

Minutes for Castle Douglas Primary School Parent Council AGM

Meeting held Monday 7th September 2020 at 6:30pm

Meeting called by Amy Graham, Vice Chairperson.

Present: Amy Graham – Vice Chair/Parent; Tara Rooney-Bell – Clerk/Parent; Kay Mcfarlane – Treasurer/Parent; Gemma Blackburn – Parent; Ian Stewart – Parent; Mary Devereux – Parent; Mel Henry – Parent; Lindsay Earl – Parent; Lisa Geddes – Parent; Jaszweska Katar – Parent; David Tyson – Head Teacher

Apologies: Anne Bell – Teacher Representative; Jonathan Hall – Parent

Welcome

Amy Graham welcomes everyone to the meeting

Minutes of the previous AGM held in 2019

AGM minutes were discussed. The last AGM was held on Monday 9th September 2019.

No outstanding issues remain from this AGM.

Minutes of previous regular meeting held On 18th May 2020

This meeting was unable to be held due to Covid-19. Prevalent issues were discussed between Lesley (Ex-Chair) and Mr Tyson with minutes produced from this.

Certain issues could not be actioned due to the current situation, re Covid.

Amy Graham read the amendments from these which were written in red.

Comments made by Councillor John Young – David Tyson has spoken to the directorate also and has asked that they brief councillors about the facts.

Office Bearer Elections

Amy Graham went over the current set up for office bearers, and who was fulfilling each roll.

Tara Rooney-Bell, Kay Mcfarlane and Amy Graham are happy to remain in their respective positions of Clerk, Treasurer and Vice Chair.

A New Chair was not elected at this time and has been tabled for the next meeting.

The Parents Committee would like to note how thankful they are to Lesley Andrews who was our Chair for the past year. They are all extremely thankful for the hard work and dedication which Lesley showed in her position.

Headmasters Report

School Capacity - The school has quite a few spaces this year due to only having one composite class. Primary one has three spaces across the two classes. We are then at capacity up until Primary

five. Having two primary five, two primary six and two primary seven classes has given almost 6 spaces at each stage of the upper school.

Budget – Every school this year has had their budget cut by 25% due to Covid. Mr Tyson asks whether this is something the Parent Council would like to pursue as in the national press last week a minister had said that no school should be financially disadvantaged due to Covid. The school has roughly £7,500 to run the school on this year for all the consumables compared to having £18,500 ten years ago. The school is having to look carefully at some of their online subscriptions such as accelerated reading etc, however the school does have a large PEF fund which DT is hoping can be used to mitigate some of this financial strain.

Covid/Home Learning - Mr Tyson would like to say that the whole school community deserves praise. Without the support from home it would not have been as successful as it has been and families at home deserve a pat on the back for trying their best throughout the whole Home Learning experience. Parents did a fantastic job juggling all the challenges faced during home learning.

The first day back was a little overwhelming but day two was much better. The school is constantly adapting to make things easier such as starting split home times to allow for less traffic to be moving through the grounds at one time. DT would like to praise the children for how good they are with hand washing and sanitising. The settling in period went a lot smoother than anticipated and it was like the children had never been away despite their being a little anxiety amongst them during the first week.

Social distancing between the staff and children is challenging and not always possible. Overall DT has been really pleased with the way things have went through lockdown, as a community everyone worked well together and deserves the utmost praise for all that they have done.

AG and GB would like to say thankyou to the school for everything the staff have done throughout the home learning period. They have been amazing throughout and were always available when they were needed. GB also went on to comment on how things have been within a high school setting agreeing that social distancing is extremely challenging especially within the more hands on lessons. GB also acknowledges the immensely difficult position staff are placed in right now whilst trying to do their job. All attending quickly agreed with these sentiments.

Treasurers Report

The current balance of the Parent Council account is £1058.55.

The cash book and statement files are all up to date.

The 'End of Year Financial Return Form' was completed and handed in to the councils finance department on time. The return of this form will trigger out December annual payment from the council. This payment comprises of a lump sump and an amount per head for each child. The amount we will get in December is not yet known as it depends on what Council Funds are available. It however normally comes to around £300.

The Parent Council has not given any monies to the school since 22nd December 2015.

The signatories for the account have been updated to be Amy Graham, Gemma Blackburn and Kay Mcfarlane.

AG states that there is a large amount of money sitting in the account which during this time would be good to use when things are so stretched for the school. The money can however only be used for communication means between the school and parents. KF describes what the money can and cannot be used for and asks whether anybody has any ideas for what we could use the money towards. AG mentions that not all schools have separate PTA and PC and some have them both together so that money goes into one pot. The Primary school has a very good PTA which does a lot of fundraising and raises a lot of money.

It is important to use the money we have sitting whilst the school really needs the help.

Ideas such as Group Call and the school app were brought forward. The school app is roughly £450 a year which is cheaper than group call. AG asks whether DT knows how many parents use the school app which would let us know whether this is the main app that parents are using for communication with the school. DT is unsure of how many parents access the school website so is very keen to keep the app going due to its ease of use for both the school and parents. An idea would be to resend information regarding the school app to parents to make sure the whole school community is aware. Information is sent out both via group call and the school app as DT is not aware who has the app however most parents have provided an email address so they know if its sent through group call it will be received. TRB suggest that perhaps the teachers can be given a poll/questionnaire to find out what they think the best use of the money could be from their perspective.

DT mentions that the council has recently just been successful in a £700,000,00 bid to provide hardware for primary six to S6 pupils, initially targeted to those children who receive free school meals. During lockdown the school was given 10 chrome books from Draks which is the company who runs the Galloway hydro scheme. David picked these up and personally handed these out to families who really needed to use them. They were also able to get some of their netbooks reimaged meaning they were able to help every family who got in touch. Some have been returned and some are still being used by families at home.

During the lockdown the primary school ran as a hub for children of NHS staff. During this time 6 of the school's Dell netbooks were broken during cleaning. This also happened at Dalbeattie. David has asked the council whether these can be replaced however has not heard anything back yet. Wonders whether the Parent Council would consider contributing towards something like this which would be kept in the ICT suite. The school is short of machines to be used in school as they are unable to use the chrome books. AG asks whether anyone would have any objections to some of the money being used in this manner. DT states that it would be helpful if an email went out from the Parent Council to support the one which was sent from himself to Gillian Brydson. AG also suggests that we wait to see whether David hears back from the council before looking further into contributing towards this.

Mel suggests also sending an email to Laura Fugaccia. She has said they handed out laptops during lockdown which have mostly been returned. Wonders whether these could be used.

Crossing Patrol

No change to the position of the crossing patrol. Issue now closed.

Mobile Phone Guidelines

Short discussion regarding the guidelines within the school handbook and Bring Your Own Device which is used within high schools. Also making sure that the children in school are aware of who to approach if they see something which is of concern. No further issue.

Scooter Use

The issue of children using their scooters/bikes within the school is much better than it had been since they have returned. David has had on complaint from a member of public regarding scooter use on Jenny's Loaning however this is not something that the school can deal with apart from reminding children to be careful once they leave school grounds and to be mindful of others who are using a footpath. Be Safe, Be Ready, Be Respectful. No further Issue at present.

Car Park

AG wonders whether there is anything we as a parent council can communicate that would be helpful. DT asks that they just support the school. He was anticipating it being more challenging due to the nursery moving to the new hours. Staff and Support staff are struggling to get a space within the car park which is then making them unable to meet some of the additional needs children in the mornings. Perhaps an email or online leaflet would be useful as a letter would not be suitable at the moment due to making sure there is reduced paper use.

MH suggests that communication on the "Drop Off Point" needs to be clearer in that parents are not supposed to be leaving their car when using this zone.

KF mentions that not many cars are using the Market Hill carpark anymore. Remind parents that this is available for use.

GB agrees with MH regarding the wording, however for those who have sat on the PC for a while sometimes they wonder what more we can do. But it is more of a case that we need to consistently remind the parent of this message. It is one of these issues that is always going to be there. GB also acknowledges that Mr Rob has in the past received verbal abuse when asking people to move. AG wondering whether it would be worth asking the local community police officer to become involved due to the parking not only being inconvenient but also dangerous due to blocking access to emergency vehicles. Could we make it so that no parent is allowed to park within the school excluding those of additional support needs children.

DT will get in touch with PC Ellis on this issue.

MD and TRB wonder whether something like a badge or similar could be made to show those who are allowed onto the carpark helping parents get into the mindset that they should not be on the school grounds without a badge. MD also asks about giving the children an incentive to walk. AG mentions the sustenance app which gives little badges etc for children who walk. It is mentioned though that something is put in place so that those children who cannot walk through no fault of their own does not miss out for something they cannot help.

As a group we can come together and think about how to send the message out to parents regarding the parking issues. AG will draft something and send it to everybody.

Meeting Dates

The dates were set for the remaining meetings throughout the year. Those are as follows;

Monday the 9th November at 6:30pm

Monday the 8th March at 6:30pm

Monday the 17th May at 6:30pm

Monday the 6th September 6:30pm AGM

