**Lawhead Parent Council AGM and meeting**

**September 25, 2023**

Present in person: Donna Bain, Headteacher, Jennifer Simpson, Deputy Headteacher, Miss Forsyth, Class Teacher, Robin Lawson, Fife Councillor, Rachel Deegan, Chair/Parent, Melanie Dobie, Treasurer/Parent, Theresa Ring, Social Secretary/Parent, Melati Cox, Secretary/Parent, Louise Donaldson-Nixon, Parent, Sienna Sproson, Parent, Amy Niven, Parent, Liz Peacock, Parent, Paolo Annibale, Parent.

Present on Zoom: Sarah Kay, Parent.

Rachel chairing. Thanks and apologies, approval of minutes from last meeting.

Treasurer report, Melanie Dobie

Last years spending: Sport equipment, outdoor learning, P7 VIP area at summer disco

Money from last year made from discos, Christmas Fair, AMOW

For this year’s academic session, planning to make money on same and spend money based on findings from parent survey

Thanks to Stuart Bell for approving the accounts and providing oversight

Mrs Bain, HT report (see HT report for details)

Staffing update

29/08 visit from Care Inspectorate to school

Final report will be published shortly

Positive experience and school pleased with feedback from CI

School Improvement Plan – will be published to parents at the end of month

Good progress on all aspects of school improvement last year

Now in 3rd year of a 3 year cycle. Continuing to work on school improvement goals

Pupil equity funding allocation same as previous session: £14,700, being used to fund pupil support assistants who are able to target work with pupils who need it most. Mrs Bain feels this is a beneficial approach for the school. School will be able to monitor the progress of these children by establishing baselines for them for closer monitoring over the school session.

There is a need to focus on current p6 cohort as they are not attaining as desired. These plans are already in place.

Further attainment information included in published HT report which is available to all parents.

The school exceeded stretch targets in literacy and numeracy from previous school session.

100% attainment for armed forces children, bucking national trend

English as an additional language children are also achieving national benchmarks

Attendance was 94.79% over last session. Much higher than other schools coming out of the pandemic.

Mrs Bain stressing the importance of embedding good attendance habits early, even starting from nursery.

Headteacher’s suggestion: for next meeting, work together with PC to update the anti bullying policy

Also would like to work on equality policy

Pupil leadership groups building from last year, details of 9 groups in HT report

Youth music initiative 4/5 and 5/6 – African Drumming fortnightly. The children who have received these visits are enjoying them very much.

Bikeability after the October Holidays – will be offering level 2 to all current 7s, and level 1 to all p5s and 6s who want to do it. All 5 and 6 pupils from the last session who wanted to take part passed their level 1 Bikeability level.

Outdoor learning continuing

Phasing out School Parents App – will be focusing on parents portal – 98% of parents currently use this and there is a free app available which parents can download

Assemblies – every week, p1-3 with Elmo and Mrs Simpson, p4-7 with Mrs Bain.

Assemblies are planned carefully and they link in with the overall wellbeing programme (SHANARRI). They also mark major holidays from all world religions and special event days and weeks. Assemblies also link into specific parts of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. Mrs Bain has kindly provided more information in the HT report for parents to learn more about what takes place at assemblies.

School session calendar for full year will be on parents portal app. Updates will be found here.

There are currently extra curricular groups running every single day, either during lunch or after school to run activities to enhance children’s experiences at school. Staff and parents give up their time voluntarily to enhance the experiences of all our children at the school.

Children are being tracked to ensure equity of access for children so that children will have equal access to participate in these extracurricular activities through the academic year.

Dylan Suttie, working with Active Schools, is currently running a block of activity sessions using sport to enhance wellbeing and resilience. Other children will have an opportunity to join these sessions later in the year.

Rachel Deegan: responses so far to parent survey for how to spend money. Top choices so far have been:

1. School trips and excursions
2. Reading books
3. Outdoor learning

Request for clarification on communication of injuries to parents?

Mrs Bain has provided the following information:

Head bumps always receive a phone call

Playground bumps and scrapes with a plaster, note in bag, provided by the person who applies the plaster, usually a member of staff supervising playground time.

P1-4 will always get a note home, p5-7 will generally not.

All incidents are recorded in the school first aid book.

Request from parents: Regarding Active schools and activities – can we work as a parent body to support more Lawhead teams to participate in local activities?

Active schools coordinator Madison Garland very good at sharing calendar of events, but other organisations don’t publish calendars in advance so school doesn’t have advance notice.

Request from the school: Can a parent volunteer take on the role of collating a sport calendar for local events? This would be a huge assistance to the school and would support increased local participation and representation from school teams.

Note from Mrs Bain: After school activities are much easier to facilitate than activities taking place during the school day because the school won’t need to provide classroom cover if members of staff are absent from school.

School can provide volunteer application form for PVG to take children to events. Then the school can have a list of parents able and willing to volunteer. PVG process is simple and can last indefinitely. Council pays PVG costs. Mrs Bain can put this application form on website for any parents who would like to volunteer for the school in this way. Has kindly provided several paper copies of this application form to parents present at this meeting.

The school now have 4 members of staff who can drive the minibus (16 children)

The school would benefit from a sport liaison person from the council to coordinate with Madison Garland, the parents volunteer directory and other local schools to help with developing a annual calendar for local events and to help coordinate PVG volunteers for transportation and chaperoning. Melanie Dobie has volunteered to take on this role and her help is gratefully accepted.

Mrs Bain can include new topics for classes for upcoming term on Friday Newsletters

Question from PC re: Raffle prizes at assemblies – are there more sustainable options for children? Can PC fund options that are not plastic or more sustainable? Mrs Bain and Mrs Simpson currently privately funding these prizes themselves. When children win a raffle prize they have the option to choose one of these. If PC funded these out of the PC budget could we have other prize options? Mrs Simpson’s Eco/Outdoors Pupil Leadership group can be consulted for sustainable options. Parent Council could then pay for these to further promote sustainability in the school and take a private financial burden off of members of staff.

Clarification of lunchtime rules - p1-3 go in to hall first to eat, then p4-7s, eat first, then play outside afterwards. Always at least 2 members of staff supervising lunches. Not possible to supervise that every single child has eaten sufficient amounts in their lunch. Because of the buffet style of service it’s not possible for all children to sit for a minimum period of time. Children are being served at different times. Children are not required to sit in classes. Lunch is a very sociable time for the children, sitting with mixed ages and mixed friendship groups. Lunch is served over a small window of time and these are very fixed. Also the hall is used for other purposes, like gym for different classes and different times.

Discussion of the possibility of local cluster schools developing a voluntary “No Smartphones before High School” pledge. Melati Cox presented information to school leadership about a town in Ireland who have implemented this across 8 local primary schools, helping to contribute to a local culture delaying smartphone access for very young children.

Useful discussion on advantages to using technology appropriately to enhance learning versus the risks of young children having unfettered access to internet/social media.

School open to further discussion on this. Mrs Bain suggests that PC coordinate with Kirsty Simcock, one of the deputes at Madras, currently working on internet safety and social media - possible to get a local cluster statement of values or intent?

Mrs Bain also clarified school policy on smartphones at school. If children bring smartphones to school they are not allowed to use them during the school day and are kept locked up until being handed back to children at the end of the day.

Plan: Melati Cox will contact Kirsty Simcock on this issue when time allows and continue this conversation with school leadership with a view for the School and Parent Council to produce draft text on a potential No Smartphone Voluntary Pledge for parents to sign.

Question from parents: Crossing on Buchanan Gardens road near school – safety issue for local community. Crossing options? Fife Council has been dismissive of options in the past. Traffic has increased on this road and will continue to do so in light of Madras campus and local building projects. What can the school community do to support a statement addressed to the Council? What speed mitigation measures can be put in place?

Plan: for PC to pursue this and canvas parent opinion with a view to submit a statement to Fife Council requesting assistance in this matter.

Parent Question: Mrs Bain has no further update on school expansion, unfortunately has had no further information from Fife Council.

Parent Question: School photographer – Mrs Bain will ask Mrs Greig to ask photographer about option to return prints to school for parents to pick up without delivery costs. School currently using a local small business rather than a large national company and parents are pleased with quality of photos.

Social event update for this academic session from Theresa Ring: Dates for discos are in calendar. DJ booked, PC to organise. Christmas Fair – Mr Munro will liaise with Theresa Ring on a p7 stall to make money for leavers hoodies/other P7 projects. Mrs Bain will bring this issue to the staff meeting to see if a pupil group or a class will get involved in running something at the Christmas fair.

PC happy to subsidise the hoodies for leavers. Can we move the timeline for distributing these hoodies?

Costume swap for Halloween – school pupil group getting organised on this already.

AMOW template – square or circle? Vote in meeting was inconclusive. Melati to flip a coin at home to choose template this year. No objections offered in the meeting. Result: square template.

**Summary**

1. PC to work with school to help to update the **anti-bullying policy and the equality policy**
2. Use of School Parents App will be phased out and instead will be replaced with on **Parents Portal for communication** with parents
3. Responses so far to parent survey for how to spend money. Top choices so far have been:

* School trips and excursions
* Reading books
* Outdoor learning

1. Clarification on **communication of injuries** to parents

* Head bumps always receive a phone call or group call text
* Playground bumps and scrapes will be communicated with a note in bag, provided by the person who applies the plaster, usually a member of staff supervising playground time.
* P1-4 will always get a note home, p5-7 will generally not as are expected to communicate a scrape themselves
* All incidents are recorded in the school first aid book.

1. Involvement of Lawhead students in more **extra-curricular activities** with support from parents.

* Melanie Dobbie will be sport liaison person on the parent council and will put together a calendar of events for the year (Active Schools and other events)
* **Extra-curricular calendar** will be circulated to enable parents to volunteer to help at events (transport etc) to boost Lawhead participation
* **Parent volunteers:** volunteer application form for PVG must be completed to take children to events. Then the school can have a list of parents able and willing to volunteer. PVG process is simple and can last indefinitely. Council pays PVG costs. Mrs Bain can put this application form on website for any parents who would like to volunteer for the school in this way and has kindly provided several paper copies of this application form to parents present at this meeting.
* Note from Mrs Bain: After school activities are much easier to facilitate than activities taking place during the school day because the school won’t need to provide classroom cover if members of staff are absent from school.
* The school now have 4 members of staff who can drive the minibus (16 children)

1. Mrs Bain will include **new term topics** for classes for upcoming term on Friday Newsletter before each holiday
2. More **sustainable raffle prizes**- Eco/outdoors pupil leadership group to be consulted on more sustainable prizes and PC to look into funding these to take financial burden off Mrs Bain and Mrs Simpson who currently fund these.
3. Clarification of **lunchtime routines** – see minutes for detail of discussion
4. Discussion of the possibility of local cluster schools developing a voluntary **“No Smartphones before High School”** pledge. Melati Cox presented information to school leadership about a town in Ireland who have implemented this across 8 local primary schools, helping to contribute to a local culture delaying smartphone access for very young children. Useful discussion on advantages to using technology appropriately to enhance learning versus the risks of young children having unfettered access to internet/social media. School open to further discussion on this. Mrs Bain suggests that PC coordinate with Kirsty Simcock, one of the deputes at Madras, currently working on internet safety and social media - see minutes for rest of discussion.
5. Question from parents: **Crossing on Buchanan Gardens road near school – safety issue** for local community. Crossing options? Fife Council has been dismissive of options in the past. Traffic has increased on this road and will continue to do so in light of Madras campus and local building projects. What can the school community do to support a statement addressed to the Council? What speed mitigation measures can be put in place? Plan: for PC to pursue this and canvas parent opinion with a view to submit a statement to Fife Council requesting assistance in this matter.
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9. Date of next meeting – 6th November 2023