



St Joseph's Primary

Parent Council



Minutes of Parent Council 12th September 2023

Parent Attendees

Claire Campbell (Secretary), Jonathan Carroll (Chair), Aimee Scullion (Vice Chair), Samantha MacConnell (Uniform Secretary), Nicola Hill (Treasurer), Lynn Johnson (Vice Treasurer), Suzanne Kavanah (Social Secretary),

Sharon Constable, Karen Jordan, Claire Sweeney, Leeanne Macklin, Claire Carr, Stacey Hogg, Amy Wright, Hilary Young, Rosie McCluskey, Fiona McKenzie, Emma Merriman, Clare Friel

St Joseph's School Representatives: Suzanne Martin (Head Teacher), Karen Wynne (Deputy Head), Clionagh Leddy (Principal Teacher), Hannah Addison (Acting Principal Teacher), Katie Baxter

St Joseph's Parish Representative: Rebecca Harrison (see apologies)

Opening Prayer lead by Karen Jordan

Introductions and Apologies

Apologies: Canon Stephen, Rebecca Harrison, Kirsty McDermaid, Marie-Claire Mackie

Minutes of previous meeting were circulated and approved

Proposed by **Aimee Scullion** Seconded by **Nicola Hill**

Head Teacher's Report

Mrs Martin thanked parents for ensuring their children were so well turned out and for adhering to the school's uniform policy. The children have settled well and seem keen to get back to school.

Mrs Addison will remain as Acting Principal until at least November. The temporary position currently being filled by Mrs Lavery as a secondment, has been advertised and once that is filled Mrs Lavery may return to St Joseph's.

There are currently 2 members of staff on Maternity Leave.

We have 2 Newly Qualified Teacher's (NQT) this year, Miss Katie Baxter in P4b, supported by Mrs McArdle and Mrs Rachel O'Shea in P5a, supported by Miss Harvey.

The management team will be in the playground every day as there are now insufficient PSAs to cover this duty.

The school has been awarded £18,000 PEF funding this year, which is being used to cover the cost of outdoor learning for all classes and to cover Mrs Addison's principal position.

Reading recovery and Trail will continue this year but will be funded entirely from the school's budget, with 0.5 of Mrs Leddy's time being allocated to this.

One of the NQT positions has been funded entirely by the Scottish Government, which allows an additional staff member. Angela Harvey will provide support for spelling and writing.

This academic year, we have a roll of 384 children over 14 classes, with 41 children across the 2 P1 classes. The roll is down slightly over the last 2 years (391 in 2022 and 400 in 2021). This appears to be, at least, in part due to an increase in parents deferring children. The legislation now allows parents to defer for a year if their child won't be 5 on the first day of the school year. This year, 13 children who were eligible to start Primary 1 at St Joseph's deferred. It is unknown whether this will be a rolling pattern or if in future years we may need to cap admissions - the maximum number of Primary 1 children we can have is 60.

Last year, attendance was 98%, which is an increase of 3% on the previous year. Mrs Martin has again reminded parents to make dental and doctors' appointments etc outside of school hours. Parents are also requested not to take children out of school for holidays.

At the start of term, children are given diagnostic assessments to get a baseline for the start of the year; this can assist in identifying where additional support is needed, particularly in spelling, reading and numeracy. These tests have not identified any significant gaps.

Overall, attainment is very good, in line with or exceeding the authority average. There was a drop of 1 or 2 points in the standardised tests, but this is no cause for concern as a small fluctuation is not unexpected.

90% of our children are achieving above National Average on Scottish Government standardised tests.

All P7 children received the Pope Francis Faith Award last year. This included our children from different Faith backgrounds as well.

Playful Pedagogy continues to be embedded across the school with positive outcomes. The My World Triangle activity has been undertaken to assist teachers in identifying any areas of concerns. This can then be flagged to the management team who can step in if necessary to provide support.

Resilience questionnaires have also been completed to give a baseline for the start of term.

Mrs Martin shared that the whole staff appreciates the continued parental support which allows the school to have events such as Wild Week and Winter Wonderland.

There will be more opportunities for parents, grandparents and extended families to be involved in school activities. This Friday, 30 parents have signed up to help at the playground tidy up day. In addition, there have been many donations of seeds, tools etc as well as cash donations.

Parental workshops will be held in November. The school is looking for feedback from parents as to the preferred structure and format of these workshops as attendance in recent years has been poor.

The feedback from the authority following the collaborative inspection was very positive and they are very happy with St Joseph's. Another Collaborative Improvement Visit has been notified, but as this will be our 3rd in 2 years, the format will not include an actual school visit.

Family engagement workshops will be run at schools in the St Ninian's cluster. These will be on various topics and workshops will be held in the different schools - a timetable will be issued shortly.

The expected strike action by auxiliary staff is likely to go ahead in September. It is expected the school will be closed to pupils on strike days.

Social Secretary's Update

Academic year 2022-2023

Total money raised £7,535 – Expenditure approx. £4,500 on Annual Commitments - P1 welcome, Halloween Howl, Winter Wonderland, St Joseph's Day, Communion Brunch, Wild Week and P7 disco.

Currently we have outstanding playground equipment, which is priced at £4,000 plus removal, moving into this year we have raised and banked £2,230 towards this.

Throughout the Academic year we, the social committee have accumulated Annual Commitments (detailed above and below), most of these commitments are Events which do not generate funds, therefore additional fundraising events take place. In total we are involved with a minimum of eleven fundraising activities or Event. Additional involvement/activities may occur.

Academic year 2023-2024

Annual Commitments & status.

P1 Welcome Night September Event

Halloween October Fundraiser

Winter Wonderland December Event – the school request payment for this event, however, the Parent Council contributes up to £2,000.

St Joseph's Day March Event

Easter March/April Fundraiser

Communion Brunch April Event

Wild Week June Event – the school request payment for this event, however, the Parent Council contributes up to £2,000.

P7 Disco June Event.

Additional Fundraiser's over the years have been -

Family days, black tie, curry nights, Christmas stalls, summer fayre, 100 squares, tea towels, photography, sponsored bounce, etc

This year, after considering the views and opinions of the latest Parent Council survey on Uniform and Social, we would like to host (subject to agreement with HT)

Sponsor bounce - November

100 squares - February

Summer Fayre May 2024 – this Fayre will accommodate all our St Joseph families.

Next Social Committee meeting will be held October 2023

The Halloween disco dates were proposed to be 26th October, with separate discos across the evening to accommodate the different age groups. The Halloween Howl will be on Friday 27th October during school.

Mrs Martin provisionally agreed that the sponsored Bounce in November should be possible and will confirm once she has checked the school diary.

The parents survey indicated that more family days would be welcomed. The school fayre in May will allow all families in the school to attend.

DEPUTY UNIFORM REP UPDATE

Pre-Loved Overview

The past 12 months have seen our pre-loved uniform offering go from strength to strength. From our first event in October of last year in the church hall to our most recent event in August just before the start of the new term, we have raised just over £700.

This came from 6 events in the church hall after 10am Mass and a stall made available at the P1 Information afternoon. All proceeds have been split between PC funds and church funds and a donation made to Missio.

We have grown the offering at our events to include all items of uniform, badged and unbadged, as well outdoor wear, wellies and we still have a selection of small sized, brand new, boxed school shoes which were very generously donated by Pauls & Zappititos of Hamilton & Uddingston. We also have a small selection of Communion dresses and accessories from the joint event we participated in with Our Lady of the Missions. Our pre-loved offering has been so well supported by our parents generously donating items, that we were able to donate 4 bags of unbadged uniform items through our Chair to school in more deprived areas of the city in June. The newly created Laudato Si Faith sub-committee is now ably assisting and likely to take over fully from me running future pre-loved events.

New Uniform Overview

In terms of our traditional block uniform orders, which I took over from Katrina Adams at Easter, we have delivered a £1,700 order in April & a £2,000 order in August for the start of the new term. The PC doesn't make any money on these bulk orders; however, we do pass on small savings to parents. The PC currently received 5% commission on all online sales placed directly with parents. This has generated £97 from April 22 to March 23. We have sold £100 worth of new ties in the past 12 months, though this doesn't generate any revenue for the PC, it's simply a service to parents.

Summary of Uniform Related Work since June 2023

Since our last PC meeting on 6th June, we elected to run an extra pre-loved event in early August for parents. This was really well attended and supported by parents, raising £160. I believe parents were pleased to have an opportunity to shop in a planet and purse friendly manner just before the start of the new term. I had a waiting list for parents looking for larger P7 sized blazers which I was able to satisfy, with only one exception. I have since given the last remaining larger blazers and winter coats to Mrs Wynn for her to have ready at school should a child need a badged blazer/coat for church or other external visits.

The dates of our next pre-loved events are Sundays 1st October after 10 Mass & 3rd December, after 10am Mass.

I delivered the Summer Order for new P1 parents 10 days earlier than is our customary delivery over the two in-service days. This was partly due to work commitments, partly due to me having to take delivery of all of the stock to my home address as the school was closed over the summer and partly due to me wanted to get orders out to parents with a little more breathing space before the new terms. I must report that there were issues with Gilmour Sports stock levels. Not only was the full summer order not fully completed until 10 days ago, but GS has no small stocks of blazers to facilitate swaps for the half a dozen or so parents who has mis-measured their children. I was only able to fulfil these orders through our pre-loved stocks of blazers. This time last year, I would not have been able to access pre-loved items. All parents in this position received an immediate refund on all items not suitable due to size discrepancies. I have to say GS only provided with a credit note for £278 worth of returned stock the other day after weeks of chasing. I will settle the account this week.

The whole process of the summer order was difficult, from parents having to collect and then return in many cases items to my home address, to lack of customer aftercare by GS leading to a huge number of returns, refunds and a scramble to get orders satisfied via pre-loved stock.

Plans for the new academic year

Pre-Loved

As Jonny has already commented upon, myself and fellow office bearers are agreed that as a PC we want to concentrate on our pre-loved offering to parents; we want to increase the frequency of our events and improve channels of communication for requesting items. The recent survey of parents returned extremely positive feedback on our pre-loved service, but there is always room for improvement. A couple of parents commented that they would like to see more events; that they want stock to be available at the school, that they would like the times of our events to not always be after 10am Mass, that some wish to see more opportunities to donated items in between our events, and for an online ordering service to be available.

Taking these in turn, it is our intention to try to offer as many events as we can. A lot is driven by accessing the church hall. We share alternate Sundays once a month with Our Lady of the Missions. We may however be able to negotiate an increase and we would certainly like to build upon our jointly run Laudato Si Communion Clothes Sale. We can potentially also look at alternating the timing of events between 10 Mass & 12 noon Mass, if this is possible. The reason we run events after 10am Mass is to fit in the coffee mornings run monthly on behalf of the Church. Whilst we were able to run an event for the new P1 parents in May, having pre-loved items available for parents to browse routinely at school is problematic, due to no storage and few PC office bearers being available to facilitate this due to work commitments. Canon Stephen has kindly provided the PC with storage at the church and running events on Sundays allows working parents to attend and also strengthens our links with the Church and Parish.

Whilst I put out communications via our Class Reps and by email throughout the year on the run up to events, requesting items, it is possible for parents to drop off items during term time to the school office and to my home address during the summer holidays, as frequently as they are clearing out. Going forward I would propose that parents are welcome to drop off items on any Friday which suits them, as I can collect on a Friday.

In terms of implementing an online ordering system, this would certainly be something we could aspire to in the future but it isn't something which can be devised quickly. A tremendous amount of set up work and then continual monitoring would be required to achieve this. The system set up by St. Ninians last year is operated by the school's staff. We do not have the capacity at present to deliver this, however, our Chair is in discussions with St. Ninians to see whether there might be enough interest from sixth year pupils to assist the PC with running events and stock taking. Our Laudato Si Faith Sub Committee is now also actively involved in assisting with running events to ensure that we have enough helpers. I have for some time been able to offer parents who require pre-loved items but cannot attend our events the option to email me on the PC uniform email to place requests. Whilst it may take me a week or two to get time on the weekend to access our stock at the Church, I am very happy to do this. My hope would be with some sixth-year students on board we will be able to offer a slicker service to our parents.

Plans for the new academic year

Bulk Ordering New Uniform

Given the problems which I have encountered with GS, the vast amount of time required to run this service, my lack of time and the lack of any other PC office bearers to assist or take on this role, I am formally proposing that the PC cease offering this service, with immediate effect. I have consulted with fellow office bearers and with the HT and whilst this service has been useful in the past, it is no longer sustainable. If I cannot rely on the supplier to carry adequate stock, I cannot confidently continue with the service. GS no longer gives us a Rep to assist with orders and Paisley isn't handy for return trips with returned items. The summer order was logistically stressful. We are a small PC and as we do not make any money on the bulk orders, I feel that we should concentrate our efforts and resources on our pre-loved service to parents. Trying to juggle both is too time consuming and the two offerings do not really sit well together.

It would be my intention to try and negotiate an ongoing discount for parents through GS (and possibly Stevensons at Muirend too, if this is possible), which would hopefully mitigate parents losing the discounted prices which we were able to offer. Parents would simply order any and all of their new uniform directly themselves, in person or online, at whatever point in the year the need arose, with all items delivered directly to them. I am certainly not looking to divert business away from GS; they are after all the sole supplier of the knitwear in school colours. However, Stevensons do however carry blazer, winter coat, tie and PE top stock and are more local. I am keen to remind parents that they have options with where to purchase new uniform.

If approved this evening, I will advise GS when I settle their invoice of our intention to move away from bulk ordering with immediate effect. I can confirm that as far as I am aware we are not bound by contractual obligations to GS.

It would be my intention that I or a newly elected member of the PC continue to carry tie stock for parents and also to supply P7 Leavers Hoodies on behalf of the PC. I will look at other suppliers for the hoodies to ensure we offer the best prices and hopefully the best customer service.

Finally, if we are moving away from bulk orders, I would propose that we use the PC account to facilitate BACS payments at our pre loved events, something which we have offered at the last 3 events. We have been using a personal account of mine as that was the only practical way of handling the bulk orders, but I think it would be preferable to transfer over to using the PC account, as only a tiny bit of admin on the morning of an event would be required of the treasurer or vice treasurer.

I would finish by saying that I can issue a summary of the services, the options and the decisions made here tonight concerning uniform to our parents via email & our Class Reps, in the coming days, so that parents are fully informed of all changes & of the scope of the offering moving forward.

I am happy to take any questions on my report or to hear any comments parents or the School's Management Team may have.

Diocesan Church Representative Report (read by Aimee Scullion)

Please accept my apologies that I cannot attend in person. The Diocese welcomes back all students and teachers to the new school year and have issued their 'Centred on Christ' publication for all school staff at the start of the term. If anyone hasn't received this and would like to, let me know and I can email a copy.

Focuses for September include Vocations and The Season of Creation with The Missions and The Rosary being the main themes for October.

Diocesan events for Autumn include;

-P7 Mass for Confirmandi, St. Mirin's Cathedral, Thur 14th Sep, 10.15am

-Primary School Day P4-P7, St. Mary's, Paisley, Sun 17th Sep, 2-5pm

-Afternoon of reflection 'The Beatitudes' for HT's primary & secondary, St. Columba's, Renfrew, Wed 4th Oct, 12.30pm

-Diocesan Family Day for Our Lady, St. John's, Barrhead, Sun 29th Oct, 2-4pm finishing with Mass Celebrated by Bishop John, all ages welcome!

The first Diocesan parent forum takes place on Monday 30th October, the main focus will be the revised RE course for the secondary schools. I am planning to attend.

Laudato Si/Faith Group

Laudato Si is an encyclical of Pope Francis and calls on the church to care for our common home. In response, SCES has launched Laudato Si for schools and our school St Josephs is part of that. Laudato Si schools learn, pray and act to change for good. They protect all life, to prepare for a better future of justice, peace, love and beauty.

As a parent group we seek to support the school/ parent council in such endeavours. Our members are Clare Friel, Clare Sweeney, Karen Jordan, Aimee Scullion and Rebecca Harrison.

Our current areas of work include: Pre-loved uniforms (as covered above), school clean up days, Mini Vinnies and strengthening the links between School, Home and Parish.

School Clean up

We will help with the school clean up and have 2 events planned:

Term 1 - assisting on clean up day and publicising the event through the Parent Council communication channels

Term 2 - Creating an outdoor prayer space through activities with the children - e.g. painted rocks, and tree planting etc.

Mini Vinnies

We have been in conversation with Mrs Addison to help with this. Mini Vinnies is a St Vincent de Paul society for children aged 7 to 11. This year we propose to have a food bank collection and to forge better links with the parish's SVDP society and work together with them.

School-Home-Parish link

We hope to be a link between school, home and parish through a few activities. During the summer, we worked with the parish to host the Bishop John Keenan Book launch. We publicised the book launch at the church and organised a few of our pupils to be part of a team that asked Bishop John questions and then led the rosary on the day.

Coming up we will participate in Catholic Education Week with a parent reflection (Thursday 30th Nov, 7pm, Church Hall) Theme :Pilgrims of Faith and journeying in Faith, Hope and Love.

Communications

Rosie advised that the Communications team were proposing setting up a closed FaceBook page which would be used to post notices and reminders for school events. In order to access the page, parents would need to submit a few personal details to confirm their eligibility to view the contents. This raised concerns around GDPR. Some suggestions to mitigate this included wiping the membership at the end of June and having parents re-request access at the start of the new term.

Rosie confirmed that the FaceBook page would be a notice board for general school information and would not include any individual child's picture or details. The page would not allow general comments or posts but only those with admin access could post on the page.

It was noted that other schools use similar FaceBook pages to disseminate information and would have considered the concerns raised. Jonny will ask on the East Renfrewshire Chair's WhatsApp group and make enquiries with Connect as to how these pages work in practice.

AOCB

Jonny noted that there had been some recent incidents of vandalism on the school grounds and proposed that we raise a petition requisition more protection for the school, including more patrols by local police and enhanced CCTV coverage of the grounds.

The next meeting will be Monday 13th November 2023 via MS Teams