

West Kilbride Primary School Parent Council

Ordinary Meeting

Monday 4th November 2024

Minutes of Meeting

Online via Zoom

In Attendance

Emma Clark (Chair), Judith Spence (vice chair), Kayleigh Maxwell (treasurer), Gemma Carson (Head Teacher), Jackie Park (Depute Head Teacher), Lauren Grant (Principal Teacher), Anil Chundoo, Karen Harkins, Vicky Ramage, Penny McKnight, Lisa Mitchell, Dyenaba Cowan, Jennifer Smith, Rebekah Tosh, Kate Fox, Louise Meeke, Christopher Ferrie, Catriona Moran, Michelle Duffy, Michelle Murray

Apologies

Carolyn Shelley, Kara Andrews, Hazel Haddow, Susan Rankin, Nicole Adam, Samantha Parker, Kate Matthews, Gillian Burns, Laura Turner, Joe Douglas, Phil Pritchard, Ainsley Simpson, Jennifer da Silva Neto, Sarah Fleming

Welcome, apologies (Emma Clark)

Resignations

Pamela Couper has handed in her resignation to the Parent Council but is still keen to volunteer at events. Thank you to Pamela for her contribution to the Parent Council.

Proposal of new members

Victoria Lawrence was proposed by Emma Clark, seconded by Karen Harkins as a member of the Parent council and to take on the role of secretary. Thank you to Victoria for agreeing to take on this role.

Fundraising update

The Halloween discos made just under £300 profit, with around £300 of tuck left over so will be used at the Christmas Fayre.

Finance report (Kayleigh Maxwell)

The bank balance at the start of the school year was around £7500. £715 was spent for the Halloween disco and £1100 was brought in in takings. As Emma said, there is a lot of tuck remaining which will be sold at the Christmas Fayre.

Last year's accounts are being looked at by Jacqueline Kerr.

P7 Hoodies

Vicki Ramage and Kara Andrews got P7 hoodies sorted in advance of the Arran trip. Thank you to them. A cheaper stockist was found this year and as usual the Parent Council subsidised £10 per pupil.

Head Teachers report

1. Staffing

Our two new Principal Teachers, Mrs Grant and Mrs Bone, have now joined us in post and whilst we have appointed our new DHT, Miss Jennifer Ryrie, we await her start date of Monday 18th November to bring us back to a fully staffed management team. I would like to express my thanks to Mrs Park for going above and beyond in her support to lead the school in this interim period.

We currently have a full-time vacancy advertised for our Education Business Assistant Post within the main office due to Mrs Banister's forthcoming retirement. We will also be advertising for maternity leave support soon to cover Miss Todd's impending leave in January.

2. Care Inspectorate Visit

We were visited in our Early Years Class by two colleagues from the Care Inspectorate for an unannounced inspection over two days on Wednesday 2nd and Thursday 3rd October. This was an opportunity for us to showcase the hard work being put in across our service and we are delighted to share that this was reflected in our final report, which is due to be published this week and will be shared with parents and carers in due course. Our EYC was graded as '5- very good' across three indicators: 1.1 Nurturing Care and Support, 1.3 Play and Learning, 4.3 Staff Deployment and as a '4-good' across two indicators: 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities and 3.1 Quality Assurance and improvement are well led. We are very grateful to our families who contributed to this experience, as part of our focus groups or by responding to our reporting questionnaire. Look forward to this being published on the Care Inspectorate website.

3. Building Maintenance

Thank you very much to all of our parents and families who volunteered time to support our ongoing maintenance work. We identified the four most impacted classrooms, alongside the Visiting Services Room and areas of our main corridor and work began on Thursday to improve these spaces by removing old staples, minor resurfacing to damaged surfaces, priming walls and applying a fresh coat of paint. This took place over the course of Thursday and Friday evening and during the day on Saturday and Sunday. We will work through the remaining classrooms as time and budgets permit.

4. IT Infrastructure

We are keen to boost our IT infrastructure to support enhanced access for our young people. We currently have 30 class laptops, split between classes and so all classes have 2 each. We also have 29 older laptops which are used within the ICT suite to support whole class lessons. Devices within the ICT suite support the delivery of our Technologies curriculum, our ReadingWise intervention programme and our expressive Arts offering, through the use of Sonappa and BandLab. These are likely to be taken off the network soon due to their age. Whilst we are hopeful that these will be replaced, we have yet to confirm this. However, replacement devices would be required to maintain NACs given ratio of one device to every 4 pupils. We have 40 iPads, including new purchases.

So far this session we have purchased 10 iPads from PEF resources, alongside other digital resources including Tonie and Yoto boxes (digital readers) and BeeBots amongst other resources. Ideally, we would like to purchase a further 10 iPads at a cost of £305.34 and another 20 laptops at a cost of £334.20 per device, alongside additional Yoto and Tonie boxes, also extending their usage to our EYC provision. We have allocated a significant portion of our PEF spend towards this for 2024-2025 but it will require further funding and so will be an ongoing funding project.

9 laptops potentially being donated by Hunterston, will not be able to be linked to the network but could be used for typing. Mrs Park will look in to this. Mrs Park to contact Anil Chundoo with outcome of this.

5. Dyslexia Screening

Despite facing challenges in our Dyslexia screening processes, most notably the lack of available GL Screener during the last academic year, we have a robust system in place for identifying and assessing pupils for possible Dyslexia. This is being led by Mrs McCormick (formerly Miss Murray- recently married) and will be overseen by Miss Rylie, our new DHT. However, due to the loss of our 0.6FTE intervention staffing, which equates to 3 teaching days per week, the time allocated towards this has significantly reduced and it is a time-intensive process involving gathering evidence portfolios over a number of weeks and ending in the use of the GL Screener. The maximum time we can now allocate towards this is 3hrs weekly, divided across two blocks of time. However, this is often impacted by staff absence.

We currently have 12 pupils awaiting the assessment process. It is likely that, as we fill gaps in learning through our intervention processes, further pupils with suspected Dyslexic traits will be identified. Nationally, 1 in 10 people are impacted by Dyslexia.

It has been suggested that with improved diagnostic processes, this figure may rise to 1 in 8. Our statistics currently do not align with these ratios and historically there has been a gap in identifying and assessing pupils. We are keen to ensure the process is robustly followed to identify all learners with who experience Dyslexia as a barrier to learning.

That being said, we have a multitude of interventions in place already to support all learners with barriers to Literacy, and so pupils currently awaiting the assessment process are not at a disadvantage. The only additional intervention which may further support learners with Dyslexia is Toe-by-Toe, funded through PEF, which would be in place post-assessment, if required.

Whilst we strive to allocate laptops to learners with Dyslexia to support during Writing lessons, this has proven difficult as the number of learners with Dyslexia have grown whilst our IT infrastructure has remained unchanged. We have one cohort in particular with a high number of pupils with suspected Dyslexia and insufficient class laptops to accommodate this. We have requested that our 12 older staff laptops, which were due to be surrendered, are reconfigured to pupil laptops- these laptops will only have access to Microsoft to support typing but there will be no access to the internet for voice to text support or touch typing programmes on these devices. These were due to be returned to us on Thursday 31st October but haven't yet and will be used by pupils moving forward.

Emma Clark proposed the Parent Council funding £291 to pay for Mrs McCormick to have a full day to work on assessing the identified pupils. A majority vote (11) in favour of this was recorded.

6. Learning Conversations

We appreciate the change to 7 minute timeslots was not without its challenges. Due to union directives and Working Time Agreements we are not able to facilitate 10 minute appointments moving forward. However, we are keen to make adjustments to make the new schedule more workable for both parents and staff. During our next learning conversation block, appointment slots will be managed more stringently to ensure sessions don't overrun, eating into the time from the next appointment. Other schools manage this by having all appointment slots within the Gym Hall to ensure sessions are centrally managed and this is a model we are considering. Parents would be welcome to make an additional appointment with the link depute if further information/discussion is needed.

Due to changes to NAC letting processes, we may also have to change the times of our learning conversations to finish at 6pm across multiple evenings to meet the requirements of the new directive. We pushed back on this this session as arrangements had already been made which met the needs of our working parent demographic. However, NAC processes will likely need to be upheld moving forward.

Parent Council feedback confirmed that it would be good to try appointments in the gym hall and review again after the May appointments.

7. School Library

We have identified our school library as an area requiring further improvement and we are beginning to apply for grant funding to support us in this journey. The library itself is modern and welcoming but some of the text types are outdated. We hope to incorporate a range of more modern texts, a fuller range of text types including magazines, comics and digital texts, texts with increased representation of minority groups and sections with specific Dyslexia and LBGQT+ friendly texts. This work is likely to be formalised next year. However, we are seeking to be proactive. If you are aware of any funding available or can offer time to support with this, please contact the school office. Natalie Bone, PT, will be responsible for overseeing this.

8. After-school Clubs

We are finding it very difficult to find volunteers to support after-school clubs this year and as such we have very few clubs up and running. If you could lend an hour consistently every week for a block of 4-6 weeks and are happy to undergo a PVG check, please get in touch. This does not necessarily require volunteers to have any particular skillset, as we can partner volunteers with a fellow parent skilled in the sport/area. Ideally 2 volunteers per club, therefore it doesn't need to be someone who is skilled in a particular area but as an adult presence/ support this would be good. EC will post this on the Parent Council Facebook page.

9. School Trips

Continuing with our commitment from last academic year, all classes will benefit from school trips this year and we have allocated £2000 of our PEF funding to offset the costs associated with these experiences to ensure they are accessible to all. Any families identified as finding it difficult to fund trips, the school will ensure they do not miss out. Class Teachers have chosen trips to link with pupils' Interdisciplinary Learning work and they are as follows:

P1 Kids Village (Date tbc- Summer term)

P2 Viking Festival

P3 Unconfirmed

P4 Maritime Museum 19/03/2025

P5 Glasgow Science Centre 28/04/2025

P6 Titanic Museum 25/10/2024

P7 Glasgow Science Centre 19/05/2025

EC has applied for 'Great School Trips' bursary, £1-3000.

10. Outdoor learning

The outdoor space is being well used for a variety of learning opportunities including a campfire for P1. Parents are asked to please support by providing their children with outdoor clothing. With Parent Council support, 15 sets of waterproofs have been purchased for P1-3 15 and P4-5. P6-7 are not as keen to wear waterproofs and adult sizes are needed but the school are still looking for a source for these. The school don't have wellies/ other footwear, other than for early years so it would be helpful if parents could send in wellies or old trainers etc. EC will post to the Parent Council Facebook page asking for donations of wellies.

Outdoor Learning (Michelle Duffy)

A small group of volunteers has been supporting P5-7 pupils on Thursday afternoons with planting, digging, weeding. Kay Hall has been taking the lead on this and is also pushing forward looking for funding. There are multiple benefits of gardening including boosting mental health and highlighting sustainability.

The volunteer group have partnered with Nectar Network who are working towards regenerating pollinating flowers. Turf has been lifted at the side of the astroturf and P3 and 4 pupils have been involved in planting bulbs and a wild meadow at the side of the astroturf.

Currently the group runs with very small number of volunteers but more would be welcome. Gardening expertise is not required. The group are loosely following the Royal Horticultural Society's school awards programme which has five levels which each take on a different aspect of gardening and gives pupils a wide experience of various aspects of gardening.

An accessible space is required to achieve the RHS level 1 and for this more benches and bins are needed. Approximately £120 per bench or £75 if purchased from the men's shed. Bins are going to be sourced from Moorpark school. The Parent Council voted to approve funding £200 for benches.

Emma expressed thanks to the group of volunteers who have kept this project going. GC thanked Michelle for her great work towards the RHS submission.

The proposal to fund 2-3 sets of outdoor clothing for staff to support outdoor learning is still ongoing as it is proving difficult to find a supplier for this. This will be revisited at our next meeting in January.

Council Budget Cuts - impact and future planning

North Ayrshire Council has made budget cuts and now evening and weekend lets of school buildings and grounds are no longer approved. Emma and Judith submitted a formal complaint about this decision but the response has been that the decision is made and there is no movement on this. This means we can no longer hire the school grounds at weekends. The Spring/Summer fayre that we had planned can no longer go ahead. This is a popular event that involves community partners and raises around £4000, so it is particularly disappointing that the decision of NAC has not supported us. A decision as to how we move forward with this will be made in January.

Discussion followed about the proposed budget cuts for 2025-26 and how these will impact the school.

CF asked if there was any particular budget cuts that will impact the school? GC hoped that class teacher staffing should be fairly safe but is worried that classroom assistant numbers could be cut and this would have a very negative impact, particularly on the interventions that are currently being supported by the capable and adaptable classroom assistant team. Capacity issue relating to the gym hall was also discussed as it is not clear if the proposed cuts will impact the planned new gym hall.

It would be helpful if as many parents as possible could complete the survey on the proposed budget cuts to share views and concerns. EC will share on Facebook and ask for link to be shared on class WhatsApps.

Taylor Swift Fundraiser

Taylor Swift fundraiser is planned for 24th November and ticket sales show £500 profit currently, but it would be great to sell some more tickets. Please share with anyone who may be interested. We could do with another couple of volunteers, please email Parent Council if able to help. Any adults helping do not need a ticket but they will need to purchase a ticket for any children they are bringing with them.

Christmas Fayre Planning

This is the current team's 3rd fayre so we are able to use previous spreadsheets as a template for this year. At least 40 volunteers will be needed, please email parent council if you can help. Bouncestation has offered to bring along a friendly Grinch mascot. Miss Armstrong's dad may be able to help as Santa, GC to check this. We will not be accepting bric-a-brac or book donations this year, only new gifts, Christmas jumpers and toys. We have pocket money toys left from the summer fayre which will be on sale. Raffle tickets have been ordered and will go out in school bags asap.

Close - reminder of next meeting date - Mon 13th January - The Barony Centre

CLOSE

END OF MINUTES

Draft Minutes released	Approved (Chair)	Final release (on behalf of secretary)
J Spence	E Clark	J Spence
05/11/24	05/11/24	05/11/24