



Thornliebank Primary School & ELCC Parent Council
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Gaelic Medium Primary Education Presentation, AGM, and Parent Council Meeting

Held on 7th September 2022 at 7.00pm via Zoom

Present: Gayle McDonald (Acting Head Teacher), Andrea Shaarani (Chair), Elaine Fleming (Treasurer), Suzanne Murray (Secretary), Sara Dow, Lianne Fyfe, Michael O'Malley, Kirsty Vadon, Lee Vickers, Nageen Khan, Joanne Kelly, Kirsty McLaren, Joe McCaig (ERC Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision)), Mary Hart (ERC Education Dept.)

Apologies: Cllr Mary Montague, Cllr Colm Merrick, Rev. Mike Gargrave, Duane Roft, Suzanne Benson, Jackie Borthwick, Sarah Longfield (Vice-Chair), Janey Lennon

Gaelic Medium Primary Education Presentation

Joe McCaig (JMcC) presented his input on the proposal for GMPE at TPS, which was minuted by Mary Hart (MH) from ERC Education Dept. JMcC will forward the presentation to the PC.

The following points were made by PC members:

ERC have calculated that TPS has capacity to operate as a two-stream school with max capacity 420. Presently operating as a single-stream school with max capacity 210; ERC data shows that capacity falls between 40 and 46% in recent years (currently 45%, based on two-stream max). AS queried how ERC's planning data was calculated: JMcC said these are historical calculations based on "learning and teaching opportunities [i.e. spaces]" based on a maximum class size of 30 pupils. AS pointed out that TPS has not operated as two-stream school for some time and the additional spaces now have other uses, which are valuable assets to the school. JMcC said he appreciated that rooms change in use over time. He stated that two classrooms would be given over to GMPE and in the next school year they are only likely to require one space initially due to low numbers.

JMcC also spoke about capacity at Woodfarm but stated that there are no plans to extend GMPE to GME. He also mentioned that a significant number of Woodfarm pupils are placing requests from Glasgow, but then stated that the children who attend GMPE at TPS would attend their own catchment high school based on place of residence.

JMcC acknowledged a shortage of Gaelic-speaking teaching staff which is a national issue due to demand for GME.

JMcC mentioned that TPS was chosen as the proposed site due to various considerations including centrality within the authority. Elaine Fleming (EF) noted that TPS is not located centrally within the authority, and is in fact on the border with Glasgow, which contributes to difficulties in addressing

Acting Head Teacher: Gayle McDonald
Chair: Andrea Shaarani

traffic problems. EF wanted to know what measures ERC would take to address the impact of additional traffic arising from the introduction of GMPE. JMcC stated that ERC are “currently undertaking approaches to deal with that” and spoke about ERC’s agenda for Net Carbon Zero and reducing school traffic across the authority. He said this is a problem across the board and mentioned the Giffnock PS residents-only street pilot (although EF and AS noted that TPS has the additional complication that Bangorshill Street is not within ERC and that Glasgow City Council have responded to say there have not been enough reported incidents to implement traffic calming measures). EF mentioned that this is a long-standing problem that the PC have been trying to address and that Cllr Colm Merrick has been looking into, but nothing comes of it: we were repeatedly promised Police patrols but this has never transpired. JMcC said ERC could look at staggered start and finish times to reduce impact of traffic and he would anticipate that families living within 2-mile radius of the school would walk.

EF asked why the public consultation is not taking place at TPS. JMcC said they had tried to find a central location within the authority to promote parental engagement authority-wide, and St Cadoc’s was identified as being the most appropriate venue.

EF stated that the PC want to preserve the identity of TPS: what assurances can ERC give that the identity of TPS will not be lost to GMPE who represent a smaller proportion of pupils? EF highlighted that there needs to be consideration given to pupil voice and to the identity of mainstream TPS pupils. JMcC stated that ERC would focus on integration whilst maintaining discrete provision of Gaelic and English education. He mentioned the use of shared spaces e.g. lunch and gym halls. Gayle McDonald (GMCD) mentioned a visit to Meadowburn Primary in Bishopbriggs who have had GMPE for about 25-30 years. She noted that it appeared to work well; GMPE pupils identified as Meadowburn Primary pupils albeit using the Gaelic translation of the school’s name.

AS asked about funding streams. JMcC said there were two main funding sources from GMPE however they are “not quite there yet” in terms of what this will look like in practice. JMcC hoped that funding would benefit both parts of the school. AS asked if there could be a parental consultation about how funds can be used to benefit the school; JMcC said ERC can look at this.

Kirsty Vadon (KV) asked if ERC predict that TPS will eventually become a purely Gaelic school. JMcC said that at present ERC had not received a huge number of responses intimating interest in GMPE but they realise that demand may increase once GMPE is established. At present they are planning for two composite classes: P1-3 and P4-7, with maximum class sizes of 25.

JMcC and MH left the meeting after the presentation.

AGM

<p>1. Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Andrea Shaarani (AS) welcomed all to the meeting, including our new members: Nageen Khan (NK), Lianne Fyfe (LF), and Michael O’Malley (MO). There were a couple of others who contacted the PC to enquire about joining but who were not in attendance tonight.</p>
<p>2. Minute of Previous AGM</p> <p>Previous minute was distributed ahead of the AGM and no issues noted.</p>
<p>3. Appointment of Office Bearers</p> <p><u>Chair</u>: Andrea Shaarani proposed by Suzanne Murray and seconded by Elaine Fleming.</p>

Vice-Chair: Sarah Longfield stood down as Vice-Chair. Nageen Khan proposed by Andrea Shaarani and seconded by Elaine Fleming.

Secretary: Suzanne Murray proposed by Andrea Shaarani and seconded by Elaine Fleming.

Treasurer: Elaine Fleming gave notice to stand down as Treasurer but will stay in post until the next PC meeting. Kirsty McLaren (KMCL) proposed by Andrea Shaarani and seconded by Elaine Fleming. KMCL will take on the role of Treasurer but has requested assistance.

4. Chairperson's Report

AS welcomed all new members and passed on thanks from Mrs Miller for her baby gifts, and from Fiona Potts for assistance with her dissertation survey.

AS gave an overview of the activities of the PC in the last year:

- The PC raised the issue of staffing and management of behavioural issues in several year groups. The PC submitted a Freedom of Information Request in relation to staffing levels, additional support needs, and levels of deprivation across ERC. This led to a meeting with ERC Director of Education (Mark Ratter) and other senior management staff. AS and Sarah Longfield (SL) relayed the PC's concerns regarding staffing inequalities and the seriousness of the behavioural difficulties within some classes. Staffing was increased following this meeting, with additional teaching and PSA hours allocated via both ERC and school budgets.
- The PC had ongoing conversations with local councillors regarding road safety, which continues to be a concern.
- The PC ran a parental consultation regarding the need for an After School Service operating from the school. There was not sufficient demand to take this further.
- AS attended ERC recruitment training and suggested that other PC members may wish to attend this year.
- The PC undertook several fundraising activities including the My Child's Art project, winter raffle, spring disco, summer fun day, Thornliebank Together community council funding bid for funds for a nursery boot room/green space in the playground, and secured commission on all sales of school uniform made through Schoolwear Made Easy.

AS noted that going forward, the PC will be supporting the school with the implementation of the Thornliebank Together projects, improving parental engagement, continuing to improve road safety, work with the school to make best use of funds achieved through fundraising, and Lee Vickers (LV) will look at developing an improved PC information leaflet.

5. Treasurer's Report

EF informed that the bank statement is printed on the 1st of the month and September's has not arrived by post.

Current balance in PC account = £3,790.56

£2,000 expected from Thornliebank Together re: nursery boot room project. No monies received as of 1st August 2022. EF to advise if on the September bank statement. GMCD will also check (school also due to receive Thornliebank Together funds).

Summary of PC Expenditure and Fundraising for YR 2021-2022:

Expenditure

Mrs Miller gifts	-£43.95
Family Fun Day	-£322.12
Spring Disco	-£299.05
P7 Hoodies	-£525.45
Lockerbie Manor Bus*	-£670.00
Christmas Crackers	-£40.00
Halloween Party Boxes	-£147.19
Bank Charges	-£86.58
TOTAL	-£2,134.34

** receipt/invoice still required from the school; cheque was issued based on AS email instruction 19th February 2022. AS will check with school office.*

Fundraising

Halloween Party Boxes	-£121.69
My Child's Art	£143.49
Winter Raffle	£1,965.00
Howdens Donation	£250.00
Spring Disco	£299.20
Family Fun Day	£1,484.30
TOTAL	£4,020.30

EF recommended that £1,000.00 is set aside each year for P7 Hoodies, miscellaneous expenditure, or bus funds. From current balance we currently have £2,790 available to the school.

EF highlighted issues with the bank account due to the closure of the Thornliebank branch of the TSB. The nearest TSB branch is now Shawlands which has a limited counter service making it difficult to access. The Post Office have a limit on deposits made in small change, which is normally how cash is received at our fundraising events. EF suggested changing the banking provider this year; she has already experienced some issues in finding suitable community bank accounts; she will try to explore this further before handing over responsibilities to the new Treasurer.

6. Head Teacher's Report

I would like to thank everyone here for their ongoing support to the school, and to introduce myself formally to those I haven't had the pleasure of meeting yet. I'm Gayle McDonald, Acting Head Teacher this session while Jenni Miller is off on maternity leave. I was Depute Head at Carolside Primary for the last 5 years, and I previously worked in Thornliebank as Principal Teacher. I am delighted to be welcomed back into this wonderful, diverse community and I look forward to working with you all as part of the parent council, and as part of the wider school. We have had a great start to the year- the pupils are settling well into their classes and building relationships with their new teachers.

Staffing

Some good news to begin with- congratulations to Jenni, who welcomed a healthy baby girl at the beginning of term. Both mum and baby are doing well. This session we also welcome Gemma Parker (Modern Apprentice based in the nursery), Lindsay Ferguson who joins us as a Newly Qualified Teacher, and Audrey Grubb who joins us from Calderwood Lodge in a Support for Learning role. We are well staffed at the moment, with 6 PSAs, and in addition to the class teachers we have a Support for Learning teacher, a nurture teacher and a teacher who covers non class contact time.

School Improvement

I have shared the School Improvement Plan for this session on the school website, along with the Standards and Quality report from last session.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/Thornliebank/information/school-improvement/>

We have 3 priorities identified, which are re-engaging parents more fully within the school, raising attainment in literacy and numeracy, and closing the poverty-related attainment gap using our Pupil Equity Funding. I'd like to talk a little about each one.

Re-engaging parents - Regulations during the pandemic, when we weren't able to have parents into the school, naturally had an impact on our ability to build relationships and involve parents as fully in all aspects of their child's school experience. Relationships with families are so important, as working as a team with parents plays such an important part in a child achieving their full potential. We have prioritised re-engaging parents as a result, and we are looking forward to having you all in to school more often this session. We have established a working party, led by Janine McGarvey, who have already started making a 'Family Room' in the annexe building where we plan to hold coffee and chat, parent workshops and information sessions with some of our partners. We will have lots of opportunities planned for parents to visit- open afternoons, class assemblies, and we would love to have parent volunteers in to help. I had an exciting meeting today with Rukhsana Ali, who is on secondment as Education Development Officer for EAL and Diversity. We discussed establishing a group of Diversity Champions, to look for opportunities to celebrate our diverse community and fully engage and involve everyone from all cultures and backgrounds. We would love the parent council to assist with all this work, by encouraging people to come in, volunteer, and by letting us know what you would find helpful from the Family Room.

Raising attainment - raising the attainment of our pupils continues to be a priority for us. Attainment figures are lower than we would like them to be, and we continue to see an impact following the pandemic. Assessment data has indicated a particular need for a focus on developing writing within the school. We have introduced a new writing scheme called Talk for Writing, and many of the staff collegiate sessions have been dedicated to this, working together to look at writing samples and planning next steps. For numeracy, we have set up a working party led by Jennifer Wilson to further develop Number Talks- a model for delivering numeracy and maths lessons which has been successful across East Renfrewshire. I will continue to provide updates on attainment and how it is progressing throughout the year.

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) - every year, schools are given funding to use to close the poverty-related attainment gap. This year we received £29,400 in PEF, which has been used to fund a Child Development Officer (CDO) working in P1, 3 days a week, to create an Acting Principal Teacher post, and to fund some additional Pupil Support Assistant (PSA) hours to support targeted pupils. Schools must ensure that the money is used specifically to ensure equity for pupils who meet criteria set out in the PEF guidance. This year, the Scottish Attainment Challenge has widened its criteria and definitions around 'poverty' risk factors, to include lone parent families, minority ethnic families, families with a disabled adult or child, young parents, families with children under one and larger families (3+ children). We as a school must monitor the impact of the interventions we have put in place and meet with the local authority several times a year to report back.

Gaelic Medium Provision Consultation

Karen Shepherd has been tasked to carry out the consultation with the pupils over the next few weeks, and she will be recruiting the House Captains to help her carry out this piece of work. I will continue to provide updates throughout the year, as the consultation closes and we are made aware of the outcomes.

Improving our Outdoor Areas

Last year, we were awarded £1,000 from Tesco, and as a Parent Council you made a successful Participatory Budgeting bid and we were awarded £2,000 for a nursery boot room and £2,000 for a school sensory garden. Thank you! We have set up a working party this year led by Mandy MacAskill to improve our outdoor areas. We would love your help in this- anyone who is interested in volunteering their time or skills to help improve our outdoor learning environments would be most welcome. This would be a fantastic way to get more parents and families involved. We have a meeting with Ruth Adams on Friday to discuss possible placements for the boot room at the nursery building.

7. Close of AGM

Parent Council Meeting

Agenda Item	Actions
1. Previous minutes Previous minutes distributed in advance of the meeting. No issues raised.	
2. Gaelic medium consultation (Joe McCaig) – See page 1-2	
3. Road safety – issues and update with previous campaign AS advised that Jennifer Wilson was looking to set up a competition and campaign with JRSOs; Suzanne Benson's husband had offered to supply a large banner which the PC had agreed would be printed with the artwork from the winners of the JRSO competition. GMcD wasn't aware of this and will speak with Jennifer Wilson. AS and other PC members noted ongoing concerns about the volume of traffic, cars mounting the kerb, and dangerous driving on Bangorshill Street. Seems to be more cars mounting the pavement this term. No Police presence as promised. Cllr Merrick is attending a full council meeting tonight therefore not available for an update – he was planning to speak with the new Police Area Commander and hoped to progress a similar pilot scheme as Giffnock PS.	GMcD will speak to Jennifer Wilson regarding JRSO campaign/competition.
4. Use of Funds GMcD asked the teaching staff for ideas on how to use PC funds. Consensus was to provide buses for a day trip for each class, and a final whole-school day trip to Dumfries House at the end of the year. AS asked PC members to vote on this decision; members agreed to use PC funds for buses. Agreement from PC members AS, SM, EF, KMcL, that parents may be more willing to fundraise for specific purposes (e.g. to fund buses). AS pointed out the need to be mindful of fundraising fatigue, particularly in the current economic climate, as the school have already sent out sponsor forms for a Rainbow Run this month.	

<p>GMcD advised that the school are applying for various grants so may not require assistance with the Lockerbie Manor coaches this year.</p> <p>Janey Lennon is working on the hoodies order; AS will contact GMcD to progress this.</p>	
<p>5. Fundraising and Events</p> <p>AS suggested that we have an additional meeting to discuss fundraising/ events due to the time already taken up this evening, primarily by the GMPE input.</p> <p>Discussion around Halloween Disco and suggestions for improving participation with children from BME families and various religious groups. KV suggested that we try to consult with those families about participation and engagement; GMcD confirmed that Rukhsana can assist with this.</p> <p>Halloween Disco set for Thursday 27th October. AS advised that Janey Lennon has historically taken the lead on organising discos. Jackie Borthwick will speak to Gavin (DJ).</p>	<p>GMcD to speak with Rukhsana re: family engagement around events.</p>
<p>6. Child Smile Programme</p> <p>SM asked about the Child Smile Programme. GMcD confirmed that two teachers (Ms Vannet and Ms Hughes) have completed their training and will be reintroducing Child Smile in the next couple of weeks.</p>	
<p>7. EAL Family Support Worker</p> <p>SM asked about the EAL Family Support Worker, who has been absent for a lengthy period. GMcD advised that she is still off work but is due to return soon.</p>	
<p>8. Homework</p> <p>LV raised that P3 homework instructions were unclear. Joanne Kelly (JK) confirmed the same issue for P4 and said that teaching and learning methods have changed since parents were at school and parents don't know what current methods are. NK advised that in her son's previous school, teaching staff shared information about learning methods and models at the start of term.</p> <p>Parent reps in the upper school noted that some parents were struggling with online homework and preferred their children to have some screen-free homework time. KMcL expressed concern that children's writing is falling behind expected standards. GMcD will take this back to the teaching staff; she said that schools are being encouraged to make use of digital technology but appreciates the difficulties this can bring. She reiterated the need for a balance between online and paper learning. She suggested using the Family Room for sharing information about learning methods.</p>	

<p>9. Meeting Frequency/Communication/WhatsApp Group</p> <p>AS asked for opinions on the frequency of PC meetings and methods of communication. She stated that she is aware that the volume of messages on the PC WhatsApp group can be overwhelming but it minimises the need for meetings and other forms of communication.</p> <p>Agreement from PC members to continue current arrangements i.e. one meeting per term, with additional ad hoc meetings as required for fundraising or events, and communication via WhatsApp or email for other matters.</p> <p>AS asked about class WhatsApp groups, as they are useful for sharing info. Most year groups seem to have one; MO will check if there is one for P1. AS advised that a joining link for the group can be emailed, and GMcD can assist with distributing this to P1 parents/carers if required.</p>	<p>MO will check if there is a P1 group and advise AS.</p>
<p>10. Lunch Time/After School Clubs</p> <p>SM asked if After School Clubs will restart this term. GMcD advised that teachers are already running lunch clubs. PC members were not aware of these: AS asked for this info to be communicated in next newsletter which GMcD said she would do.</p> <p>GMcD advised that Craig Gordon, Active Schools Coordinator, is now a full-time post and will be organising After School Clubs.</p> <p>AS pointed out that there are not many clubs for the lower school children; GMcD said that she would consider this and speak with Craig Gordon about clubs for younger children.</p>	

Next meeting TBA.

Addendum: 14/09/2022

Following the meeting, Joanne Kelly volunteered to assist Kirsty McLaren with Treasurer duties.