



NETHERLEE PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Netherlee Parent Council Meeting – 3/12/20

Present				
	Adam Capek	AC	Hariet Boyle	HB
	Carole Chalmers	CC	Handri Cronje	HC
	Brian Cook	BC	Emma Gibson	EG
	Chris Fawbert	CF	Justin Haccius	JH
	Kaneez Fizza	KF	Trisha Hamilton	TH
	Fiona Khan	FK	Lorna Hurst	LH
	Felicity Rose	FR	Mike Law	ML
	Tenant Stevenson	TS	Fiona Mcmillan	FM
	Jane Thomson	JT	Richard Owen	RO
	Yvonne Donaldson (NPS)	YD	Councillor Annette Ireland	AI
	Julie Robertson (NPS)	JR	Councillor David McDonald	DM
	Lynn Sweeny (NPS)	LS		
	Angela Kerr (NPS)	AK		

Observers: Alistair Haw

1. Welcome by Chair

The Chair (TS) opened the meeting noting that it was a few minutes after 7pm and with the agreement of FK (Zoom meeting host) that she would let the anticipated two remaining attendees into the meeting when they were able to join.

TS noted that certain suggestions had been made to him regarding timekeeping and that he had devised the following time allocations for this meeting:

- General Matters: 30 mins
- “School to Parents”: 20 mins
- Internal PC Matters: 20 mins
- AOCB: 10 mins

TS noted that he does not wish to cut people off when they are speaking but requesting that attendees think before they speak about whether what they are saying is really necessary. TS welcomed everyone and commented on the excellent turnout. TS thanked YD for bringing the meeting forward from 16 December, as had originally been planned.

2. Apologies for Absence

It was noted that apologies had been received from Jenny Bryant (Secretary), Adam Capek (Vice Chair) (who hoped he might be able to join later on) and also from Alan Martin, Joanna Haw and Hannah Bayes.

TS thanked CC and VP for recording minutes in JB's absence.

3. Educational Matters

TS sought clarification from YD regarding the standardised test results (P3, 5 and 7) that she had reported on in the previous meeting.

YD confirmed that the figures were 111 for numeracy and 109 for literacy and that both of these demonstrated a high level of attainment with a significant rise in Literacy.

4. Traffic Speeds around the School

TS informed attendees that the PC were copied in on a letter to YD from Duncan Scott who has been looking at the issue of the speed of traffic at the Clarkston Road entrance and states that the average speed of passing vehicles is 23.4mph. TS believes this is really a matter for East Renfrewshire Council ("ERC") and they have stated that this is favourable compared to other sites. TS noted that most schools seem to have a 20mph speed limit and asked AI to try to find out why this is not the case for Netherlee Primary School ("NPS")

AI explained that the figures seemed to be based on 2018 which was before the recent build-out but undertook to find out why there is no 20mph speed limit. (She also shared that another build-out is planned at Linnpark Avenue before the end of the financial year aiming to improve visibility to make the crossing safer.)

BC expressed his view that the build-out has made a significant difference. He is not sure this is such a big issue now. He thinks the traffic is often very slow moving.

YD informed AI that the email from Duncan Scott has already been forwarded to the Education Department so they should be aware of it.

TS offered to share a copy of Duncan Scott's email if anyone wishes to see it.

5. Covid: Other

Social Distancing

TS noted that it has been commented upon that P1 and P2 have to be collected from school by an adult and that the ability to socially distance is constrained by the narrow entranceway.

YD noted that many parties were involved to produce the relevant risk assessments. Clarkston Road is the busiest area and she was there on a daily basis for the first week or so to monitor how things were going and adaptations have been made since then. It is sometimes necessary to put things into practice to fully appreciate what requires to be done. Measures have included opening the P1 playground, closing sections of the playground off, opening the third gate at the main entrance, staggering P1 to P3 (but appreciates that this can also cause people to end up waiting around for longer). The Education Dept had considered the possibility of removing the low red brick wall at the entranceway but this was deemed not to be possible for technical reasons.

YD has tried to reassure people in her communications that they can hold back at busy times if they feel uncomfortable. YD stated that since we have moved to Tier 4 she has obtained authority to open part of the large playground and if this is found to be helpful she is happy for this to continue even when we come out of Tier 4 whilst Social Distancing is still required. LS noted that she and Miss Wharton have been covering doors in that area for the past few weeks. We now have 2 classes going down the stairs at one side and the other 2 classes down the ramp. This seems to have lessened the crowding. There are cones at the P2 door and parents can come through them to collect their child.

TH thanked the school for their hard work but pointed out that 8 classes are all exiting at the same time and suggested that it may be better to stagger further given that we are unable to alleviate the bottleneck at the narrowest point. YD stated that she is happy to look at that and will give it further consideration over the next few days.

HB noted that there were 3 days last week when the gates were not open for pickup and parents naturally did not feel comfortable to open them themselves. YD and LS were unaware of this. YD requested that parents please phone the school if this happens again. FR noted that if we are considering adjusting the sequencing we should think about years other than just P1 and P2. There are still a lot of crowds for P3 pick-up and still a significant number of parents not wearing face coverings. YD stated that she has been trying to mention this a lot, thanking people with their cooperation with it etc but can do so again.

Classroom Ventilation

TS asked YD to clarify what pupils are allowed to wear in class.

YD explained that NPS does not have its own ventilation policy but is following guidance and practice set by the Scottish Government and ERC. All ERC schools have had visits from environmental and technical departments because every school is different.

YD confirmed that at present children can wear whatever is most convenient. The main concern is keeping children warm and comfortable.

Single Use Plastics

YD noted that the single use plastics has been introduced to keep kitchen and dining staff safe. Instead of all the washing of utensils that they were previously doing, they are now doing enhanced cleaning of surfaces.

6. General Matters

TS asked what the school's priorities are for 2020/21 and what the PC can do to help achieve these aims.

YD referred to the School and Nursery Improvement Plan (SNIP) and encouraged parents to peruse it on the school and nursery website. YD noted that equity and diversity are threaded throughout all of the targets. We should see diversity in its widest sense, for example, including a range of socio-economic groups as well as different faiths etc. She has just invited parents of any or no faith to come forward to get involved with the school and quite a few already have. She also welcomes increased diversity within the Parent Council. We should try to have representation from as many groups as possible.

TS noted that we will get up to speed with the SNIP and come back with suggestions.

7. Format of Parent Evenings

TS noted that there had been some issues at previous parents' evenings and the PC had contacted YD for a discussion on this.

TS noted that CF had already had some discussions with YD. He asked CF and ML to put together some recommendations and come back to the PC for discussion.

ML noting that he had a very positive experience based on his own telephone call from nursery staff.

YD noted that she previously had a very lengthy conversation with CF and that subsequent parents' evenings had had very positive feedback. The recent parents evening had to be conducted by telephone due to the current COVID situation and this was not a decision that NPS had any control over. Although it is nice to meet people face-to-face, she has noted that we had increased engagement this time (99% for these phone calls compared to 93% previously when it was face-to-face) and also increased number of both parents being able to attend. YD would like to consider all information and would also like to discuss this with staff including whether we might be able to include in our offer to parents the option of a telephone call in the future.

FR noted that parents had previously raised a range of concerns to the PC and suggested that a broader analysis could be done about parents' nights in general.

CF noted that there were 5 or 6 concerns that had been raised previously and suggested that it may be useful for his previous feedback to be shared again now that there is a wider parent council. He is happy to explore the issue further and would like to canvas the parent forum.

8. Uniform

YD noted that the uniform policy has not changed since she came to Netherlee. After she took on the role of head teacher she was soon approached by parents to clarify the wearing of 'hoodies'. She looked at the policy she had, spoke to the PTA and realised there was some confusion, so communicated that it was not meant to be worn in class. This is not a new policy.

Regarding proposals to change the uniform policy, YD stated that she had intended to come back with her thoughts in June after receiving feedback. For example, there was overwhelming feedback that the navy poloshirt was better for P1/2 than the white. However, this hasn't happened yet due to COVID-related issues.

TS asked if there was a date for the uniform review and YD replied that there was none at present.

JH asked if we could request that a date for this be set. YD said that she cannot commit to this right now but she is willing to review the uniform policy in due course if people want this.

BC noted that others have come to him with the idea of a school tartan which is Scottish but also incorporates many colours, nicely linking to the themes of equity and diversity. He would like us to consult the wider school population about this.

TS suggested that perhaps we could ask the pupils to design a tartan and it could feature in the school in some way.

FR noted that there have been lots of difficult discussions at Williamwood surrounding the issue of tartan skirts and expressed concern about the potential cost of this becoming part of the school uniform.

YD stated that she will think about the tartan suggestion. She does like tartan but is currently unsure about it becoming part of the uniform due to the likely costs associated with that. YD will come back to the PC on this issue.

EG shared her view that the tartan suggestion is a lovely idea but that there may also be other equally lovely ideas that we could develop within the PC and present to the school.

9. Outdoor Spaces

YD noted that this is mentioned in the SNIP.

AK updated that the Acorn Building of the Nursey has a large plot of land behind the building which is under used. 6 weeks ago they applied for a grant and have been awarded £4927 to develop the nursery and school grounds, including creating an area to grow vegetables.

10. Communication

School to Parents

Weekly school email

TS noted that the weekly school email only goes to one parent.

YD noted that NPS use the same system as throughout all schools in Scotland so we can't adapt it. They do accommodate this for split families but this involves extra work for office staff. She thinks it might crash the system if they extend it to everyone.

FR suggested that the issue should be escalated. Perhaps we should speak to the chairs of other parent councils in Scotland.

Minute addition- following the meeting, YD contacted ERC to get an update on the email to one parent matter. Due to the roll out this session of ParentPortal across Scotland, primary schools can now send emails to both contacts on this system. YD requested that her office staff set this up asap and this has now been rolled out in Netherlee.

JT pointed out that using email is actually becoming quite outdated and that the information is also on the school website. We could set ourselves reminders to read it.

YD advised that the PC can contact the office to put information on the website at any time, and asked if items could be sent to her to approve first.

Owing to time limitations on the present meeting, TS decided that other issues relating to communications with parents should be addressed at a later time.

Communication on COVID matters

EG noted that she wished to make one point relating to communications relating to COVID. When Track & Trace are operating at the school it would be useful to have a bit more information about what year groups are affected. Parents are hearing this informally through other parents.

YD explained that she shares what information she can but is limited by national guidance around confidentiality. There are 2 standard letters and all she is able to do is put these out to the relevant people. They have had 2 cases where classes have been working from home. She clarified that this is referred to as "remote learning", not "blended learning". They have been gathering feedback from the affected children about how this has been going and she is happy to include in a communication to parents a reassurance about how this is working. EG and TH both stated that it is useful for us to know that this is happening.

FR queried whether it was only children who were being asked about their experiences or also parents. YD replied that until now it has only been pupils but that she is happy to receive any feedback from parents.

11. Inclusion and Diversity

TS noted that the PC seem to be a predominantly white ethnic group and BAME are underrepresented. He would like us to encourage more minority groups to come on board. He thinks we need to try to widen our appeal and has been discussing this with KF.

KF noted that she tried to encourage some ethnic minority groups to come along and some showed interest but then didn't come.

LH noted that we also need to get a wider range of socio-economic groups and that many members live in the same small pocket(s) of Netherlee.

CF suggested that perhaps this should be discussed as an internal PC matter, along with communication.

BC noted that we don't have the relevant statistics so it's hard to know what percentage of participation we would be looking for from different groups.

FR cautioned members against making assumptions about current members as the group may be more diverse than we realise – this is not always visible. We need to be careful not

to “over engineer” things. She also suggested that we should think about why people don’t turn up. She used to feel like it was hard to break into the group but this has gotten better recently.

BC noted his agreement with FR’s sentiments and recommended that we need to be careful that any steps we take to reach out to certain groups are not perceived by others as being unfair.

JT noted that we just need to make sure we are being inclusive and actively encouraging participation. We just need to make sure we have the right ethos and perhaps we could advertise a bit more.

FK noted that Coffee and Chats with the Leadership Team pre-COVID were great for promoting engagement.

EG noted that time is progressing fast within this meeting and suggested that we should capture some action points to take issues forward.

HB noted that a lot of issues could be discussed outwith the PC and come back to the PC for voting. She stated that she believes we can be more constructive. She agreed that we need a wider spectrum and noted that people like to feel that they are useful and contributing.

12. Internal PC Matters

TS noted that there is a lot of work to be done. He would like us to support JB in her role as secretary. The possibility of recording meetings was discussed but concerns were expressed about recording meetings. Various members offered to take a turn of taking minutes of future meetings.

CF suggested that we meet as a closed group.

TS stated that he would like to do this and proposed an internal meeting to discuss administrative matters. Consensus among members who expressed a view on this was that this meeting should take place in January 2021.

13. Close of Meeting

TS thanked everyone for coming and noted that he was pleased to have seen contributions to discussion coming from lots of different people over the past couple of meetings.

ML expressed thanks and good wishes to all Netherlee staff.

TS closed the meeting.



Our Netherlee Community Working With and For Our Children