



Oxgangs Primary School – Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 12th January 2016, 7.00 – 9.00 pm, Staff Room

Present: Crerar Christie – CC (Chair), Liz Walshe – LW (Head), Louise Mercer – LM (Teacher Rep.), Sue Bellis – SB (Vice Chair & Eco- Group), Ewan Stewart – ES (Treasurer), Nicole Johnstone – NJ (Communication), Patricia Rudolf von Rohr – PRvR (Secretary), Elaine Aitken – EA (Local Councillor), Gordon Roberts, Rachel Pickett (RP), Julie Drake (JD), Sam Haston (SH)

Apologies: none

1. Welcome

CC opened with a welcome to everyone.

2. Approval of previous minutes (6th October 2015)

RP and SH approved minutes from the previous meeting.

3. Matters arising

3 i. Road Safety

EA advised that Buckstone and Bonaly Primary had both withdrawn from the Safe Street Pilot, where they were in Stage II. Colinton Primary will go ahead. Both Buckstone and Bonaly have a difficult road layout and there was a large opposition to road closures during the consultation from both parents and residents. EA explained that 18 months after Stage II implementation there will be an overall evaluation to decide whether to expand the scheme to other schools or not. Buckstone are planning to start a 'Park Smart Project'. This will include a pledge by the parents.

LW confirmed that there are ongoing issues with parking in the car park, including parents of a disabled child not being able to park in the designated space. There has also been a complaint from a resident about a car being parked in front of their drive. As advised in communication to the parents, the janitor stood at the car park entrance to stop parents coming in. NJ agreed to put an article into the next newsletter to highlight the problems caused by inappropriate parking. It was further discussed that a polite letter could be prepared to point out why certain parking is inappropriate and what problems it can cause. This letter could then be given to the offenders.

3 ii. Firrhill Partnership Centre

EA advised that work will possibly start on site in April. The overall costing will need to be re-done, so exact timescales are not clear yet. EA will advise as soon as she knows more.

3 iii. PC Communication and Outreach

CC re-iterated that everyone on the PC should provide him with a head-shot photo for the wall at the school entrance.

CC is still working on the website. Furthermore he plans to do this year's Parent Survey online and is currently investigating the options. This will save much time in compiling the results.

3 iv. Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club Funding Group has started to meet. See under Section 4 vi.

3 v. School Lunches

LW confirmed that she talked to the catering staff following the last meeting. Regarding vegetables, until now they hadn't actively offered this to older children, only the younger ones. But going forward it will be actively offered to all. All cutlery goes through the washer, so is clean. It is very seldom that food runs out, and if it does, the catering staff will ensure there is another option available.

3 vi. PC Account Signatories

ES is still trying to sort this out with the Bank as it appears some forms have gone missing. He will advise if anything further is required from new/old signatories.

3 vii. AOCB issues: Dog Fouling

Dog Fouling still appears to be an issue. EA offered to take this up with the Environmental Warden to check if specific areas can be identified.

4. Update reports

4 i. Head teacher report (LW)

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

First she wanted to say a big thank you to everyone for raising £604 for Barnardo's through all Christmas activities, such as stamps, Nativity collection, staff collection instead of cards etc.

There has been a great attendance at the Christmas events, so much so that next year there will be two ticketed performances for P3-7.

Mr Brewer has started Maternity cover for Miss Nash in P4, Mrs Brander has left for Australia and Mrs King has started as a pupil support assistant.

The playground supervisors have done a lot of work around introducing new strategies for problem solving like the 'wheel' displayed on the windows. In addition all P7 pupils have now been trained in Peer Mentoring. This is being put into practice by volunteers during break-times and seems to be a great success.

There is a drive to engage more with the new values across the school, for example Ambition and Achievement were the themes at the assembly this week. Staff are also discussing how to introduce the values more into the curriculum.

The Firrhill Village has been working on fundraising to celebrate its 10 year anniversary. The pupils have come up with various suggestions, including a fitness challenge. The raised funds will go to the local charity Tiphereth.

Upcoming events include the Science Festival, which is being part-funded by Baillie Gifford, and the February UNICEF non-uniform day, organised by the Right Respect Group.

4 ii. PTA (CC/GR)

There was no representative of the PTA present at the meeting. However CC and GR advised that the PTA was meeting the following day and provided the following update:

The PTA has been very busy at the end of 2015, running the successful Christmas Shopping Event and children's Christmas Parties. It was agreed that splitting the children's parties by age was a good idea.

The next event to be organised is the Social Event for parents and teachers which will probably take place in March.

4 iii. Communications (NJ)

NJ confirmed that the last Newsletter went out at the end of last year, with paper copies going to parents who are not on Parent Mail. She will send out dates for the next one shortly, due around Easter. LW suggested to put out paper copies again to the local community, such as the Community Centre, the Library and the community board in Tesco. NJ agreed to put some up on those boards for the last one and going forward.

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

In relation to the Playground Development Group (PDG), SB advised that there hadn't been any meeting since 24.9.215. The next work squad will take place in April.

The ECO group is currently focussing on litter.

4 v. South West Neighbourhood Group (SB)

SB attended the meeting on 9.11.2015 and found it very informative. These meetings bring together representatives from both Primary and High Schools. She provided the following update covering mainly areas which could impact on Oxgangs:

- Around the Council Budget Discussion, there appeared a consensus that not many cuts directly affected schools.
- The Placing in Schools Appeals Panel are always looking for volunteers. This is an important task which needs parents. For more information, check the Council website.
- They are setting up a GIRFEC Group (Getting it right for every child) and are still looking for volunteers to provide input. This falls under the social care protection scheme, in which the Head Teacher is the named person for every child. This is a very important scheme for the safeguarding of all children. NJ will add an article about this to the next newsletter.
- The 'Daily Mile' scheme was discussed, which was started in Stirling and involved children walking a mile a day built into the normal routine, i.e. without changing into PE clothes but for example walking around the grounds while doing maths etc. Many primaries have now started doing this.
- There was a discussion around the Literacy and Numeracy Testing. The overall agreement was that this was a good idea for looking at individual progress, but not if it resulted in league tables. LW explained that Nicola Sturgeon had recently suggested to introduce consistent testing across Scotland, the aim being to get equal measures for individual progress, not for league tables. The concern is that this might be used for such tables to compare schools nonetheless.
- Defibrillators are being introduced to all High and Special schools over the next few months, not Primary schools currently.
- Mental Health Training is being carried out in many High Schools, while some Primary schools are offering 'Raising Children with Confidence' training, for example Bonaly.
- The 'Children & Family Achievement Awards' were mentioned. These are being awarded to achievements posted on edinburghbrightfutures.com.
- Online Payment facility across all schools is expected to be implemented in August 2016 after successful trials have been completed.

- All breakfast clubs seem to be very busy, with some schools offering early-morning-sports-clubs as well.
- There are going to be Catchment Reviews, including the new housing on Lanark Road. This is unlikely to impact Oxfords, but Bonaly and Currie.
- All PC Chairs were asked to put out an appeal for Foster Carers, as more are urgently needed across Edinburgh. This is a paid job. NJ will include this in the next newsletter.
- Ratho Primary have merged their PC and PTA as there was a constant lack of recruits. They are currently working on rewriting the constitution for the new situation. A lack of parent involvement appears to be an issue in many schools, with some having Parent Social Events which seem to help recruitment.

4 vi. Breakfast Club Funding Group (ES)

ES, NH, GR and CC have started looking at the ongoing funding for the breakfast club. They have been looking at the current numbers and considering what options there are. The club currently requires about £7,500 to run, with £5,000 being covered by the Council.

If the current Council funding was halved and based on the current number of children registered for the club, this would require an increase to the yearly child contribution from currently £15 to about £40. Some schools already charge more than this, although that could become controversial if at any point it is considered to be child-care.

Other options taken up by other schools are full funding through AEGON (which would mean no Council money at all) or to find sponsorship elsewhere. The group will pull together a list of possible sponsors and will contact them, ideally before the Easter break. The concern is that any sponsorship might be limited for a year or so and the overall funding would then have to be reviewed again.

It was also discussed to have other groups (such as 'Homework', 'Sport' etc.). However they would not move away from the main cost being the staff and not the breakfast food itself.

LW advised that, as our breakfast club is currently the largest, she will attend a group across the city to discuss breakfast clubs. This will take place next Thursday.

It is very important that any solution considers parents who are not on benefits but might struggle to pay £40 per child and year. One option would be to split the payments into quarterly instalments. This shouldn't cause too much more work now that electronic online payment will be implemented.

The group confirmed they will involve LW in any further discussions.

5. Parent training courses (CC)

5 i. Recruitment and Selection

There are currently sufficient people who have attended this course, i.e. GR, SB and CC. If anyone is interested to do the course, they should contact CC.

5 ii. Raising Children with Confidence / Cyber Security

Raising Children with Confidence: No further update.

Cyber Security: EA confirmed that no PC was currently available to run a course after the retirement of Kenny Walsh. However there is a new Divisional Commander who might review the current situation of PCs.

5 iii. Additional Information

Links provided on the Agenda as follows:

SPTC Training: <http://www.sptc.info/events/category/parent-info-sessions/>

SPTC Home: <http://www.sptc.info/>

6. School Survey 14/15

CC provided a summary of the survey results. All feedback was very good. There were 133 respondents, an increase from 111 the previous year.

Currently a form should be filled out for every child, however various people present confirmed that they only completed one to cover the whole family. Therefore the 133 will cover more than 133 children.

CC will issue the detailed report in the next few days.

7. AOCB

7 i. Placing in School Appeals Meeting

EA highlighted again the need for more parents to volunteer for these Appeals Panels (see also 4 v. above). These meetings require the involvement of someone from the Council, someone involved in teaching as well as a parent. It involves training and the actual meetings mostly take place in May, June and July. It can be time-intensive but it is a very important part of the school system. More information can be found on the Council website.

8. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 26th April 2016 at 19.00h