Northmuir Primary School

Parent Council Meeting

17th October 2012

**Present;** Andy Howard, Laura Law, Leaca Crawford, Susan Morrison, Claire Brown, Audrey Ireland, Ruth Nelson, Karen-Ruth Philips, James Webb, Arlene Walker.

**Apologies;** Janice Wotherspoon, Jackie Low, Belinda Langlands and Lynette

**In Attendance;** Paula Wharton, Eddie Valentine, Norma Craigon, Barbara Donaldson, Gavin Forrester (active schools), Linda Caston and Eddie Finlay (Angus Council external funding).

Andy welcomed everyone and introduced Gavin to the council members and handed over to Gavin to explain the reasons for his presence. Gavin is involved with many schools in the area and is helping our Nursery to become a more active place for our young children. The school and Nursery staff would like to upgrade the nursery garden and they have previously had a company in to do a plan and a quote for this which came in at £18,000. The staff have had to prioritise their wish list and have narrowed down the plans to approx £10,000, Gavin was along to talk with parent council members as to looking into applying for funding on behalf of the Nursery as the school has previously been given grants from the Lottery and may not fit the criteria to apply again. Linda and Eddie where along from Angus Council to give some advice as to which grants were available to us and offer any support in filling out any forms should we wish to go ahead. Andy has also spoken with the lottery and as the parent council is a separate body from the school we could apply to them. Awards For All is over subscribed at present with schools returning in August perhaps if we are using them to wait until December. There is also a communities and family fund we could see if we meet the criteria. Linda left information on these funding issues with Laura. Gavin mentioned that he would hope to work alongside a few Parent members, Nursery staff and Paula to for a small subgroup, Laura, Andy and Audrey agreed to be part of this and would arrange a meeting as soon as possible.

Arlene asked how the school had narrowed down their initial plans and what compromises were made to reduce the price. Paula and Gavin mentioned that some items they could make or have made and Andy is already in the process of making a picnic bench at a cost of materials only.

At this point Andy thanked Gavin, Linda and Eddie for taking the time to come along to talk with us and we would be in touch soon.

The minutes of the previous meeting were deemed correct.

Matters arising from previous Minute; Children are getting used to using the slop to enter and exit the school. Donations for Harvest assembly are coming in.

**Head Teachers Report;** A new Early Intervention post in P1,2 and 3 is temporary until summer. Three days per week. Two members of staff due to go on maternity leave at Christmas Miss Alston and Mrs Young, best wishes for their forthcoming arrivals.

The Improvement Plan is to be made more child friendly, 6 statements “we are trying to get better at” they will need to provide evidence for these statements to show the impact. P5-7 parents should be encouraged to ask “are you getting better at?”

The open night is planned for 1st November 6.30pm – 7.30pm. Parent council members expected to be there to show support and be on hand to welcome parents. Post-it notes will again be available for parents to write things they wish to see an improvement in. The main hall will have the tea/coffee and post-it notes and council members to help here would be appreciated.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) the safety and wellbeing of children is everyone’s responsibility and the school will be raising the children’s awareness, working along with Angus Council guidelines and the SHINARRI indicators, Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. The children are in the process of making a t-shirt display with these indicators, crossing safely with the crossing patroller and safety on the way to and from school are some of the areas to be covered and parents are also encouraged to help their children to become more safety conscious.

The Annual Christmas Parade into the town square is to take part on 1st December and we will walk from the school into the square for 4.10pm. Jonathan Brown is to be the MC for the occasion a trailer is to be provided and the school will print out song sheets.

**Matters brought to Council members;** Safety Issues – recently two primary 1 pupils had decided to change their lunch arrangements and walked home when they should have been at school meals. A parent was at home and realised the mistake and returned the children to school. Parents are wondering if there is a system in place for young children as to how they and staff members know what their lunch arrangements are. Paula explained that all P1 children are escorted to the playground by the class teacher where the assistants are. Children whom are having a home lunch are sent out of the class first, coloured dots are given to the children to distinguish what their plans are. Parents have the ultimate duty to ensure that their children know what is happening each day for their lunch and also at home time. Northmuir is not a modern school with no access to the playgrounds by parents and other members of the community therefore it is important that parents/carers/grandparents refrain from entering the school unless visiting the office first, as staff are not always aware of each child’s family members. The school wishes to remain a welcoming environment, and having gates locked is not best practice as parents/carers, outside agencies etc cannot gain access when they need to. The school also encourages independent children. The question was asked if this raised the fact that we need more assistants working the playgrounds, a new member of SFL staff has been appointed who also helps at lunch times and all staff take turns giving up their lunch time to supervise the dining area. Paula explained that the school role now stands at 320 but the basis for staffing is from previous term. Claire talked about introducing a “gate buddy” who could double check if children are meant to be leaving for a home lunch. Parent helpers would be appreciated but would need to be PVG checked.

The newspaper article – The parent in question had previously asked the school for help with the child’s homework issues and the school was more than happy to work alongside the parent. On the day the child had mentioned to the teacher that they did not have their homework. The school tried to phone the home of the child and as it was engaged the teacher took the decision to send the child home, a short walk away, to collect the work. P7 children are allowed out of the school premises with permission from parents. When the child arrived home the parent was not best pleased and came to the school to speak with Paula but she unfortunately was interviewing at this time and the parent was told that she was not available but the class teacher was. The parent decided however not to talk with the teacher and in the heat of the moment went to the paper. The teacher and school have apologized to the family and a statement from the school was made through Angus Council.

Grass cutting inside the school grounds prior to 9am when children were in the in the area. Paula has spoken to the Janitor who will contact the workmen with regard to this not happening in the future.

Speed Bumps – Andy has spoken with the Police Chief inspector and speed bumps on this type of main road would not be possible. The school area already has deterrents 20mph flashing signs at both ends and crossing patrollers. The road Policing department also visit on a regular basis, Andy has asked if possible for the Police presence to be even more regular. A petition for a railing on the opposite side of the school beside the dentist would perhaps be a better idea. Audrey is to also take this up with the Community Council.

P1 diaries are detailed differently one teacher has a very clear outline for the week whereas others don’t have as much information. Paula has already brought this up with infant staff who are now committed to using the more detailed outline for the weekly homework. The infant and upper departments also send home an information sheet each term detailing each classes topics to be covered. The upper block diaries have a timetable section for the children to complete. Paula has advised parents that she could send out the school timetable for the year stating when each class has the use of the gym hall if this would help. Again the children have to take responsibility for organising their daily needs.

**A.O.C.B;** Laura and Andy are to meet with the Director of Education on Monday 29th October with other parent council reps. One of the discussion items for the night will be the new handbook criteria which Eddie has been reviewing. 15th December is when the handbooks will go live on the websites.

Quality assurance, feedback from parents, Andy and Laura to meet to go over this and feedback to council members.

**Dates of next meetings;**

Monday 26th November 7pm

Tuesday 15th January 7pm

Wednesday 27th March 7pm

Parent Forum Wednesday 15th May 7pm

Meeting closed 8.50pm