



Oxgangs Primary School – Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 16th June 2015, 7.00 – 9.00 pm, Staff Room

Present: Crerar Christie – CC (Chair), Liz Walshe – LW (Head), Louise Mercer – LM (Teacher Rep.), Carol Munro – CM (Treasurer), Sue Bellis – SB (Eco- Group), Patricia Rudolf von Rohr – PRvR (Secretary), Ewan Stewart – ES, Tracy Brown – TB, Nicole Johnstone – NJ (Communication), Elaine Aitken – EA (Local Councillor), Victoria Irvine – VI (Reporting Working Group)

Apologies: Gordon Roberts (Vice Chair), Gill Christie (PTA Secretary), Gabby Carlyon (PTA Chair)

1. Welcome

CC opened with a welcome to everyone.

2. Approval of previous minutes (10th March 2015)

ES and SB approved minutes from the previous meeting.

3. Matters arising

3 i. Road Safety

LW confirmed that there is a new Crossing Attendant.

TB provided an update from her contact with the councillors regarding the planned yellow lines. These have been agreed, the current timescale is nine months.

The police has been on patrol recently however they left about five minutes before the bells.

LW also advised that Firrhill High School will be changing their school times after the summer holidays. This is due to re-structure of the different lengths of their lessons. The new end of day times will be very close to Oxgangs' 3.25pm, specifically on Wednesdays and Thursdays. There is concern about expected increase of traffic and parking during this times.

3 ii. Firrhill Partnership Centre

EA confirmed that this had been delayed due to changes in EU Finance Regulations. There are currently no new dates available.

3 iii. PC Communication and Outreach

CC advised that he had no further update. He had some problems with his computer, but expects to have more work done on the proposed new website for the next PC meeting.

3 iv. AOCB: Dog Fouling, Parent Mail, School Bell, Goal Posts, Active School Co-ordinator, Chanter Lessons

Dog Fouling: TB confirmed that she has raised this with the Council and it is currently being investigated. It was noted that there had recently been an improvement.

Parent Mail: CC confirmed that the number seems to have reduced. CM advised that the current system (ParentMail1) will soon be upgraded to PMX. All parents will need to sign up again to the new system, even if they are currently already signed up the old one. Online payments are still under consideration for all schools. EA confirmed that the plan is to get one provider for all schools and potentially the Council overall.

School Bell: LW confirmed that the clock check had been completed.

Goal Posts: LW advised that new, smaller goal posts had now been purchased and are being used.

Active School Co-ordinator: LW confirmed that Lorna continued in this role.

Chanter Lessons: CC noted that there was a communication regarding a new Firrhill Pipe Band with chanter and drumming lessons available for P4 pupils upwards. CM mentioned that there might be a possibility of lunchtime club lessons at Oxgangs for next year.

4. Update reports:

4 i. Head teacher report (LW)

LW gave an update on what has been happening in the school.

CM, Business Manager, will be leaving the school at the end of the term to take up post in a new school. She has been a valuable member of the Senior Management Team and her experience, expertise and commitment to Oxgangs will be hugely missed. CC also added his thanks to CM for all her work for the PCM.

LM has been appointed as Principal Teacher with responsibility for the Early Level (nursery and Primary 1).

The school is currently recruiting to fill all of the vacancies that have now become available. Interviews will take place until the end of term.

The children will be meeting their new teachers for the next school year tomorrow (17th June), when the P1 Induction Meeting will take place as well. CC confirmed that he will attend this to introduce the PC to the new parents.

P7 recently performed their 'Wonderland' musical, which was a fantastic show!

Primary 6 will be performing the Recycling Rhythms at Firrhill on Tuesday 23rd June at 7 pm. Everyone has been invited to join their performance.

The lunch break for P3 will change next year to 12.30pm to 1.15pm, this is back to what is used to be prior to this year. The reason it had been changed originally was due to there being a P2/3 composite class.

LW advised that the Breakfast Club will be running next school year as before, with a £20 charge for each child per year. The school has received funding again from the Council. LW pointed out that the set up at Oxgangs is unique in Edinburgh, as in far as other schools have limited numbers. This will need to be reviewed again the following year. EA confirmed that she will find out what the rules are around Council Funding and if there is a limit as to how much parents can pay before it would turn into Child Care and might lose Council Funding.

Regarding the School Fund Account, CM informed that the new Business Manager will need to set this up and should also be the treasurer. In addition the Parent Council account will also need a new treasurer with CM leaving. The current signatories are CM and CC. ES volunteered to take on the treasurer's role. Regarding other jobs currently completed by CM, VI will be putting information on the school website and LM will update Twitter.

4 ii. PTA (GLC)

CC provided an update on the PTA in the absence of Gabby Carlyon and Gill Christie.

Rag Bag: This continued to be well used and brings in a steady stream of income during the year. The company is slow to respond to requests to empty the bin so we try to keep everyone updated via Facebook and Gabby offers the option of leaving clothes with her in the interim.

May Fair: As ever, this is our biggest fundraising event during the year and we raised approximately £3,000. The P7s did a sterling job helping to man the stalls and a big thanks to everyone who helped in the run up, on the day and clearing up afterwards. Particular mention should be made to our Treasurer Michael who spent the day in the meeting room counting pennies and to the barbecue men who are stepping down this year after many years of service. These gentlemen have continued to man the barbecue long after their children have left the school and we are very grateful for their support over the years. Generous donations by parents allowed us to buy a new barbecue and gazebo. This year, we had a new addition of a uniform stall which was well received. Also, this was the first time we allowed bidding on the silent auction outwith the actual May Fair and a number of items were won by people who were not there on the day. Unfortunately new Health & Safety regulations meant we were not able to have a bouncy castle as it must be sited on grass outdoors.

Oxgangs Fair: We were given the opportunity to run a refreshments stall at the Oxgangs Gala Day on Saturday to raise money for the PTSA which we did. It was quieter than expected due to the weather but altogether a successful community event which were pleased to be involved in. The refreshment weren't a great success (people were more in need of teas and coffees not cans of juice given how cold it was!) but Gabby is in the process of selling what we had left to recoup our outlays. It was good to be represented and if asked we intend to do it again, with fingers crossed for better weather. Thanks to all who helped on the day.

Facebook: This continues to run smoothly with 149 members. We are very strict in turning down request to join from individuals or groups not connected to the school. Facebook has been great for drumming up last minute volunteers for events. As well as advertising our events and making requests for help we have been able to share information on events such as free swimming in the holidays that we think are useful for parents. We are making our pitch at the new P1 parents meeting tomorrow morning and so will be encouraging the new parents to join the Facebook group by liking the page.

PTA Spending: The PTA paid for the Science Festival workshops. We also bought the ice lollies for the school sports day and medals for the nursery sports day.

Parent Council Approval for Spending: Can we have approval, in principal, to pay for next year's coach for P7 camp? We don't have an exact figure as yet, but it is usually in the region of £500 and so would need Parent Council sign off.

This request was approved by the Parent Council.

4 iii. Communications (NJ)

NJ is looking for contributions for the next newsletter, which is due next week. Some articles have already been received. She intends to cover PTA activities as well as general information around PTA and Parent Council.

There was then a discussion around the seeming apathy shown towards the PTA by many parents. Thoughts were around breaking down jobs into smaller junks, specifically during the planning stages of larger events as well as possible change of name to give more prominence of the PTA's aim. This needs to be decided by the PTA of course.

4 iv. Playground Development Group (PDG) and ECO Group (SB)

In relation to the Playground Development Group (PDG), SB confirmed that there were some new games in the playground and the pavilion had been fully fixed and cleaned.

The ECO group was litter-picking at the recent Oxfangs Gala Day.

4 v. South West Neighbourhood Group (CC)

CC confirmed that the last meeting had taken place in early May. Unfortunately no one present had been able to attend. CC advised that he will try to go to the next one.

5. Parent training courses (CC)

5 i. Recruitment and Selection

SB attended the course on 19th May. CC will try to encourage Gabby Carlyon to attend one too.

5 ii. Raising Children with Confidence

CC confirmed that a course will run at Pentland Community Centre. LW advised that there will be more coming up and encouraged everyone to attend. She will inform of any future dates.

5 iii. Additional Information

There was currently no further information.

6. School Survey 14/15

CC confirmed that this has been completed. Due to the problems with his computer he couldn't finalise the details. He intends to pick this up before the end of the term and will circulate the results. They will be discussed at the next PC Meeting.

7. AOCB

7 i. Reporting Working Group

VI is currently leading a working group looking into the reporting in the school. A questionnaire has been sent out to all parents. To date all returned forms confirmed that parents were happy with the current way of reporting.

VI explained that the teachers felt that the children were not much involved. As Learning Conversations are required under the Curriculum, these could be incorporated into the reporting process, including the agreed next steps.

The suggestion at the moment is that there would be two reports per year, working together with the children. The reports would be sent out immediately when completed, so staggered over some weeks and not all on the same day. They would therefore be more current. All the reports over the years would be kept in a portfolio for each child going through P1 to P7. These portfolios could possibly include assessments and could be used at the teacher discussions with the parents.

VI was still looking for parent volunteers to participate in the working group, so far she had only one. Some parents attending the PCM agreed to join too and provided VI with their details.

7 ii. Sports Day – Competition

SB advised that some parents had complained that there wasn't sufficient competition at the sports day, e.g. running, and didn't agree with "Everyone is a winner."

There was a discussion around this, and the consensus of the people present was that the children had lots of fun and it was very well organised. A special thank you to P7 for helping with the smaller children.

LW added that Mr Hunter completed many competition-style sessions during PE lessons.

7 iii. Sports Day - Tesco

NJ informed that she noticed a large queue at Costa/Tesco during the sports day. They confirmed that if they had been aware of this taking place, they could have put on a BBQ or supported it in another way.

NJ will get in contact with Tesco, so they can be added to the Parent Mail for any future events.

7 iv. Parents smoking at the gate

CC forwarded a concern by parents that there were groups of parents regularly smoking just outside the school gates at drop off and pick up times. Unfortunately, as this is taking place outside the school grounds, there is nothing the school can do.

7 v. School Dinners

CC also raised a concern by parents around school dinners, specifically in relation to the value for money and there not being all choices available.

Regarding the availability of all choices, LW advised that parents should inform the school as soon as possible if this happens, so they can raise a complaint with the provider, AMEY.

CM explained that Oxfords didn't have a pre-order system like other schools. Therefore there can be occasions, especially when the menu changes, where some options run out. However this does not usually happen once there was a full run through a new menu.

Overall, there was agreement that the food provided was good value for money.

8. Date of next meeting

AGM – Tuesday 8th September 2015 at 19.00h