

Minutes of Parent Council AGM 20th January 2026, St Joseph's Primary School

Present

School representatives: Mrs Martin, Mrs Addison, Mrs Leddy, Mrs Wynne

Parent Representatives: Mark Lilley, Samantha MacConnell, Annie Crowley, Amy Dickson, Louise McKenna, Hilary Young, Mohammed Zabir, Angela Macklin, Nicola Hill

Apologies:

Karen Jordan, Suzanne Kavanagh, Aime Scullion

Approval of last year's AGM Minutes proposed by Amy Dickson and seconded by Mark Lilley

Chair

Chair post is still vacant, and no-one has put themselves forward to date to take on the position. Amy Dickson and Karen Jordan are willing to hold the position until the end of this academic year and then review whether there are other applicants for the role, if necessary.

Mrs Martin advising that the PC does not require to have a Chair at present as long as there are parents who are content to keep it going and holding the meetings with the other office bearers in place. Therefore, agreeing that the position can remain vacant at present.

If anyone is interested in the role, please contact the parent council for further information as to what the role entails. The role of Vice Chair is also still currently vacant.

Head teacher's update

Conor McCrae had been working as a Pupil Support Assistant. Unfortunately, he had had to leave his post as it doesn't coincide with his university timetable. He will be greatly missed by both pupils and staff. It means there is a vacancy of 10.5 hours for a PSA until backfill for Conor's previous role. It has been advertised and hoping to fill the position soon.

We are going for Gold Rights Respecting School Awards. Achieved Silver last year. Accreditation meeting on 30th April. Don't know if asking for parents input but some parents may be contacted to assist with the Accreditation.

Primary 1 enrolment – lower than last year. Also have 9 deferrals. 9 is quite a significant number. We knew that over the decade the school role would fall. That's the demographic of the area and decline was expected. Took in 7 placing requests last year from ERC and another 12 from other Local Authority schools. Applications closed yesterday for primary 1. Applications can still be made but they will take longer.

54 going on to S1 and 60 coming into Primary 7. The drop in numbers has implication on staffing going forward.

Attendance letters have been sent out to those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90%. Still a lot of children going away for long periods of time during school time, and also numerous long weekends away. Having to highlight academic progress is being effected due to missing school time.

Different from children who has long term health conditions. Talking about voluntarily taking children out of school during school time.

Standardised testing starts Monday for primary 3, 5 and 7. Sometimes can't get children to sit in front of paper. Management go in to try and make process as friendly as possible. That's coming over the next 2.5 weeks.

Primary 7 have had 3 cluster visits to St. Ninians. Also going to Dalguise in Perthshire. Lockerbie was more expensive and staff said Dalguise better organised. Seeing a difference in terms of value for money with Dalguise being the better option.

This term, social studies is the focus. Looking at other countries and their histories. Primary 1 all things Scottish. Anyone who plays the bagpipes to come in and play for them.

Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, Primary 4 will not be going swimming. Used to be Primary 6 which went which was less of an issue. It was then moved to Primary 4 and that has made the supervision more difficult. Cost is £1500 to send 2 Primary 4 classes which came from the school budget. Scottish Government said not allowed to charge parents for it. Only got £487 from Government to cover any additional costs for curriculum which all went to swimming. In addition, over the course of the 6 week swimming period, children were missing out on 2.5 hours per week to go swimming which was having an effect on the academics.

The recent Scottish Government budget announcement suggested that there would be a budget allocation for swimming for primary 5 but that is not due to be effective until August 2027 and will need to see how much is actually allocated to consider whether able to do.

Second term newsletter come out. Helps parents prepare with the dates ahead.

PVGs

With regards to the issue around PVGs on activities, today the school had to send 2 PSAs to Offgrid. Had quite a few parents who have opted to pay for PVG. Will persevere with Offgrid as the children enjoy it so much but becoming increasingly difficult to stage as need parents with PVGs to attend to help. Trying to look at work arounds such as parents assisting by walking the children up and down to Offgrid without having to be in Offgrid itself.

Mrs Leddy involved in primary 1, 2 and 3 for Stem and used to have parents in to help with that but unless the parents have PVG can't do that.

Amy D advising that M Lilley has been spending a considerable amount of time looking at the PVG guidance and set up to see if this is something that could be run through the PC. The conclusion is that the legal obligations are too onerous for any of the office bearers to take on and therefore best to apply for them for parents through the school and then the PC can reimburse the school for the cost of those. If someone already has a PVG for something else, then adding on the school.

A Macklin suggesting that a pole be sent to parents via WhatsApp to see who would be willing to help at school events/activities and are willing to be put forward for a PVG. Suggestion that could fundraise specifically to obtain the PVGs. Agreement that a poll of the parents in the first instance to assess interest would be helpful and then can have further discussions about how best to fund. PC currently has sufficient funds to be able to assist with that.

CCTV/Digital Update/Mobile Phones

We have new CCTV cameras fitted off the back on what happened last year. We have 29 new cameras and one at main reception desk and they feed right through to an office at Spiersbridge and have to have written permission to look at any of the tapes. However, cameras are great and cover all of playground.

Update re: Authority – mobile phones. Discussed at HT meeting in December. They sent out a survey on usage. They had an ok return. Majority were primary parents who didn't have a phone. Variation in thought process for secondary school. No general consensus. Secondary teachers don't feel significant problems in ER. Children are very compliant children at St. Josephs'. Proposals coming from ERC to put to HTs

- 1) To empower schools to make own decisions based on own school community which is difficult and open to challenge by parents
- 2) Other one was a ban in primary school and restriction in secondary schools
- 3) Enforcing total ban during school hours with exception of medical needs

The Education department is to send out the policy. It won't affect St. Joseph's as the policy has been in force for some time which is phone is turned off and given to teacher who keeps it until end of day when it's returned to them. Several smart watches been taken off children as disabled smart functions but that doesn't stop parents being able to enable them again to phone their child when they wish to do so. Don't think parents would do that but have to be consistent so have to say no to all of it. In past had issues with children taking photos and putting on WhatsApp and then had to deal with fallout from that. If we can mitigate against that, then we will. More information on School Handbook and in newsletters. The school's policy is regularly in the communication from the school.

General update

Curriculum improvement frameworks- sitting on 2 of groups of Education Scotland. Nothing really come out yet that's significant. Ready to implement August 2028. New Curriculum framework will come out. More info to follow.

Looking at new reading scheme. Story Worlds which is currently in use by primaries 1-3 need an update in terms of equality and representative of diverse groups. Looking at new reading scheme and 2 under consideration at present. Request made to the PC to potentially funds as will likely cost in the region of £3000-4000. Had Story World for 15 years and the change will be a significant investment for the future of the school. PC will be kept updated in terms of what is decided and how much the final costings will be so discussions can then be had as to whether can use funds to this.

Mrs Leddy – going forward looking at doing international culture evening 27th May in St. Ninians. All cluster schools. Basis is going to be held in St. Ninians' as big space and parents from more schools likely to attend. Event going to be fashion show with cultural dress and music (bagpipes, Irish dancing etc.) stalls and sport taster sessions. Bollywood dancing, cricket. Google form to go out to parents and looking for as a diverse range of cultures to take part. Will likely include food stalls from different cultures and each of the schools involved will ask their respective PCs to ring fence some money to assist towards making food for the event.

Also going to create a recipe book and take some from each school and hoping to make a bit of money from that. Many different groups have already expressed an interest in taking part.

Wynne- Primary 5 etc. are learning mandarin so looking to show case some of the work that our pupils will have done.

Once schools have decided on budget, PC will be made aware to consider assistance with funding.

Mrs. Addison – looking at Chromebooks and had a few breakages and they don't last as long anymore. Down about 3-5 since start of school year. Couldn't buy new Chromebooks this year out of the Digital budget as that budget had to be used towards updating other technology within the school which was more of a priority. Request for PC assistance with funding Chromebooks.

Diocesan Liason's Update

Enquiries to be made as to who the new representative is.

Social secretary update – read by Amy Dickson obo Suzanne Kavannah

SK has had to formally step down from her role as Social Secretary. Thanks to her from the PC and all of the parents and teachers for all of her hard work that she had put in over a number of years with arranging the numerous events.

Social committee has assisted the school with Winter Wonderland by providing workshops and selection boxes for the children.

Currently no fundraising events arranged for February but something simple like a sponsored bounce could be considered.

Other commitments for the Social Committee is the P7 leavers disco and assistance at wild week, if required by the school. Do still need to raise some funds so can keep all the events going every year?

22nd June will be this year's primary 7 school disco and arrangements to be made to book the hall and DJ.

Laudato Si update – read by Samantha McConnell obo Karen Jordan

Eco uniform hub

- Initiative has continued to grow with requests for uniform being processed through emails or school office
- The parent nights have been well received, and we shifted a huge amount of stock. Feedback has been it allows parents to pick uniforms at their convenience through the evening
- Sunday Family mass and uniform events - £225 made and £80 donated to church leaving PC with £145.
- Parents evening uniform event - £123.

Parents Reflection evening.

- We ran this evening on 29th Nov "Being Pilgrims of Hope" in the Jubilee year with St Clare's parent council that provided all the hall decor.
- Representatives from every school Present and Fr Dan did the main input.
- Great participation from parents in our school out with the Laudato Si group

Grounds clean up

- grounds clean up and spray painting school values of Hope, Compassion, Justice and love on the white boards on the school Grounds

Upcoming events (dates need confirmed from the school)

- 8th March : Eco uniform Hub after family mass
- 27th March - Ground clean up
- Parents night uniforms- Wednesday 6th May
- P1 uniforms – welcome induction. Can email that over to us. It will be in May usually at the end. Thursday 28th May.
- Communion Brunch 10th May after 12 o'clock Mass.

Primary 7 leaver hoodies all sent out on time and without issue which mean that they can be worn for the transitional visits.

PVG

- Need a few more PVGs to help with ground clean-up day activities and Minnie Vinnies (Rebecca H, Clare S, Tanya M)

Hall booking information

- David Melvin stepped down from hall booking duties

New hall committee with independent email address hall@stjosephclarkston.com for any future bookings.

Treasurer's Update- Nicola Hill

Since the last meeting on 24th September, we have spent £1,352 with Income of £1,950, mainly from the Halloween Discos.

The Bank of Scotland have updated their accounts, and we are now charged £4.67 per month for the Community Account.

Our current balance is £7,904.01, which includes the funds previously ringfenced for new playground equipment.

General discussion regarding prioritising how best to spend the money in the PC account particularly in light of the particular requests made on behalf of the school in relation to the new reading materials, Chromebooks and assistance for Cultural evening. Money had previously been ring fenced to assist school with paying for repairs to playground equipment as that is not met by the Authority. Playground equipment is not a capital spend. It's a want of the school.

Further discussions to be had by Office Bearers in relation to this and possibly ring fencing a set sum every year for repairs to playground equipment (e.g. £1000) with the rest of the money to be sent on other requirements as requested by the school.

AOCB

All Agenda item AOCB dealt with earlier in the meeting.

Next PC meeting TBC.