

Gelston Parent Council Meeting minutes

10th March 2021 7pm (via Facebook Messenger video call facility)

Present

Pam , Mary, Emma, Abbie, Justine

Apologies

Kay

A Facebook page has been set up for the PC specifically to be able to set up meeting via video link easily. There are no plans to use this page for anything other than the "room" facility at present but should this be something that parents feel would be beneficial it can be reconsidered in the future.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and updates were as follows

- Pam attended DG Parent Forum meeting via Zoom 23rd February 2021 - update to follow
- Mary received cheques for Christmas party sundries as agreed
- Rolling chair checklist prepared by Justine & past on to Pam
- Outdoor classroom funding updates to follow
- Pam looked into Smile Amazon in order to raise funds but we have to be a registered charity to apply
- Pam confirmed all Connect membership documents including insurance are all up to date

Chairperson's report

Pam attended the National Parent Forum Scotland (NPFS) webinar with Public Health Scotland on 18th February 2021, just prior to P1-3 returning on 22nd February. It was a really informative webinar where Public Health Scotland presented the evidence which in part led to the decision on how to manage the return to schools for P1-3 and ELC settings. There was also the opportunity to ask any questions to the panel. There were a series of three webinars in total representing the various age groups. All webinars were recorded and can now be found via the following link should it be of interest

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOYfhw7VpEowLBUT6SplHR-hsqv170ia4>

Pam also attended DGPCF meeting on 23rd February 2021 where Alistair Young , D&G Council Quality Improvement Manager, gave a presentation on how the region tackled this phase of remote learning and lessons to be learned from them. He was keen to involve Parent Councils as a means to receive independent feedback from parents directly to the council. Again, Pam found this a really valuable presentation and felt encouraged by the developments and in particular the focus on the mental well being of the pupils. A summary of the minutes for this meeting are also attached at the end of these minutes.

The next meeting will be held Thursday 27th May 2021, 7pm via Zoom - includes AGM answers election of Chair.

Treasurer's Report

All accounts 18/19 and 19/20 are now complete and signed off by the council. A cheque £175.15 (10th February 2021) has been sent to the Council to be reallocated to the school funds. Kay to keep an eye on the bank account to check when this has been cashed as

there will be a delay due to the offices being closed during lockdown. Once the cheque has been cashed we should then receive the outstanding payments due from the council for 19/20 and 20/21. We have already gathered receipts for printing etc to be paid directly to the school as soon as the funds are received. Kay also in the process of trying to get access to account online.

Head Teacher's report

See attached

Fundraising Opportunities - specifically for Outdoor classroom

Pam has found details of the parent company for Castle Maclellan (Kavli) but is having trouble getting any further in finding the right channels to apply for funding. Mary to look into how funding was gained from Kavli by other local school.

An opportunity has arisen of a possible grant up to £1000 from NFU who award grants locally to help with the advancement of education and experiences for young people.

Deadline for this is 31st March 2021. Pam to complete the application for and Mary has kindly agreed to check over it before submitting it.

Mary to contact Galloway Glens as a potential funding source.

Pam to contact the Community Council for any potential collaboration/funding opportunities.

Pam to look into any local groups who would be interested in using the Outdoor Classroom and whether any fundraising collaboration would be of interest.

Abbie suggested approaching the Rotary Club. She is happy to ask the question and will keep us informed.

AOCB

The next meeting will be arranged during the first few weeks of the summer term.

Gelston Parent Council

Headteacher's Report

01003.2021

New Enrolments

We have had two new enrolments at Gelston Primary School taking our roll there to 43 pupils. Another pupil is enrolling after Easter. We welcome our new pupils to the school. We have 6 x P7 leavers and 5 x P1 enrolments meaning our roll will be 43 in August.

Crossmichael Primary School's school roll is 91 pupils. Two further pupils wish to enrol shortly.

We have 9 x P7 leavers and 6 x P1 enrolments plus the two new pupils meaning our roll will be 90 in August 2021.

Update of Events Since Our Last Meeting

- Schools were closed again to most pupils and staff from January as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Emergency Childcare Hubs opened in each school and were staffed by Learning Assistants, RICCT Teachers, Principal Teachers and the Headteacher
- All pupils began remote learning. Thank you to pupils, parents and staff for doing an amazing job of navigating remote learning and using Microsoft TEAMS!
- Learner engagement was very good across the partnership.
- All pupils in P5-7 with Free School Meal entitlement received a new laptop from Scottish Government. Other devices were loaned to families who requested them. We were short of devices in the Crossmichael hub so were provided with Vodafone WiFi and a handful of devices were donated by members of the public. (At the moment, only devices configured to the school network can access the internet.)
- Weekly Health and wellbeing questionnaires sent out to pupils.
- Communication was good – blog, emails, texts, Facebook pages, TEAMS chat, telephone calls and Headteacher Award postcards sent home to celebrate achievements
- Weekly Learning Grids sent out with hyperlinks to activities and worksheets. Some activities could be completed online and others encouraged pupils to spend time outdoors or to focus on life skills such as baking.
- Teachers provided a mixture of live lessons and regular check-ins using the video call feature on Microsoft TEAMS. It was lovely for us to be able to see each other during these interactions.
- On the 15th February, the virus was sufficiently suppressed to allow our schools to reopen for P1-3 pupils and to those accessing emergency childcare. We were delighted to welcome them back! Staff and the children have been so animated and grateful to be in school. The childcare hubs were collapsed onto on site at Crossmichael Primary School allowing friendships to be formed between pupils across the partnership schools. Our P4-7 pupils continued to learn remotely.
- P4-7 should return to school as planned on 15th March. Arrangements will be as they were in August with pupils remaining in class bubbles and our two younger classes sharing lunch times at a separate time to our two older classes.
- Staff are engaging in the Covid-19 testing programmes using lateral flow tests twice weekly. Along with other safety measures, this provides peace of mind for staff and hopefully parents too.

Settling Back into School Again

- Our main priority is for our children to feel settled and ready to learn in school.
- Before the pandemic we were making good progress in raising attainment. Before Christmas, we began our standardised assessments with all pupils. We were pleasantly surprised to see that most children fell within the expected range of 85-115 for reading, mental maths and general maths. Several pupils were achieving scores above this and some were slightly below the 85-115 range.
- We track pupils' progress at three times each year and teachers meet with me to discuss who is 'on track' or 'not on track' to achieve their expected curricular levels by the end of the year. We then identify universal or targeted support to help individuals or groups of pupils to reach their potential. Sometimes this involves

meeting with parents to discuss involving partners from other agencies such as Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy or Occupational Therapy, etc.

- In February, teachers predicted how many pupils would achieve their expected curricular levels in P1, P4 and P7 by June 2021. These judgements were based on assessment evidence from terms 1 and 2 from class work and from other assessments. These predicted results were shared with the Local Authority as a snapshot in time.

Our strengths are:

- Most of our P1 pupils are on track to achieve Early level in Numeracy, Reading, Writing and Listening & Talking.
- Most of our P4 pupils are on track to achieve First Level in Numeracy, Reading, Writing and Listening & Talking.
- Most of our P7 pupils are on track to achieve Second Level in Numeracy, Listening & Talking and Writing.

Our next steps are:

- Half of our P7s are on track to achieve Second Level in reading so we need to provide targeted support to help the others.

Transition Arrangements

- The remote transition programme is underway for P7 – S1 with regular communication in place between home and school.
- We have started contacting our local feeder Early Learning and Childcare providers to gather information about our new P1 enrolments for August.

ICT Equipment and Infrastructure

- Dumfries and Galloway Council is updating its ICT infrastructure - Windows 10, bring your own device and better Broadband speed.
- Our schools have been chosen for the rollout in April.
- During Lockdown I asked for donations of old devices and we have had one tablet donated.
- We will be asking for pupils to return the Drax Chromebooks that were loaned to them.

Finances

- Our funding comes from three sources:
 1. Devolved School Management budget (DSM) provided by the Local Authority (Each school only received 75% of this for 2020-2021.)
 2. School Fund (comprising of monies from fund raising, donations etc)
 3. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) provided by Scottish Government to reduce the poverty related attainment gap (calculated according to how many pupils we have who receive Free School Meal Entitlement).
- Finances as of end January 2021 were:

Gelston

DSM = £562.63

FUND = £1675.88

PEF = £3990.38

- Normal fundraising events have not been possible nor are they appropriate with so many families feeling the financial impact of the pandemic.
- We will be reliant on applying for grants and approaching businesses for donations of equipment and resources
- Meanwhile, we continue to look at ways of making savings in school.

Dumfries & Galloway Parent Council Forum Tuesday 23rd February, via Zoom, 7.00pm

Summary of meeting discussions – full minutes from page 3

1. Welcome & housekeeping – attendees and apologies received at Appendix 1

Mel welcomed everyone to the meeting – especially those who have not attended before – explaining that the screen would be recorded for completing minutes afterwards and then deleted.

2. Approve minutes from 18 November 2020 meeting as accurate record and matters arising

Mel has set up a Dropbox account for DGPCF

Action: Mel to populate Dropbox account and notify PC Chairs of contents

The results of the joint DGPCF / DGC E&LD survey were sent out to all PC Chairs in January for their information and this. This report can also be found in the Dropbox [here](#).

Action: Mel to update information leaflets ASAP

Vanessa also wanted to thank everybody that took part – it has clearly identified that that DGC E&LD needs to have two separate website pages for Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) [current page can be found [here](#)]: one new webpage for information for new Chairs/members coming and one for wider Parental Involvement and Engagement agenda information.

3. Alastair Young, Quality Improvement Manager, D&G Council Education & Learning Directorate (DGC E&LD)

Background:

- Schools and nurseries went into remote learning quickly and unexpectedly in January after a national lockdown began on Boxing Day. For D&G this was particularly significant as this was a sudden shift from Tier 1 to full lockdown with little or no forewarning prior to the change.

Learning and Teaching via remote Learning from January 2021:

- The Local Authority had to quickly take on board advice that was coming nationally from Scottish Government and its Covid Education Recovery Group called CERG about expectations around remote learning.
- There were increased expectations around remote learning from Scottish Government and Education Scotland with teaching and other unions involved in shaping those expectations – there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach, each school will be different depending on many factors, e.g., digital access, staffing, logistics.
- We in D&G were well placed due to work and planning already done in support of first lockdown, e.g., Rainbow Recovery and other resources to support schools and early learning and childcare (ELC) settings.
- Schools & ELC settings geared up for remote learning over Christmas break.
- Local Authority provided support via District Headteacher meetings and regular communication from the Senior Management Team to support the processes, discuss expectations around remote learning and deal with all the logistical challenges, staffing challenges, access to digital devices etc.
- Quality Assuring remote learning – Education Scotland sampling 5% of schools for first three weeks, ‘what is working well, what are the challenges, what further support might you need?’, pupil forum conversations and Education Officer support for schools and Early Years Team support for ELC settings via quality assurance framework of discussion questions.
- Local Authority gave support via supplementary guidance around quality assurance of remote learning for schools and ELC settings – e.g., Education Officer conversations, Collaborative Forums for Headteachers, self-evaluation sheets for practitioners and sharing of examples of practice collected from across D&G schools and nurseries.
- Education Scotland is working with all Local Authorities around different themes relating to aspects of remote learning.

Schools and ELC settings are expected to ensure that there is good communication with parents and that they follow up on queries with appropriate help and support for young people and families. Schools are actively seeking feedback from parents to continue to improve the remote learning arrangements.

Return to School for Nurseries, P1-3 and some Senior Phase pupils in Feb 2021:

- Why these stages? – a Scottish Government directive. All schools have shared a letter from Jason Leitch (National Clinical Director) which Education Directors were asked to share with all parents/carers (on electronic platforms) – explained a combination of the science of COVID transmission and the need to get the young learners back – social / emotional skills / health & wellbeing, developing learning and meeting needs. For Senior Phase pupils – this is for essential aspects of practical subjects only at the moment – to enable practical elements of courses needed for accreditation - max 5-8% of older pupils due to increased transmissibility factors.
- We will continue to follow Scottish Government guidance re getting different stages back to school. We don't expect any additional age groups to attend school in person until mid-March although we are seeing an increase the number of vulnerable children attending in person for targeted support.
- Different schools will face a host of different challenges that will be specific to their particular circumstances, location and context so it is likely there will be differences in arrangements, but Scottish Government guidance will be followed in relation to which stages return and when.
- Schools should continue to be mindful and sympathetic to the juggling act many families will be going through and the range of challenges many families will be facing at this time.
- Moving forward there will be a significant role for Parent Councils to work in partnership with schools to consider the impact of the pandemic and what can be done together to take forward the recovery and healing process. Always welcome feedback – whether it is directly from pupils/parents, through individual parent councils and/or the DGPCF.
- The Local Authority will continue to work with a range of professional and community partners and teacher's representative groups to ensure we find a careful balance of recovery activity that supports young people and their families in ways that are manageable yet mindful of the demands placed on education professionals and community partners.
- Finally, we wish to thank parents for their continuing support for their schools and nurseries at this challenging time. Where we see Parent Councils working in close partnership with their schools, we see the benefits for all the young people. Now more than ever we will all need to pull together to tackle the impact of the pandemic.

Parent questions and further information in full minutes – page 4

4. Vanessa Morris, Support Officer with responsibility for Parental Involvement & Engagement, DGC E&LD

Vanessa sent her latest update to PC Chairs on Friday 26 February 2021 and it can also be found [here](#) in the DGPCF Dropbox.

Further details in full minutes – page 12

5. Open forum for PC Chairs/representatives to ask questions/share updates

Observations and feedback from parents – discussion details in full minutes – page 13

Appendix 1 – attendees and apologies

Next meeting

Thursday 27 May 2021, 7pm via Zoom – includes AGM and election of Chair