

# MINUTES

## Eastfield Primary School Parent Council Minutes

March 8, 2016

The meeting was called to order by Julie Baxter at 1900.

### 1.0 In attendance

Pamela Di Nardo	PDN	Headteacher
Lesley McPhee	LMP	Deputy Headteacher
Julie Baxter	JB	Chairperson
Kate McLean	KM	Secretary
Jennifer MacGowan	JM	Parent Council Member
Pamela Renton	PR	Parent Council Member
Frances McLaughlan	FM	Parent Council Member
Hazel McMillan	HM	Parent Forum Member
Suzanne Breakell	SB	Parent Forum Member

### 2.0 Apologies

Peter McLaughlan	PM	Parent Council Member
Catriona McLaughlan	CM	Parent Council Treasurer
Ashley Mitchell	AM	Vice Chairperson
Lesley Murray	LM	Parent Council Member
Adibba Ahmed	AA	Parent Council Member

### 3.0 Approval of Minutes

JB ran through the agenda and extended a warm welcome. KM noted the minutes from the previous meeting were approved via email and would be made available on the school website for all to read.

### 4.0 Matters Arising which are not Otherwise on the Agenda

No matters arising

### 5.0 Financial Report

JB provided the report in CM's absence.

There is currently £2989 in the Parent Council bank account

## **6.0 Headteachers Report**

### **6.1 Forward Planning- Head Teacher 'Special Leave'**

PDN formally advised the Parent Council that she is expecting and will be taking a period of maternity leave prior to Summer 2016. PDN has met with senior officers in the authority to highlight the need for contingency in her absence. The authority will make the decision as to who will be taking charge of the school. As soon as PDN is aware of the authority's plans she will notify the parent council and will make a formal announcement to the parent forum. This will ensure that the announcement of her leave and consistent cover plans are announced simultaneously. The Parent Council agreed with the PDN's approach to managing this matter.

### **6.2 School Improvements**

PDN highlighted that the maintenance of the grounds had now been completed. This was a result of her escalation and complaint to the authority in relation to factor ground maintenance work not being carried out following completion of the extension of the school building. PDN highlighted that whilst the building extension work was completed prior to her arrival, as a result of factors not being maintained there was a large area of 'waste and poorly presented/maintained land' left over behind the car park area. This was very becoming very unsightly.

Following PDN's meeting with the authority about the matter, the grass at the back of the car park area has now been fully cut, waste/left over products from the extension work have been uplifted and overgrown shrubbery has also been addressed. PDN highlighted that the shrubs around the perimeter fence to the rear of the playground had also been cut back as many were overhanging the public right of way pathway. As a result PDN highlighted that the school grounds look far tidier and planning for better school use of the land could now be considered. PDN highlighted that as part of this process, confirmation has been given by the authority that the land will now regularly be maintained by NLC's ground maintenance team.

### **6.3 Social Media Update**

PDN highlighted that Class teachers have now taken more ownership of the school Twitter account. This will provide further opportunities for the feed to share updates on class activities via this medium.

As discussed at previous Parent Council meetings there have been incidents over the past three years, where social media has been inappropriately used by a few members of the Parent Forum. This has been to raise personal complaints relating to matters such as car parking at the school, gritting and also the storage of rubbish lying near to the bin sheds. PDN reinforced appropriate complaint communication channels to the Parent Council and discussed how support was provided to engage these parents/carers in further dialogue about their concerns. In addition, PDN clarified inaccuracies in some of the information that had been posted about the school by such individuals.

PDN highlighted that as part of a recent Fire Risk Assessment visit completed by NLC Health and safety division, an audit of the carpark raised questions/suggestions about closing off the school carpark completely to parents/carers (other than nursery parents). PDN highlighted that this was a suggestion provided by NLC and was currently operational within many local schools who were encountering similar issues. It was agreed that rather than closing the carpark completely to cars other than staff, the car park would be sectioned off. The upper area and the area near to the bus drop off zone would be reserved for staff parking and the remaining area to the right of the carpark area would be allocated for nursery/parent drop off and visitors to the school. PDN also confirmed that the nursery drop off spaces would also be offered to nursery parents/carers to support short-term drop off parking.

PDN confirmed that once signage has been agreed by the authority, parents/carers would be informed of the new school carpark rules. Signage would then be erected to permanently indicate staff only/visitors/nursery parent parking areas.

PDN confirmed that she would continue to encourage parents to use the overspill car parking areas at the Forge and promote healthy 'walk to school initiatives' with children and families in the school.

PDN also highlighted that as part of the recent NLC Fire Risk Assessment, the standard school bin shed was deemed as being too small for the current size of the school. As a result, the local authority plan to build a new, larger bin shed and waste storage facility on the ground. PDN noted that the timeframe for the completion of this work would be managed by NLC direct and she would keep the Parent Council aware of developments as she was being advised of plans/timescales.

PDN also reiterated that the gate beside the bin shed is not a designated walking route into the school and should not be used by parents or children to enter the school playground. PDN confirmed that this is a bus route for pupils only during the morning drop off routine. PDN noted that signage was being put up to advise parents/carers of this rule and reinforce the need for safe pedestrian movement throughout the car park area.

#### **6.4 Efficiency Savings**

PDN noted that the authority have announced a further round of efficiency savings which will focus on the school's support staff teams (ASN's, clerical staff and classroom assistants.) PDN reiterated the significant impact that management savings last session had on the running of the school. PDN stated that these further savings this session (in relation to the wider support team) would again have a significant impact on the school. PDN confirmed that the changes are required to be actioned by June and reduced staffing would take effect in August '16. PDN confirmed that communication regarding this matter would be shared with the Parent Forum as soon as all efficiency saving exercised involving the school were complete.

PDN confirmed that as a result of such broad savings, the school would be required to look at many of its current operational systems and further tailor back facilities in line with staffing and resources now available.

PDN noted that one of the initial suggestions to manage workload (with reduced office capacity), was to pilot a daily 'down time' for the school phone lines by the clerical team. PDN noted that during this timeframe, active phone lines would go to an answer service for approximately one and a half hours to allow clerical staff time to complete daily pupil registration and absence alert work to be completed. PDN noted that a trial period of this pilot would take place during March and April '16 to assess how functional, beneficial and sustainable this improvement approach would be in the longer term. PDN confirmed that following this pilot (and others that would be required) communication on set/ improved systems (which would be required to be implemented due to staffing reductions) would be fully communicated with the parent forum.

#### **6.5 ECO committee**

PDN confirmed that the school (via the School Eco Committee group) had qualified for the final of the Tesco 'Bags for Life' campaign which will see the school receiving a grant of between £8000 and £12000 to spend on developing a specific outdoor area/classroom located at the senior area of the school. PDN stated that full disabled access to this area strongly featured within the plans/ development proposals.

PDN formally informed the Parent Council on this achievement and confirmed that further communication on the voting process would be shared via the school's Twitter account over the next few weeks. Upon completion of the campaign information on the school's success would be shared with the wider Parent Forum.

## **7.0 Items of Business**

### **7.1 National Framework Letter**

All PC members had the opportunity to read and approve JB's letter to Angela Constance. All members agreed the letter was excellent and are happy for it to be sent.

### **7.2 Summer Fete Planning**

We will hold a summer fete this year on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June. JB provided an updated on progress of planning. Big items such as the bouncy castle, police, fire engine's, Irm Bru bus, dance schools for the community showcase and Mr Amos are all booked for on the day. PDN noted Kay Smith and Carolyn Paton are the two points of contact on the staff and all staff have agreed to run a class stall selling items made by the children on the day. CM has taken the role as chair of the fete planning subcommittee. Meetings will be held as required and CM will update all members at PC meetings.

### **7.3 Fund Committee**

The school accounts have been audited recently to ensure good practice. PDN requested a PC member to have a look at these books to audit and ask questions to ensure these good practices are being utilized. FML volunteered as she has an auditing background.

### **7.4 Easter Disco Planning**

The cheque has been prepared for JMG to purchase supplies for the disco. The format will largely be the same for the disco's. AM has organized parent helpers to attend each disco.

### **7.5 Social Media**

PC members had approached JB about the PC doing something to address the issues on social media which PDN outlined at the previous meeting. JB agreed that social media misuse should be addressed and did comment that this was something all groups should take seriously and will write to parents to remind them of the appropriate methods of communication. As always all members should be positive, lead the parent forum to the correct and appropriate methods to contact the school and parent council and always be mindful of promoting the school in a positive light.

PDN agrees that parents in the Parent Council should continue to support the Parent Forum in relation to communication routes in order to contain and address any negative comments raised on social media.

### **7.6 Constitutional Change**

JB noted that no objections were raised to the letter sent out previously regarding increasing the membership of the PC from 10 to 12. JB noted this a very positive step forward for the PC.

KM to update the constitution and send this to Maureen Moore.

JB welcomed the new members Sarah Singelton and Jo Grant.

Unfortunately one of the members will be leaving the Parent Council, Jennifer MacGowan will leave following the Summer Fete. JB and PDN noted JMG's support has been invaluable and it will be hard to replace her.

### **7.7 Parent Council Logo Competition**

PC members reviewed all entries to the competition. All members were very impressed at the standard of entries from the very talented children of Eastfield Primary. It was a very difficult decision and it took a very long discussion and deliberation. A short list was drawn and a winner was decided. One winner with two runners up were chosen.

## **8.0 Correspondence**

None

## **9.0 Any Other Competent Business**

### **9.1 P7 Leavers Gift.**

CML has been looking into P7 leavers gifts. It was felt the traditional gift of dictionaries were outdated. Possible other ideas are personalized hoodies/tshirts. Cost for 60 pupils is £150 for cotton tshirt and £384 for the hoodie. PC members all agreed they like the hoody design but a question was raised regarding issues with children's names being printed on clothing. PDN suggested sending out a slip confirming parental consent for the sharing of children's names on this gift whilst keeping the actual gift a surprise.

### **9.2 World of Work Week**

Last year the school held a very successful World of Work week with parents, community members etc. coming into the school to talk to pupils about the skills and qualities required to carry out their jobs. The Enterprise Committee have asked LMP to seek some support for this from any parents/carers/grandparents etc. who could attend. LMP raised this issue with the Parent Council and requested volunteers to come forward o support with planning etc.

## **Next Meeting**

Tuesday 3rd May 2016 – 19.00