

# Minutes

Darvel Primary School Parent Council  
2021/2022

**Date of meeting:** 7 September 2021

**Time:** 7:00pm

**Location:** Via Zoom

**Attendees:** Joanna Wilks (JW), Louise Smith (LS), Laura Hodge (LH), Claire Douglas (CD), Kari Fulford (KF), Sarah Riley (SR), Laura Emery (LE), Kirsty Doncaster (KD), Heather Jones (HJ), Stephen O'Neill (SO), Nicola Quigley (NQ)

**Apologies for absence:** Gillian Harman (GH), Lorraine Dougan (LD), Kylie Cassels (KC)

**Distribution:** All in attendance, those absent, the wider parent forum and school colleagues.

## Annual General Meeting

### Welcome

LS welcomed everyone to the meeting – the group were delighted to see some new parents present.

### Review of 2020/21

It was acknowledged that due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and compliance measures, the last school year was far from normal. Many school and Parent Council activities, initiatives and events had to either be modified, put on hold or did not progress as we would have hoped. As the current restrictions ease (or are adapted), it is hoped progress across a number of areas can be made this year.

#### Key matters discussed/raised

Over the course of the last school year, the Parent Council were informed, consulted on, and raised a number of matters on behalf of the Parent Forum. Main topics of discussion were:

- Home-schooling
- Covid compliance and health & safety
- Outdoor learning
- Alternative seasonal activities
- Parking and road safety
- Staffing
- School Improvement Planning and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)
- Homework
- Communications
- Parent/teacher engagement

#### Fundraising

It was noted that there were limited opportunities to carry out fundraising last year. Fortunately, however, the Parent Council was able to use funds brought forward from the previous year to provide support to both school

and pupils. It was agreed that a concerted focus on fundraising activities was required this session in order to support the school/pupils in ways we have done in previous years.

#### Hello's and Goodbye's

In the last school session, we said farewell to Claire Robertson (who was our previous Chair) and to Morag Logan, and we welcomed Claire Douglas, Sarah Riley and Louise Smith to the Parent Council.

### **Accounts for 2020/2021**

JW provided details of Parent Council income and expenditure for the Year 2020/2021 - an overview of the accounts is provided in Appendix 1.

The funds raised by the Parent Council are used to support the work of the school and extra-curricular activities for the pupils. In the past year we have supported with the following:

- Refreshments at Christmas parties
- Refreshments for virtual Panto
- Christmas craft supplies
- P7 Hoodies
- Refreshments at sports days
- Ice cream van

**Action (JW/LS)** - New signatories to be arranged.

**Action (JW/LS)** – Arrangements to be put in place for someone (external to the Parent Council) to check/audit the accounts.

**Action (JW)** - Online banking to be set up.

### **Election of Office Bearers and Members**

#### Secretary & Treasurer

The group agreed that both Gillian Harman (Secretary) and Joanna Wilks (Treasurer) had done a great job over the last year and were a fantastic support to the Parent Council. The motion was carried for both Gillian and Joanna to continue in their respective roles for the coming school year.

#### Chairperson

Following the departure of the previous Chairperson, Louise Smith (current Vice Chairperson) was voted in as Chairperson.

#### Vice Chairperson

Laura Emery expressed an interest in becoming the Vice Chairperson (which was left vacant with LS moving to the position of Chair). The motion was carried for Laura to take on this role.

#### Conformation of Office Bearers for 2021/2022

- Chairperson – Louise Smith
- Vice Chairperson – Laura Emery
- Secretary – Gillian Harman
- Treasurer - Joanna Wilks

#### Election of new parent members

Under Constitution rules up to 9 parent members are permitted on the Council, however it was noted that the Constitution is currently under review (as discussed below), and the upper limit of parent members may increase.

SO, NQ and HJ have expressed an interest in joining the Parent Council (as have some other parents who were not able to attend the meeting). Following the approval of the revised Constitution (hopefully over the next month), conformation of the new parent members/associate members can be made.

It was noted that new membership would be prioritised for parents from year groups not currently represented on the Parent Council. We are still currently seeking parent representatives for the P7 year group.

### **Amendments to Parent Council Constitution**

It was noted that the Constitution, which sets out the operating processes, procedures and rules for the Parent Council, was now out-of-date and required updating. An initial review has been undertaken by LS and GH, and the revised draft Constitution will now be circulated to the Parent Council for review and approval. After which it will be shared with the Parent Forum for their consent.

### **AOB**

#### Schedule of Parent Council meetings for 2021/22

It was agreed that Parent Council meetings would take place on the first Tuesday of every month for this current school year.

## Parent Council Meeting

### Matters arising from last meeting

#### School Photographs

Carried forward from the last meeting. To help ensure school photographs are accessible for all, consideration to be given to finding less expensive options (e.g. option of single digital photo), whilst maintaining the photographic quality and variety which has been provided and valued in previous years.

**Action: LE** – to contact current photographer (and alternatives) to find out if other options can be provided.

### Head Teacher Update

#### Staffing

The school has had a challenging few weeks with regard to staffing. Due to the new guidelines, while children no longer have to self-isolate if a pupil in their class has a positive test result, adults in the school have different guidance to follow which can leave classes of pupils with no teacher or classroom assistant. At one stage 5 members of staff were absent (not all due Covid/self-isolation), so cover has needed to be provided at short notice. Daily updates on who is covering classes are not always possible, however the school will try to update parents where possible.

#### Homework

A staff meeting is taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> September, at which the matter of homework will be discussed. It was noted that a more consistent approach to homework would be welcomed by parents. KD explained that P3 to P7 will be using MS Teams this year. For the younger children, P1 and P2, the Learner Journal will be used - staff are to be trained on the effective use of this platform.

#### School Blogs

The intention was to start focusing on this at the start of term, but due to staffing issues this had to be pushed back. It is a priority going forward as another way to share information about class activities and learning with parents. It was noted that previous posts from last year will be deleted. The use of blogs to be raised and discussed with teachers at their next meeting.

#### Class Bubbles

In line with guidance from the Head of Education for East Ayrshire, the school has made the decision not to remove the use of class bubbles at this stage due to the current rise in positive cases. Whilst it is unlikely this will change in the immediate future, it will be kept under review. KD commented that the children have adapted to this remarkably well and are very understanding of the need for guidelines.

#### School Lunches

At present, P1/2 continue to eat in the lunch hall, with P3 to P7's eating in class which can result in cover issues. The school is currently reviewing how more classes can utilise the lunch hall and how this can be planned and implemented in a Covid compliant way.

#### Class Closures

The school is required to keep a record of all positive cases which is shared with Public Health. Public Health would advise if the school needed to close a classroom due to case numbers, however this is not routine practice. Where the school has seen a rise in positive cases in any one class, KD has been ensuring the classes are given a thorough spray clean in addition to the usual cleaning measures. Parents will be notified by email when there is a positive case in their child's class and will be sent a "Warn and Inform" letter as per the current guidance from Public Health.

KD expressed a big thank you to all parents for keeping the school updated on the occurrence of Covid symptoms and positive/negative test results. This parent communication and assistance has been hugely helpful.

#### School Improvement Plan

The School Improvement Plan, which includes PEF spend, is in development and will be submitted to East Ayrshire Council by the end of the month. A draft plan will be shared with the Parent Council and then shared with the wider Parent Forum.

#### Teacher/Parent's Night

The schedule for parent's night and school reports is currently under review and will be shared with parents in due course.

### **Communications**

#### School Updates / Newsletter

The need for regular updates for parents was discussed. In addition to day-to-day/operational matters, parents are keen to hear about pupil activities, achievements and successes to help them feel more engaged and informed about what is happening in school. It was put forward that some of the content from Mr Orr's virtual assemblies (albeit in text format) could form part of this update.

**Action: KD** – to look into the creation of a school newsletter or equivalent, and consider content/frequency etc.

#### Teacher/Parent

In addition to more general updates, parents would welcome more communication from teachers to help them feel connected with what their child is learning e.g. activities, class topics, numeracy, literacy etc. They can then help embed this at home where appropriate. It was noted that this should be basic information and not time consuming for teachers, but enough to keep parents informed.

**Action: KD** – to review this with teachers and will consider how parents can be kept informed via the class blogs/MS Teams/ Learner Journal on a regular basis. The issuing of term plans will also be looked into.

#### Parent Forum Communication

A focus for the Parent Council over the coming weeks/months will be on reviewing and enhancing our communication with the Parent Forum. Main areas of focus will be replacing the current Parent Council Facebook page; updating the school website with relevant Parent Council information; ensuring the minutes are readily accessible for all the Parent Forum; considering ways to communicate 'offline' i.e. for those parents who have more limited access to the internet.

**Action: GH** – to finalise/launch the new Parent Council Facebook page with relevant input from Parent Council.

#### Fundraising

It was agreed that we need to adopt a fair and balanced approach to fundraising – whilst we are keen to raise funds for the benefit of pupils, we understand the financial constraints some parents are under. Consideration to be given to options that may prove mutually beneficial. We will also look at ways in which we can involve pupils in setting fundraising ideas and targets. Creativity will be needed whilst Covid restrictions still apply. As it stands, due to current restrictions there will be no Christmas Fayre this year.

**Action: All PC members** – to provide suggestions for fundraising ideas.

**Actions LS/GH** – a gauge wider Parent Forum interest in the fundraising ideas, and a fundraising planner/schedule to be created.

#### Parent Council Logo

It was put forward that a logo could be helpful when promoting/publicising events and activities etc and when issuing Parent Council communications. GH had made the suggestion of involving pupils in the creation of the logo, with the winning design being selected for use by the Parent Council. A small prize (to be agreed by Parent Council) may also be provided. KD thought this sounded like a good idea and suggested it could be something that both P6 & P7 could get involved with.

**Action LS/GH** – to produce a simple logo design brief which can be shared with teachers/pupils.

**Action: KD** – to share idea with P6 and P7 teachers and pupils.

#### Breakfast/Afterschool Club

A question had been raised about whether the school would consider setting up a breakfast/afterschool club. KD explained that unfortunately such clubs are not permitted at the moment due to Covid restrictions, but consideration will be given to this as and when restrictions are lifted. SR commented that she would be happy to provide support with this.

#### Uniform Swap Shop

The creation of a uniform swap shop was raised to gauge interest. The idea would be to provide parents with an opportunity to exchange/buy good quality second-hand uniforms, and it could be an outlet for unclaimed/unmarked lost property. To be considered at a future meeting/potentially tie in with fundraising options.

#### PE/Outdoor Learning

P2, P4 and P7 are now taking part in the Curriculum Outdoors Attainment Challenge (COACH) with the East Ayrshire Learning Outdoor Support Team (LOST). This means that, in addition to 2 gym slots per week, many children may require their gym shoes/trainers on a regular basis throughout the week. Rather than issuing a complicated timetable which may be subject to change, the school is requesting that pupils pack a change of shoes each day.

**Action: All Parents** – to make sure their child brings gym shoes with them on a daily basis.

#### Road Safety - Pick Up/Drop Off

A concern has been raised about the number of parents/taxis parking on the zig-zag lines at school pick up and drop off, and that the zig-zag lines are now quite faded.

**Action: KD** – to arrange for a reminder to be issued to parents/taxis about the need for zig-zag lines to be kept clear. In addition, the school will contact the council to request that the zig-zag lines get repainted.

## **AOB**

#### Parent Council Priorities

**Action: Parent Council** – to give consideration to our priorities for the year ahead to help focus our efforts. To be discussed and agreed at our next meeting.

## **Date & Time of Next Meeting**

The next Parent Council Meeting will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm via Zoom. A reminder and request for matters to be raised will be issued in advance.

**Appendix 1****Parent Council Accounts Year 2020/2021**

BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD £4,105.87

**INCOME**

2019 – 2020 Winter Disco £308.99

Parent donations for Christmas crafts £375.25

**Total Income** £684.24

**EXPENDITURE**

2019 Panto buses £1606.00

Christmas craft supplies £355.38

P7 Hoodies £350.00

Farewell gifts for long serving Parent Council members £50.00

Refreshments for extra-curricular activities/events £881.90

(Christmas party, virtual panto, sports day, ice cream van)

**Total Expenditure** £3243.28

Balance as at 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021: **£1546.83**

\*Subject to audit/approval\*