

Minutes of the Loanhead PS Parent Council Meeting

11-Oct-22, 7.00 - 8.15 PM

Chair: Kerry Crichton

Minutes: Lynn Waight

Attendees:

Poppy Kyles, Lynn Waight, Karen Hinton, Rhonda Mag Fhogartai, Jo Gillies, Raul Pardinaz-Solis, Ashley Allen, Laura Burnett, Denise Claxton, Jane Yorkston, Rachel Coombs, Melanie Caldwell.

Apologies:

Ian Carpenter, Lorna Kennedy, Alex Kitchen, Libby McAdam, Michelle Brown, Gemma Stevenson

1. Review of previous minutes

- Confirmation that the 2023 AGM will be the first meeting of the next school year.
- Prior to this meeting an update from Midlothian Council on the crossing guide has been communicated to the members and was posted to the Parent Council Facebook page.
- Mrs Cairney's retirement gift was presented at her leaving assembly, she wished to thank everyone for their kindness. We all wish her well as she moves into this new stage of life.
- Clarification that although the suggestion of parent information/education sessions was discussed no further action was taken on advancing this idea.
- The discussion around religious representation in school was carried forward with the school by the parent away from the Parent Council forum.
- It was highlighted that the number of complimentary lets available to the school each year is limited, Melanie will confirm the number. The outcome of this might impact on the proposed meetings for the rest of the year, the meeting numbers may be limited, the venue may be changed or some meetings moved to Zoom. [MC, KC]

2. Treasury Update

Bank balance	£2544.33
Cash	£244.04
West End Skoda grant balance	£500.00
Arnold Clark balance	£713.36
Scotmid grant balance	£143.13

There are funding opportunities available for educational play equipment, we are asking staff if they have any specific play items that funding could be applied for, RC and KH to had ideas and would discuss. The nursery also have some items they have be look into.

It was agreed in the lead up to Christmas £20 will be allocated to each class, including pre-school, to buy craft materials, this would be a £160 expenditure from the Parent Council funds. To be raised at the weekly staff meeting [KH].

3. Halloween Disco

There is a box outside reception for costume drop off in advance of the costume exchange.

The disco will take place on Tuesday 01-Nov-22 from 6-7:30pm. Volunteers to help one the night are being sought.

If you wish please join the WhatsApp chat for separate pre-disco organisation chat.

A letter should go home to parents this week.

A separate meeting amongst those from PC who are able to help organise is required and will be scheduled soon. This meeting will address the ticket cost, music, apple dominations, purchases required, list of help required.

4. Charity Status

There are funding and donation opportunities which are only available to registered charities, however the Parent Council cannot register for charity status. It is proposed that a separate group be formed, suggested 'Friends of Loanhead Primary School', which could register as a charity and utilise these funding opportunities.

This group would be a separate entity and have a different committee to the Parent Council. It would require the usual committee members (Chair, treasurer, secretary) as well as 3-4 trustees, committee members could also act as trustees.

How this new group, the Parent Council and the school would work together is to be finalised but it is hoped that the Parent Council and would work in parallel with this group and that we would compliment each other.

This is being taken forward by PK and LM.

5. Fundraising Events

The Halloween disco is coming up and we should continue to look for fundraising opportunities.

Tea towels were successful last year, it is felt that this should not be repeated for a few years but perhaps something in a similar vein could be done this year.

The autumn scavenger hunt was also well received last year, we will do this again this year for children to complete over the October break.

The idea of an adult fundraiser was raised as an alternative to the child driven fundraising activities. Wine tasting or cheese and wine night was suggested, legalities of supplying wine to be researched. [PK]

The talent show organised by the Parent Council in 2020 was enjoyed by everyone who attended and raised a generous amount of funds. Perhaps a similar event could be organised in the new year. To be discussed at a later date.

6. Classroom funds

This was covered in the treasury report discussion. In addition to the £20 for Christmas crafts, a similar amount will be offered to teachers in June to buy supplies to prepare their classrooms for the next school year.

7. Atrium Fruit Bowls

This was discussed at a previous meeting as something the PC could help with and fund. To get the ball rolling a fruit bowl for each atrium has been donated along with the first supply of fruit, thank you to Laura and Poppy. This will be trialed for a few weeks to see how much fruit might be required going forward. Apples and bananas were suggested as most popular fruits. Cereal bars

or similar will be purchased by the PC to be kept by teachers for any child who would benefit from an additional snack.

We will also investigate the possibility that a 20% discount is available to the PC in Lidl when buying grocery items for school use.

8. Daily Mile

This was an initiative by the Scottish Government 10+ years ago to promote health, fitness and wellbeing. It faded out with their subsequent promise to ensure every child receives 2 hours of physical education every week. However the initiative is back, schools can register on a website which has a map of the UK showing all schools taking part.

From previous experience, within the school, it is known that walking/running takes 30 minutes, this would become 2.5 hours a week. With 2 hours of PE per week already included in the school week it is felt this would be too much time dedicated to one area of education making it difficult for the school to support in that form. If a median could be sought where it wasn't compulsory for all children or could be completed as a club activity, before / after school or during breaks. It will be raised at the weekly staff meeting for feedback.

9. School Radios

This was addressed outside the meeting and therefore was not discussed.

10. Headteacher Update

- No changes to staff, except from the already known retirement of Mrs Cairney and departure of Mrs Craig.
- The School Improvement Plan has been finalised as is now available in the school website. [HYPERLINK](#)
- P5 are leaving for camp on Wed 12-Oct-22 for 2 nights.
- The gardening initiative continues with all classes.
- Gillian Bathgate of Midlothian Council emailed the school regarding missing safe route signage. Following the redirection of the safe route after building of the new houses some signage has not been replaced, notably the signs which were on the Clerk Street giving directions to the start of the safe route. Gillian has suggested that the Junior Road Safety Officers help with producing replacement signs.

A member of the PC was requested to explain the need for the signage to the current P6 class in the hope that they can have a competition to design new signs which could be put up to replace the ones which were not replaced. KC and RC will try to take the P6 class down the safe route on Thursday to explain.

The amount of dog mess on the safe route was subsequently raised. This has been a problem in the past, the school children produced poster to highlight the problem, disappointingly they were cut down over night the first day they went up. Supplying doggy-poo bags in makeshift dispensers, as has been done by youth groups in other area on Loanhead, was suggested, RMF has surplus bags at home and volunteered to help take this forward with some help.

- Exiting by classroom doors
In response to emails from two parents Mrs Caldwell emailed Skanska to enquire about returning to the COVID procedure of classes being excused at the end of each day from

their classroom door rather than the main atrium doors (with entry at the beginning to the day continuing through the main atrium doors).

The area outside the lower atrium door is particularly busy at the end of each school day with parents and children. It is difficult to see the children coming out and in turn for the teachers to see parents collecting the younger children, it also makes some children anxious when faced with so many people as they exit the building.

A negative response was received from Skanska, in summery they explained the following points:

- Exiting from classroom doors would breach security protocols, the classroom doors offer direct access to the main school building, where the atrium door has two internal doors of the cloakroom area before the main school building is reached.
- The classroom doors are not covered by CCTV cameras unlike the atrium doors.
- The Ice Route, which details where in the playground their staff will grit in the event of snow or ice on the ground, does not cover the area outside classroom doors making exiting from them dangerous in cold weather.

These are also fire exits so should these areas not be included on the ice route?

- Opening these doors would cool the classrooms resulting in increased energy usage to re-heating the space.

It is the end of the day - the classrooms do not require re-heating.

The email was read and discussed, specific responses from the room to a couple point are noted in italics.

One of the main concerns coming from the discussion was the Ice Route. The Ice Route is the area of the playground which will be gritted by Skanska staff when required, this is the only area Skanska will commit to grit, it is a basic path around the school linking each gate to the playground. It was the view of the group that this limited route that is gritted is not sufficient, if the classroom doors are also fire exits and the classes are required to use these fire exits in an emergency, on an icy day, it would be dangerous if a path from each exit was not gritted. Last winter the issue of gritted areas was raised with Skanska, in particular for the area directly outside the P1 classroom door, this area is often in the shade so the frost / ice doesn't thaw quickly. Staff asked if the area could be gritted as a child had an accident after slipping on an untreated area, Skanska responded to say they would only grit the area specified by the Ice Route.

The Parent Council will address the insufficiency of the ice route by emailing Skanska. If the Ice ? Route can be amended to include the fire exits / classroom doors this might be the first step in reducing barriers to exiting from the classroom doors.

Additionally the PC will share a poll on the Facebook page asking for opinions on exiting from the classroom door versus the atrium door. Results to be discussed at the next meeting. [LW, LB]

11. Supervision in the playground

The question was asked as to whether there is adult supervision in the playground before school. Unfortunately there is no school staff supervision available before school.

In response it was asked that both children and adults are reminded that they should not ride or scoot in the school playground, children will be reminded in assembly, a reminder will also be put in the next newsletter and on the PC Facebook page. It will also be explained to the nursery children why they cannot ride their bikes or scooters in the school playground.

In addition the children will be reminded that there should also be no football played in the playground before school, the playground areas are busy and accidents have occurred in the past involving both bikes and footballs.

12. AOB

12.1 - Gate across the service road

The gate that restricts access to the service road is broken, Skanska to be asked when it will be fixed.

12.2 - Parent Pay

The donation button is not yet active on Parent Pay. Updates to payment requests to be implemented after the October break.

12.3. - Feedback from P3 parent regarding car parking

Following incidents in the car park the PC was asked for its view point on areas of parking around the school, the following points were given in response:

- Please park considerately.
- Some of the parking on and around school grounds is creating dangerous situations for both children and adults.
- The car park is intended for staff.
- There should be no parking in front of cars in the parking bays which inhibits their exit.
- Disabled spaces should be used by people carrying a blue badge, where the person eligible for the Blue Badge is present.
- There is parking available in surrounding areas within a short walking distance to the school, please consider doing this if you have to drive to school.
- Do not park on the white zig zag lines around the zebra crossing at the bottom of the safe route, this is illegal and it obscures the view of both drivers and people using the crossing, making crossing safely difficult. The police are aware this is a problem and patrol the area.
- The red mono-blocked area in the car park is intended as a drop-off area, please use considerately.
- Adults do not need to wait with children in the playground before school, they can be dropped off from P1. The decision to do this is taken by parents for each child.

Parking wardens routinely visit the school car park and issue fines.

The car park and cars parking is one of the most raised issues with the PC and the school. Reminders to park considerately will be put into the newsletter once again and on the PC Facebook page.

13. Next meeting

Date and format of the next meeting will be confirmed once we have information on the complimentary lets.