard work in this matter.

8. AOB

School lunches. A parent has written to the Parent Council concerned about the provision of flavoured milk and fruit drinks with meals. A wider discussion ensued on the provision of school meals, both in terms of the time taken to serve meals and the food/drink provided. The Parent Council felt that it would benefit from further understanding the current provision. Mrs Ross suggested that Parent Council members might wish to take lunch to experience the process “first hand”.

Action: Mrs Ross – to facilitate Parent Council members to experience school dinner provision.

Action: Billy Samuel / Audrey McColl – to respond to the parent informing them that the Parent Council is looking into the matter.

Minutes. A parent has written to the Parent Council advising that Parent Council minutes are no longer being posted on the School Noticeboard. This has been an unintended consequences of updating the distribution list for electronic versions of the minutes. The process of providing a copy of the minutes to Mr. Wemyss will be re-instated, in order that these can be placed on the School Noticeboard.

Action: Audrey McColl / Billy Samuel – minutes to be forwarded to Mr. Wemyss

ParentMail. A parent has written complaining about the quantity of ParentMail being sent out to parents. It was noted that the availability of ParentMail provided a significant saving to the school in terms of paper / printing, and were more reliable than “bag drops”. It was also noted that there is a text service for urgent messages.

To address the parent’s concerns, a member of the Parent Council (Carol) will liaise with the School Administrator to discuss ways of improving this system, i.e. including more information in the title bar. The Parent Council is very aware that the School administration is fully stretched. It is hoped that the new School website (once developed) will help reduce the number of ParentMails.

Action: Audrey McColl / Billy Samuel - to respond to the parent informing them that the Parent Council is looking into the matter.

P1 Parents. A parent wrote to the Parent Council complaining that they had not been allowed to accompany their child into the classroom on the first day of term in P1, this having been an option in previous years. Further, that the promised “Shared Start” had not materialised. Mrs. Ross explained that this approach had been stopped 2 years ago, in part recognising that classrooms were becoming too crowded on such occasions, exacerbated by the new P1 intake being staggered over a shorter period. This had been replaced by the “Shared Start”. Mrs. Ross advised that it had been an oversight that this has only been completed for one P1 class. This is being remedied.

Action: Audrey McColl / Billy Samuel - to respond to the parent enquiry

Community Use of Playground. Gilly Herbert has requested that the Parent Council consider whether they would be happy with the playground being accessible for community use. This is a condition for certain grant applications for playground funds. It was agreed that this would be acceptable, although any terms must be agreed with Mrs. Ross.

Action: Billy Samuel – to advise Gilly Herbert

Park Volunteers. It is hoped to have this organised for the end of February. Two volunteers will be needed each day. Mrs. Ross noted that Gillian Farrell is helping organise the rota.

9. Future Agenda Items:

- Update from Parent Focus Group (Life Skills agenda)
- Grounds Development (Update by Project Play)
- School Policy Group (Homework Policy)
- School Lunches

10. Date of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parent Council will be held on Thursday, 19 March at 7.15pm.