NORTHMUIR PARENT COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 29TH AUGUST 2012

7pm

**Present**: Andy Howard, Laura Law, Ruth Nelson, Leaca Crawford, Shona Curson, Claire Brown, Derek Thompson, Audrey Ireland, Karen Ruth Phillips, Andrew Scott Belinda Langlands.

**In attendance**; Paula Wharton, Eddie Valentine and Barbara Donaldson.

**Apologies**; Jackie Low, Christine Fretwell, Janice Wotherspoon

**Welcome**; It was thought a good idea to introduce ourselves as we have many new faces.

**Minutes of Previous meeting**; The previous minute was deemed to be correct by members who were present at the last council meeting.

**Matters arising**; Fruity Friday’s has been established within the school and this was mentioned in the recent newsletter. Laura has spoken with the local council regarding the manhole covers that are causing concern outside the school entrance, as these are Scottish water and Electric manholes it is not for the council to repair however they agreed to contact them to discuss the issue. As yet nothing has been done so Laura will contact them again to chase this up. Andy has spoken with the council roads dept and the Police about the issue Parents have with the new car park/crossing area, they have been up to monitor the situation and they will continue to do this and possibly decide at a future date to implement a safety barrier. Andy has also spoken with Mark Guild and the Dentist regarding use of the dental car park, and parents are permitted to park in the car park but are to made aware that they park at their own risk and the dentist can not be held responsible for any damage. It is also to be made aware that the council takes no responsibility for keeping the car park clear or to repair any damage. Paula wished to point out that an information letter has gone home to parents regarding the safety of children going to and from school, no parking in the school car park, using the lollipop person to safely cross the road. Audrey has agreed to speak with the Kirriemuir Community Council, as she is a member, regarding issues about clearing of snow etc, and she will feed this back to the parent council.

**Forum**; Laura thanked everyone who was at the forum for coming along and volunteering to become Parent Council members and it is lovely to have so many parents wishing to be actively involved in the school. Paula stated that it was nice to have some children speaking at the forum and hoped that this would be something we could do at future meetings.

**Head Teacher Report**; Paula started by explaining to new members that her role within the Parent Council was as an advisory and that members of staff that come along to the meetings are there to give feedback on what is happening within the school. Paula was delighted to see so many parents showing an interest in the school. It was hoped that some parents would be involved in helping with the quality assurance plan with staff and provide feedback on how well the school is performing, staff and pupils will also be involved in this. Perhaps at every meeting a discussion on the quality indicators will be part of the agenda. Newsletters have gone out with upcoming dates and other information. Large changes have been made to the over the summer, as there was a large intake of P1 this term they have made one large learning area for pupils, with more team teaching and classes to merge for certain learning experiences. The Nursery has had new flooring which has made a huge difference to staff and pupils with one practitioner commenting “the environment now matches the practice”. Two class rooms in the upper block have been re-carpeted, as this is a large expense Paula stated that it has to be done in little bits at a time due to the cost. The DHT old office is now been made into a meeting room. A new interactive whiteboard was purchased for the P3/4 classroom which means all classrooms now have one and it is hoped to get one next year for the nursery dept. This year has been the largest intake of P1 (57) for a number of years and all the children have settled really well into school life, they start full days on 10th September. Derek wished to mention that as a parent of a P1 pupil he praises the staff from the nursery and from other outside educators working well with the school to ensure a smooth transition period. Senior staff work closely with other local educators throughout the year. Next year will again be large intake of P1 as the Nursery is already full in the morning and nearly full in the afternoon. Paula and Barbara are responsible for the early years level to ensure they are following the Curriculum for Excellence; Norma Craigon is for First level and Eddie responsible for 2nd level. The P7 Dalgaise trip is next month with the pupils meeting up with other cluster schools for 3 days of fun and team building, Paula and Eddie are to be going along on the trip this year with the pupils. Extra curricular activities are very high on the school agenda and Eddie has recently sent out letter to parents inviting them along to share any experience they have with the children by helping with an existing group or perhaps running a new one. Many parents already help with some activities but Eddie would like to have more, possibly involving more of the younger age groups. Paula is currently auditioning for young choir singers. The school is lucky to have a gap year student willing to help out with clubs and this could hopefully lead to more clubs over the morning breaks as well as lunch time. It is hoped to start an infant football club and work with Kirriemuir, Forfar and perhaps Brechin cluster schools to have matches, providing a great experience for children. Gavin Forrester our active schools co-ordinator is happy to supply training to parents if they are a little rusty on rules etc for some activities. He has also been involved pupils to create golden time sports activities. We are lucky to have the support from Websters High school who also send pupils along to help with clubs. It is important that children are out in all weather and this is being encouraged within the nursery and throughout the school so parents are advised to ensure children are suitably prepared for the Scottish weather. Paula has done a draft copy of the behaviour policy and has taken note of council members who wish to look over this and provide feedback to Paula, pupils and staff will also have the opportunity to do this.

**Matters brought to council by parents**; Towards the end of last term some parents of P7 pupils were upset that there was not a bigger sending off for the children. Laura and Andy spoke with Paula regarding this and it was decided to put on a leavers dance for the children. Derek very kindly offered his services as resident DJ for the night. The evening was a great success considering how last minute it was, with the help of parents to supervise the event. It has been agreed that the parent council shall organise a leavers dance again for this years P7 pupils which is to take place on Friday 21st June.

Leaca had spoken with a Nursery parent regarding the fact that their child never received a morning space when others outwith the catchment area did. Paula explained that Angus Council set how the places are allocated on age and not catchment, also the council set how many spaces are allowed in the am and pm and are capped at 36 with a space left for additional support needs.

Andy had received complaints from Nursery parents of children whom have been knocked over by older children while waiting for Nursery to open, since the new start time, and also in bad weather children and parents are left outside. Paula is to arrange for school children to start using the new path in front of the office building thus avoiding the stairs and smaller children. Paula also mentioned that there is another covered area at the other side of the nursery building beside the infant playground which could be used. The change in the nursery times is to fit in with school, the afternoon session finishes at 3.15pm which is in the middle of the infant and upper blocks getting out, with the hope to not cause to much congestion. The bike racks in the infant area have been moved to provide additional cover for the infants as there is not shelter now with the extension. Also brought to the attention of the council was that there were many parents causing congestion by holding conversations outside the premises, perhaps parents could be informed that moving to the school gates would cause less disruption to children.

Claire had been asked about the recent cinema nights held at Southmuir Primary and could Northmuir not provide the same type of event. It was decided that this was a Southmuir enterprise and they very kindly opened it up to us so we felt this was not something we should do. Barbara also mentioned that there is a separate fundraising committee and there will be a meeting soon should anyone wish to attend. The fundraising committee deal with all aspects of school fundraising and how the money should be spend within the school with the help from pupils input. One of the long term goals for fundraising is an outdoor classroom.

Every year the school hold a harvest assembly and donate the food given to local charities, Paula asked the council on their thoughts about donating to the Trussel Trust in Forfar. This is charity which meets the needs of the most vulnerable people in our society. The council agreed this was a very good cause to donate towards.

Eddie has been to meeting regarding the review of school handbooks and he is keen to involve more parents with this, he has arranged a meeting for volunteers to attend on Friday 7th September at 2pm to discuss this.

Date of next meeting is 17th October at 7pm

Meeting closed 8.45pm