



## **Oxgangs Primary School-Parent Council Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014, 7.00 - 9.00 pm, Staff Room**

**Present:** Crerar Christie – CC (Chair), Gordon Roberts -GR (Vice Chair), Liz Walshe - LW (Head), Louise Mercer – LM (Teacher Rep.), Carol Munro – CM (Treasurer), Sue Bellis – SB (Eco- Group), Nicole Johnstone – NJ (Communications), Patricia Rudolf von Rohr – PRvR (Secretary), Ewan Stewart - ES, Claire MacDonald - CMcD, Juliana Valuchova - JV, Elaine Aitken – EA (Local Councillor) (part of meeting)

**Apologies:** Gabby Carlyon – GC (PTA Chair), Gill Christie – GLC (PTA Secretary)

### **1. Welcome**

CC opened with a welcome to new parents that attended. All introduced themselves.

### **2. Appointment of PC Secretary**

PRvR volunteered to be secretary. This was approved.

### **3. Approval of previous minutes (14/01//2014 & 29/04/14)**

GR and NJ approved minutes from previous meetings (14/01//2014 & 29/04/14)

### **4. Matters arising**

#### **4 i. Road Safety**

CC provided a quick update regarding Road Safety around the school. The overgrown hedge at the start of Oxgangs Road makes it difficult to use the pavement. The council has cut this back where it impacted the 20-mile-sign, however the rest of the hedge is still an issue. CC has raised this with Janet Buckle, Road Safety Group. EA will also look into this.

Regarding the concern around parents parking on zigzag lines, EA had previously requested the presence of the Road Safety Officer and Police checks. The road is congested at peak times of the day, and drivers can be prone to speeding through the road calming measures situated adjacent to the crossing point at the Redford Barracks end of Oxgangs Rd. North. This crossing point does not have a Crossing Attendant nor is the crossing well marked - pupils tend to cross at the road calming measure where the road narrows and affords better visibility, rather than use the crossing point beside it. However, this can be dangerous as the proximity of child to car is much reduced. EA will look into this.

EA also said that it had been raised with her if the Crossing Attendant could be moved; however, she confirmed that an assessment had been completed and this had been identified as the most risky and beneficial place.

#### **4 ii. Firrhill Partnership Centre**

CC advised that this had now gone through Planning Permission but that he had not heard anything further.

EA confirmed that all was going to schedule. The next step is to consider Health & Safety once the work/construction starts. However EA was not aware of any timescales at present. Currently the contractors are to be appointed. EA will let the Parent Council know once she knows anything further.

### **5. Update reports:**

#### **5 i. Head teacher report (LW)**

LW gave an update on staffing matters. Mr Grant has been appointed as music teacher; he works at Firrhill and currently comes to Oxgangs on Tuesdays. After Christmas this will increase to two days a week. Miss Halliday has had a baby girl and Mrs Craigen has returned from Maternity Leave. Mrs Clarke, who retired two years ago, is still coming one day a week to teach French. Oxgangs is also attracting many student teachers and early years learning practitioners who support the teaching staff.

The Curriculum is developing in line with the school's improvement plan. French has now been launched across the school, including nursery, as part of the Scottish Governments "One Plus Two" initiative. Another foreign language will be introduced from P5. Literacy is a priority across Edinburgh, with programmes "Read-Write" in P3/4 and "Fresh Start" in P5/6 being introduced with support from the Teaching Assistants. In Mathematics, there is targeted intervention for children who require extra effort to improve. The school is also working on developing Personal Learning Plans; "Curriculum Maps" have been added to the school website. LW also pointed out the Curriculum for Excellence is skills-based as well as knowledge-based.

In the nursery, provision for two-year olds has now started. There are 10 available places for children to receive 600 hours of care, the same amount as the older nursery children. This is only for families who meet very stringent criteria. Currently six of the 10 places have been taken. There are two full-time nursery teachers, who also provide Parenting Groups in the community.

Ms Nash and Ms Bank's trip to Kenya has provided a lot of interest in the school, not least in exchanging approaches to "Rights Respecting Schools" and "Pendo" for "Bonnie the Giraffe". Another application has been raised for further funding to allow Kenyan teachers to visit Oxgangs.

P7 will be selling poppies in the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> November, and Blue Ribbons in the week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> November for Dyslexia Week.

The Open Day for new children to enrol for the 2015-16 year is due on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

Children In Need is on 14<sup>th</sup> November and will involve the whole Firrhill Village singing a song together. Merchandise will also be sold in the school in support of this.

There is a Diversity (Anti-Bullying) Week coming up across the Firrhill Village. P6 are carrying out a survey on bullying and the results will be summarised in a report which will then be compared with others from across Edinburgh. This links into the launch of Article 19, which states the right to being protected from being hurt.

For the Right Respect School, the Level 1 inspection is due on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. LW asked if any of the parents could attend, as parent involvement is very important. CC volunteered to

attend. The school is due to launch a new Playground Charter which is very much orientated on supporting positive behaviour.

The next Big Book Bash is planned for 26<sup>th</sup> November.

The school-wide Flu Immunisation is due on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

There will be two Nativity Plays this year – in response to the large interest shown last year, which prevented some parents from even entering the hall. Letters will be sent out for parents to get tickets.

New bike racks have been installed next to the nursery and on the P1/2 playground. LW highlighted that this was as a result of the Parent Council Questionnaire's returns.

Many trips are planned across the school, including Dynamic Earth, Britannia, Poppy Factory, Victoria Classroom in Leith, Edinburgh Castle, the local library and woodlands as well as the Pantomime for P4-7. There has also been a visit from the Fire Brigade to the school to talk about fire safety.

Scottish Learning Directorate representatives will visit the school on 12<sup>th</sup> December. Their aim is to find out more about schools directly as they are responsible for passing bills in Parliament.

CC mentioned that he will be responding to the Council's Budget Consultation. He will also forward a link to the Parent Council meeting attendees as well as the PTA for possible including on their Facebook site.

## **5 ii. PTA (GLC)**

As GC and GLC were unable to attend, GLC provided CC with the PTA Report:

Christmas card orders have been taken and sent off. As last year, mugs were also available.

Tuck Shop was run in the previous week, raising £361.70. There may be tweaks to this next year, such as not holding it on the Friday when assemblies make it difficult to manage. This will be discussed at the next PTA meeting.

Rag Bag continues to be well supported and we needed a larger bin installed to cope with the demand. This will be emptied again this week.

PTA are running two Christmas Parties – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December. £3 per child, £4 per adult. Children have to be accompanied by a responsible adult. Tickets to go on sale on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November at 8.30h.

There has been a great response from sellers wanting a table at the first Christmas Shopping Evening on 26<sup>th</sup> November. This means the PTA has been able to be selective. A temporary alcohol licence has been applied for in order to sell mulled wine at the event. There will be a £1 entrance fee and also a raffle.

The Big Book Bash is being repeated on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Bookmarks have been made and adverts for the event prepared.

We have started recycling ink cartridges. We receive £1 for branded cartridges and 50p for refilled cartridges. CC to ask GC about collection points.

Funding requests for Rights Respecting t-shirts and netball strips have been approved by PTA. In addition the following requests have been received and require approval by the Parent Council:

£500 for the Parental Support Fund

£500 for the Pantomime Trip P4-7 (CC to discuss with GC - not noted by PTA)

Both requests were approved by the Parent Council.

The next PTA meeting is on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November at 18.30h in the staff room. All welcome!

### **5 iii. Communications (NC)**

NC has started to assemble the next newsletter, due for issue at the beginning of December.

Items to date include Mr Hunter's work with the football teams as well as the trip to Kenya.

NC asked to let her know if people thought there was too much information. There was a discussion concerning the roles of the Parent Council and the PTA and whether a better way forward would be to combine the two. There was thought to be a lack of awareness within the Parent Forum of the functions of the two bodies. This continued under Point 8 of the Agenda.

LW suggested that the newsletter could include an article around what actions had been taken in response to the Parent Council Questionnaire's findings.

CMcD offered to help NC if required.

### **5 iv. Playground development and ECO group (SB)**

SB provided an update on the ECO Group. No meeting had taken place so far this year, as there was insufficient parents' interest. Hopefully a meeting would be held in the next few weeks.

There was a discussion around the importance of this group for the school and how to raise the profile. It was suggested to include something in the newsletter.

SB then gave a summary of the Playground Development Group (PDG) who had their last meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September.

The pavilion had been damaged during the summer. The repairs had just been completed that week with a cost of £1,000.

Chalkboards, which couldn't be put on the school's walls due to Amey, have been hung on the shed and another one has been given to the nursery. PDG will purchase three painted games for the playground at a cost of £835.

The Lets Grow Promotion was still ongoing at the time of PDG's last meeting, but has finished in the meantime.

The Spring Bulb Promotion had a slightly lower update this year, but still resulted in a £83 profit.

The Autumn Work Squad Event had to be postponed due to bad weather. Amey allowed the group to take over the four barrel tubs at the front of the school. Tesco had offered £30 worth of autumn sponsorship which has been used for winter flowering pansies.

The group also discussed recruitment and it was agreed that the best approach was one-to-ones in the playground.

SB also added that she started using the half hour wait between P1/2 and P3+ finishing school to do some small jobs in the environmental garden, e.g. pruning etc.

Provisional date for the next meeting is 27<sup>th</sup> November.

### **5 v. South West Neighbourhood Group (CC)**

The next meeting is due on 12<sup>th</sup> November at Firrhill. If anyone is interested in attending, please to let CC know. Otherwise he will attend himself.

CC explained that the Council worked through a two-way-street of communication. All Parent Councils in this area feed into the South West Neighbourhood Group (SWNG) who then feed into the Council. These meetings therefore often cover council matters including budgets.

LW confirmed that she was going to attend as the Heads attend on a rota-basis.

## **6. Supporting the parents of children with additional support needs (CC/GC)**

CC and GLC went to a lecture by the Scottish Child Legal Centre (SCLC) regarding children with special needs. There it was noted that, if parents need help to put together a case to get additional support for the child, they could contact the Parent Council. This was not previously assumed to be a responsibility of the Parent Council. Whilst the PC could provide guidance – along the lines of the contact details of the SCLC – it was considered debatable just how much practical assistance the PC could provide. GLC is happy to be the focal point for any information that might be requested by parents in this respect.

## **7. Parent training courses (CC)**

### **7 i. Recruitment and Selection**

GC and SB had volunteered to attend this course. However this took place the same time as the Parent Council meeting. CC will confirm the next date, which is likely to be in January.

### **7 ii. Raising Children with Confidence / Cyber-security**

CC explained that the Cyber-security Course had not been well attended the last year. This was maybe due to it only having been advertised to parents of P4 upwards. It is being considered to running this again this year as the people who attended it found it very informative.

The Raising Children with Confidence course had been mentioned at the SWNG meeting. There was very good feedback from parents at Currie. Therefore the aim is to also run this in Oxfords this year.

### **7 iii. SPTC (<http://www.sptc.info/>)**

The SPTC hold various training courses for parents, particularly those on Parent Councils. A list of courses is available online. CC suggested everyone should have a look and let him know if anyone was interested in anything.

## **8. Parent Council Communications and Outreach**

CC raised his concerns that many parents didn't know the role of the Parent Council and that the PC perhaps needed to do more to make itself visible. There was an open discussion on how to have better out-reach – not least in terms of providing visible points of contact for office bearers, what they do and how to get more people involved.

The discussion covered how other schools were doing it, how the currently scattered information could be clarified and brought together.

It was agreed that the Facebook approach by the PTA was very successful, however another Facebook for the Parent Council might be too much.

CC and GR will look at the current website to come up with some suggestions for improvements.

## **9. School Survey 13/14 (CC)**

The main highlights from School Survey were:

- The overall response was down. This was probably because the survey was not available in time for the parent consultations.
- Overall, people are very happy.
- There were very few bad / negative comments.

- But there were very many complimentary comments, specifically for the teaching staff, head and deputy head.

It is planned to have the next survey ready for the parent consultation in order that parents can complete them whilst they waiting for their consultation, or at least take them away to complete later.

The points which have been raised and addressed as a result will be covered in the newsletter, as well as some samples of feedback.

A copy of the survey report will be added to the website, excluding specific feedback which might allow identification of individuals.

## **10. AOCB**

GR queried the situation of the link-officer, PC Gillanders. EA advised that there might be possible issues with the funding of link officers across the policy force. This was currently under discussions. There was a clear consensus that link officers should be kept as he clearly promotes a positive relationship between pupils/the community and the police.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 19.00h