

Parent Council (PC) Meeting Notes

Tuesday 21st January 2025

6.30pm

Location: St Ninian's High School

1. Welcome, apologies and confirmation of previous minutes that were approved and circulated

Attendees

Paul Padaruth (PP)	Jane Kane
Mhairi Louise Flanagan (ML)	Laura Cormick
Lisa McCarrey	Lorna Murray
Emma Simpson	Natalie Mosson-Kelly
Catherine Dillon-Ruddy	Syed Jaffri
Angela O'Connor	Chris McLaughlin (CM)
Karen Cumming	

Apologies

Aisha Alvi
Mairead Brophy
Jenny Padaruth

PP welcomed all attendees and confirmed apologies. Highlighted the aim to encourage more parental involvement which is a common theme in many areas. ES confirmed that there are a wide range of volunteering opportunities and if all OLM families committed to 1 hour per year of volunteering, all requirements would be covered.

PP also confirmed that the Co-Chairs met with Mrs Dillon Ruddy and Mrs O'Connor ahead of the parent council meeting to try to find ways to work together to encourage feedback and parental involvement.

2. Head teacher update (10 minutes)

Circulated copy of update

Budget update

- Mid term savings confirmed at a further £12,649 which is a reduction on the estimate of up to £45,422
- Big Cat audit ongoing to establish the effectiveness of the systems in place and confirm the volume of missing texts. Remaining budget of £5,000 in Classroom materials will be utilised to top up the stock as required. The discussion with the staff team will dictate the expectations around managing this resource and may entail a decision around books solely being used in school. Parental support re lost books is welcomed and the reimbursement appreciated given the scale of the loss.
- Approximately £40,000 in reserves which will be used to pay mid term saving and fund the refurbishment of school toilets. This will be completed prior to the end of the financial year. This will result in minimal carry forward to address the anticipated savings for next session.

- Since August we have reduced staffing by 2 FTE to allow for savings to be accrued. We appointed 1 FTE for January - June. Staff member used for additional support of pupils.
- Will Garden pathway in the process of being laid using the £4,000 Mushroom grant
- Discussion with PSA re potential junior staging at a cost of £21K plus all electrical works. Additional quotes pending
- Playground equipment refurbishment this week.

Other Areas

- **Staffing:** return will be in the coming week. Informed by ERC and enrolment data. Currently 132 P7 leaving and 85 P1 starting in August. Last year 2 surplus teachers and loss of 1 DHT. There is a falling number of pupils registering for school year on year; this could ultimately impact staffing levels but no specifics around this yet
- **Winter assessment:** programmed completed for all classes/stages to inform planning for remainder of term 2
- **Standardised testing** programme commences w/ beginning 27th January 2025. Runs until wk beginning 10 February 2025.
- Very successful **Scots event** run by **Primary 5**. Feedback from parents would be welcomed which could inform the planning for next year. Thanks to all families for their support and the staff who co-ordinated all activities.
- **Touch of tartan** for all on Thursday
- **Talent shows** completed by Friday - very proud of the confident individuals who participated.
- **Jubilee launch:** details from Mrs O'Connor to include pilgrimage information. The Jubilee Year of Hope activities planned over the year will be detailed in a newsletter, and will include a Jubilee door which will be blessed by Father Dan on Friday 24th January.
- **Committees on Friday:** thanks in anticipation of all support. DYW (Developing Young Workforce??) request from staff for parental input. See details on letter. Invitation to all parents to share their careers to help inspire our kids. This can take a variety of forms e.g. typical day in your role, advice for students looking to pursue a similar career via a blog, video, or can come to school to talk to our students.
- **Guardians of the Garden** request for support for April outdoor event - outdoor parent group co-ordinating.
- **School Show** - parental volunteers requested for a range of activities in the P6 school show, including costumes, makeup, scenery, supervision on the night. See Miss Cumming for details. More info will be in the January newsletter.

3. Diocesan update (5 minutes)

Discussion around the Scottish Government consultation which was launched before Christmas about how religious observance is managed within schools. This is the 2nd year in a row that the government has launched such a consultation at this time of year making it very difficult to coordinate a response.

The phrase being used in the consultation is that 'due weight' should be given to the pupil view and that this should become law. What this means in practice is not clear, but the implication is that if the pupil decided to refuse to participate in religious observance, this could be backed up by the law, in challenge to the parental view/wish.

Concerns around this are:

1. Catholic view is that parental view is sovereign - in theory, we could be in a situation where the parent wishes the child to participate but the child doesn't and the child's view is prioritised.
2. We have many non-Catholic children in our schools, and if a decision was taken to not practice religious observance, then this could impact many areas beyond just RE teaching. Also, will the school be required to provide an alternative activity for those children if this is the case and how would this be supported/funded?
3. Why is RE being singled out in this way? Are we 'othering' the children who decide not to practice religious observance?

If this type of approach was implemented, it would impact hugely how the school operates on a practical level and the Catholic values and ethos that is infused in all areas of the school.

The consultation will close on Sunday 26th January. ML will push out a reminder through the whatsapp groups. View is that it is too late to create a single parental body response therefore will encourage individual parents to submit responses.

CM would encourage the PC to submit a joint response but PC are conscious of not replying on behalf of other parents without consultation.

Agreed to share an established template with the parents to use to reply to the consultation.

4. Outdoor committee update (5 minutes)

Community event - this was a huge success with a wide range of involvement from the OLM community. Involved working on a path for the Willow Garden which is hoped to be finished very soon. Looking to obtain more trees to plant, and will be working with the school to obtain funding.

Jubilee celebrations - April will be the focus time for this specifically around the Jubilee garden.

The team will be revamping the whatsapp group to share opportunities for those who have volunteered to get involved.

Agreed would be helpful to share details/pictures with the parent body to encourage more involvement.

Going to encourage St Ninians pupils who are trying to get their Duke of Edinburgh award through volunteer hours.

5. Cluster Parental Workshops (5 minutes)

These are workshops on various topics that are supported across the cluster.

Feedback has been around the content of the workshops not always been what's needed, and also the timing of the workshops often being during the working day which makes it difficult to encourage attendance.

6. Volunteering - including school show, STEM, ECO, Culture & Diversity (15 minutes)

Discussion around having a single portal or document of all volunteering opportunities to make it easier for parents to access and review.

How can we use the school website to explain what different activities are e.g. Stage Mass, Assemblies

Also, can we include definitions of PSA and PC? And can we include a central portal for volunteering so that all parents can access all opportunities.

How can we incentivise parents to volunteer? Possibly having a stand at different school events e.g. parents night, to encourage participation.

Action - create a single spreadsheet of volunteering opportunities.

7. PSA update (10 minutes)

£7,600 gross revenue for the christmas fair which is an amazing result.

PSA is going to support the school in buying stage equipment, and also gave the school £7,500 previously for repairs for the school playground.

All events raise funds which support paying for equipment and items for the school.

Discussion around some potential safety issues at the Christmas fayre, specifically around entrance and exit to the school. Suggestion of creating a map of the stalls to help clarify what activities and stalls were where.

Exploring option of using St Ninians for the Christmas Fayre in future on a Saturday, rather than a Friday.

Discussed need to spend more time communicating what the PSA is achieving for the school.

8. AOB (5 minutes)

ML - Mentioned email from Aileen Vance re Partner Sessions for Parents, aim to circulate with parental community.

Agreed Actions

- ML will push out a reminder of the Scottish Government consultation on religious observance through the class whatsapp groups.
- CM to share an established template to assist parents in replying to the Scottish Government consultation.
- Gardening Committee agreed would be helpful to share details/pictures with the parent body to encourage more involvement;
- Gardening Committee are going to encourage St Ninians pupil involvement, specifically those who are trying to obtain their Duke of Edinburgh award through volunteer hours.