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**STEPPS PRIMARY PARENT COUNCIL AGENDA**

**Monday 5th June 2023**

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| **Agenda item** | **Minutes** | **Decision** | **Action** |
| **Welcome and attendees** | Lorraine Kerr, Chairperson, Parent  Diane Delaney, Secretary, Parent  Lynne Blair, Treasurer, Parent  Louise Laing, Parent  Susanne Ryan, Parent  Corrine Booth, Parent  Pamela Morrison, Parent  Mrs Jeffreys, Depute Head Teacher | N/A | N/A |
| **Apologies** | Mr McKeever, Head Teacher  Emma Dalziel, Parent  Angela Power, Parent  Lorraine welcomed everyone to this last Parent Council meeting of the term. Lorraine also extended a warm welcome to Pamela attending the meeting for the first time to hear about the work of the group. | N/A | N/A |
| **Headteacher’s report**  **School Building Works**  **Dining Space**  **Outdoor Space and**  **Wooded Path**  **Complaint?**  **Parent Council Communications (survey)**  **Parental Engagement Work Group (NLC)**  **Education Committee**  **Children’s Rights/ Parent’s Rights presentation** | Mrs Jeffreys advised that Mr McKeever continues to be off sick at the moment but should be back soon. Mrs Jeffreys advised that she would provide the Head Teacher report to the meeting.  MR MCKEEVER/ HEAD TEACHER POST  Mr McKeever does not have a start date yet for his new post. When this is agreed plans will begin for the recruitment of a head teacher for the school. Mrs Jeffreys advised Lorraine that as Chair, if she has any concerns she is welcome to contact Education Manager Michelle O’Halloran. Lorraine welcomed this invitation and advised the meeting that she had already spoken to Michelle when the announcement was made that Mr McKeever was leaving, and she was grateful to have the opportunity to speak to her on behalf of parents and the parent council.  STAFFING  Mrs Mearns, our administrator has now left her post. This leaves the school with a two-day vacancy. Human resources are aware, and Mrs Jeffreys is awaiting further information regarding how and when this will be filled.  Mrs Gibson our full-time administrator is reducing her hours to 4 days per week. This will also leave a one-day vacancy  Ms Cooper our support needs assistant is leaving her post at the end of this term.  Mrs Jeffreys advised that the school are still awaiting update from management on staffing for the new term.  It is likely that two teachers will not return next term, but we will receive one new staff member via a redeployment.  Mrs Lyons will begin maternity leave in the new term.  There is no information yet regarding a probation teacher.  The school intend to share information with pupils and parents on the plans for next term in terms of classes and teachers. However, they are unable to do this whilst waiting on the updates at the moment.  The parent council advised that the late timing seems unfair on everyone, and it would be more helpful if the Council were able to make these decisions earlier. We have raised this issue with the Council already.  SCHOOL ROLL  Mrs Jeffreys advised that once all staffing has been confirmed, she will be able to finalise classroom structure/ size and teachers. She said it is likely that there will be 15 classes again this year.  Numbers at this point:  P1 intake = 56  The projected school roll for the start of school term = 420  This means that the school is at near capacity once again. Everyone voiced their concerns about what will happen once we are at capacity again, particularly given the ongoing building of houses nearby.  Mrs Jeffreys advised that numbers are fluid at the moment especially with house building, families are both leaving the school and joining.  Regarding class allocation, she advised that there will be no survey this year asking children and families about their preferences for new classes in terms of friends that they would like to be in a class with. This is because the plan going forward is that there will be straight classes from P3 – P7 which means all classes will remain the same as they are now.  EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION REPORT  Mrs Jeffreys advised that she and the senior leadership team in the school are very proud of the positive report received from the inspection team.  Lorraine echoed this from a parent perspective.  Mrs Jeffreys advised that the agreed plan of action from the inspection team was already identified and in place by the school.  Lorraine asked why the report identifies the school as Gaelic. Mrs Jeffreys was not sure about this.  Lorraine also asked how a school can achieve an ‘excellent’ grade, particularly given that there were no negative comments about the school in the inspection report. Lorraine advised that it would be helpful if the inspectors could make clear what a school requires to do to achieve excellent. Everyone agreed.  Diane suggested that this might be made clearer as part of the new/ reformed organisation to replace Education Scotland.  We discussed the parent survey issued prior to the inspection. 62 parents in total completed this survey. Parents were also invited into the school to meet with the inspectors over two dates. Attendance was low, with two very small groups of parents attending meetings.  Feedback from parents about the process was that the parent questionnaire was very rigid and restrictive and there were some surprises about the type of questions asked. The questionnaire did not appear to have been created with input from parents.  Parents had also raised concerns that despite the inspection considering factors that may impact on a child’s learning and development, they would not consider any of those factors if they were related to the Education Dept/ the local authority. For example, the decision of NLC not to train all staff in play-based learning. Also, the unresolved issues with our playground does impact on play and outdoor play and learning. This was very frustrating and appeared very narrowly focused in terms of the inspection process.  Furthermore, parents noted the inspection report, and the website are not very parent friendly or easy to navigate.  Again, it was agreed that when the new organisation is created to take over Education Scotland, it is hoped that it will be more parent friendly and engage with parents as part of the entire process including the creation of a survey. Diane had attempted to communicate with Education Scotland and give some feedback from a parent’s perspective, however they did not seem interested in this, instead redirecting Diane to the authority, which was inappropriate.  Mrs Jeffreys advised that following the recent visit from MSP Monica Lennon, the MSP had written a lovely letter to the school praising and recognising the good work of the school. Everyone agreed that this was really great for the school to receive this.  PRIORITIES FOR NEXT TERM  Mrs Jeffreys advised that the school will continue to work on the same priorities for next term as identified this term. This includes:  For numeracy   * Power maths – across whole school * Focus on pace and challenge   For Writing   * Talk for writing programme * Non-fiction training day for in service for staff * Lots of planning and resources for staff in implementing this   For Reading   * Focus on pace and challenge * Give learners opportunity to choose their books   Mindfulness programme   * Some staff were trained on this this term * Training will be rolled out next term for all staff to be trained, and children can all take part in daily mindfulness   Tracking achievement   * School will begin to track individual learner achievements across their entire school journey * This was picked up via inspection and therefore this will be a priority next term   Nursery   * New tracking and planning system * Outdoor play * Staff will receive training on play based learning   Rights Respecting Committee   * Assessment to achieve silver UNICEF award on 20th June   BUILDING WORKS  Mrs Jeffreys advised that the school has received no updates regarding the progress of the building works as part of the community hub. She advised that there was no information about the lunch hall (as had been written in an email to MSP Monica Lennon from Head of Education Mr Gerard).  Lorraine advised that from the parent council perspective, there has been no meaningful updates or effective communication coming from the local authority on the progress or the future of the community hub. Lorraine advised that there has been no further information either via NLC Community Boards or Stepps Community Council. Lorraine is aware that our three local councillors also have no updates.  The parent council unanimously agreed that this is unacceptable in terms of both communication but also collaboration as stakeholders/ partners. The parent council question where the Service Level Agreement is between Transform Schools North Lanarkshire (TSNL) and the Local Authority which outlines timings and expectations.  Lorraine advised that Stepps Community Council had received communications from Council officer Charles McCabe stating that it continues to be the intention of NLC  to proceed with the conversion of the community hub back to a library. However no further information can be shared by them to the community until they have an agreement from TSNL. This is a worry for the parent council given there is no certainty. The parent council continue to be concerned about the safety and security of the school community given that the community hub is part of the school building.  It continues to be a frustration to both the school and wider community to see this huge space lying empty when it is so desperately needed both by the school and community.  There continues to be concerns about the future of the area in terms of capacity to accommodate more children and young people given the house building. A previous report to the Education and Families Committee outlined that Council are predicting that school roll could reach 500 in later years. This would mean that either a further extension of the school would be required, or the library would be removed.  The community will not be happy about the loss of the hub.  There are no free spaces in Stepps for the community to meet and use.  Diane has written to three local councillors many times to ask for updates and information. No updates received.  There was a discussion about what further actions the parent council can take given we have already submitted two formal complaints that were not upheld. The numerous and consistent emails to the local councillors, MSP and the Head of Education with no response and the ongoing work of Stepps Community Council and the Community Boards. The parent council conveyed a feeling of powerlessness given our inability to elicit any effective communication or collaboration with the Council on this.  Lorraine advised that the ongoing unresolved issue with the inadequate size of the dining room also continues with no updates.  Diane informed the meeting that she had written to Scottish Labour MSP Monica Lennon because she had noted that Ms Lennon had been campaigning about children’s rights and food in the Scottish Parliament. Diane wrote to her about the issues regarding the size of the dining room and also to establish children’s rights in NLC regarding food. This resulted in Ms Lennon accepting an invitation to visit the school to see the size of the dining room herself.  As it stands the dining hall seats 102 pupils.  As of August 2023, it is expected that there will be 420 pupils  Pupils have a varied needs including physical disability and there are a number of neurodivergent children and children with additional support needs.  The set up currently involves children with a packed lunch eating in the gym hall. However, Mrs Jeffreys advised that the school try to accommodate all requests and meet the needs of children as much as they can.  Mrs Jeffreys and Mr McKeever have walkie talkies and the year groups are brought in at different stages. This means that some children start their lunch break playing and come to eat later, and other eat first and then play.  It normally goes like this:   * P1s go first to the lunch hall * P2 12.15 – infant lunch starts * 12.25 radio for P3 (they have been out to play) * P7s then start to come along – senior lunch starts at 12.30 * P4 come in when P7 leave * P5 and then P6 – come in between 10 to and 5 to 1   The Rights Respecting Committee raised issues about this set up, in particular that the P6 group had the least time of all groups to eat. Mrs Jeffreys advised that as a result of the work of the Committee, next term, they will change the order that class groups enter the dining hall so that it is different classes that are last.  Mrs Jeffreys agreed that none of this is ideal, and they try their best to accommodate everyone, but it is a challenge given the size of the room and the volume of children. The parent council made clear that there was no criticism directed towards the school regarding our concerns about these issues. It is very clear that the management team are working hard, including not having their own lunch break to accommodate this. The complaint is directed to the Council given that the issue of the size of the dining room has been raised for over 5yrs now.  If the dining hall was bigger there could be two sittings and less rush. When Diane wrote to Ms Lennon about the dining hall issue and children’s rights. Ms Lennon forwarded the email to Mr McLaughlin, head of education. He wrote in his reply that an announcement would be made before the end of term about the dining room. As it stands no one including the management at the school have heard anything about this.    We all await Mr McLaughlin’s update  Pamela asked if there was anything else we could do from a children’s rights perspective. Diane advised that we have written two formal complaints, countless emails to local councillors and MSPs and even a letter to the Children’s Commissioner but there is no effective response that is progressing this. Pamela suggested the Children’s Parliament. Diane advised that since the Children’s commissioner’s office would not get involved in a local school issue it is unlikely that the children’s parliament will, however with the agreement of the parent council, Diane is happy to write to them to clarify.  Lorraine also advised that the Council had previously indicated that outdoor pods were being considered for the playground, however these would be strongly opposed because they would reduce the size of the playground. The only way that this would work is if the playground was extended, which in our view, there is scope for it to be extended. We are also aware that outdoor pods will require more staff in order to supervise because at the moment, Mr McKeever and Mrs Jeffreys are managing to get over 400 children in and out of the dining hall in 1hr 15 mins using walkie talkies.  Lorraine advised that the path that has been created in the wooded area of the school estate has been reinstated by an organisation subcontracted by TSNL. The original plan had been to create an outdoor space for the two local schools. However, this will not go ahead now because of the cost attached to maintain this – TSNL will be charging the authority and the authority cannot afford to maintain the outdoor space. Therefore, the path remains for no real reason. Once again the parent council feel that this is a let-down, and the school children continue to be disadvantaged as a result of being in a PPP school which was not their choice.  Lorraine advised that the Community Development team are giving it once last effort to try to make it work and if it doesn’t they are looking at alternatives, such as Bluebell Park. Peter McNally from the Council is trying hard to see what can happen that would not be a high cost for maintenance.  The path that has just been reinstated was designed for children to use, however it is unsafe as the path goes directly out to the main road also the gate isn’t opening the correct way.  Lorraine advised that she is aware that a multi utility games area is being built down at red ash pitch at Frankfield, however it is unlikely that our school will use this due to insufficient staffing numbers to accommodate this safely. However, it was noted the Community Development team visited the school and met with a group of children to gain their feedback on what they would like to see included in the area, which all members agreed was positive.  The parent council continue to raise the issue of the inadequate outdoor space within the school estate given approximately 100 more children are in the school from when it was originally built and designed. It seems absurd that the council recognises this by building three additional classrooms but doesn’t recognise the urgency of the small dining room and the inadequate outdoor space in terms of size and infrastructure.  It feels we have exhausted all options in trying to campaign to have this addressed and it is unclear what else we should do. Some parents have suggested that we go to the media. The parent council would need to seek consent from the parent forum to do this. However, the parent council are keen to build and maintain relationships with the Council which clearly feel very strained at the moment and therefore what purpose would the media attention bring.  This led onto a discussion about whether the parent council should submit another complaint or go to the Ombudsman given the two previous complaints. This issue is being raised again due to receiving information from Cllr Cairns (SNP) that Mr McLaughlin (head of education) will not meet with the parent council to discuss his email sent in October 2022, which everyone agreed was an unacceptable response.  We recognise that writing a further complaint and going to the ombudsman is more work for us and it feels that given the communications already received from the council, especially relating to the two formal complaints, that a further complaint would result in the same outcome.  We decided we would await the update regarding the dining room. We will also seek further advice via MP Bonnar who had previously offered to support us.  Therefore, we will decide at the end of term on next steps to take, however we did agree that it is necessary that the parent council continues our roles and responsibilities, and this will include a response to Mr McLaughlin specifically about that email.  Following the parent forum survey, we arranged a business meeting to both analyse and discuss the findings.  We agreed the following   * ‘*You said ……We did’* to update the parent forum on how we have responded to their suggestions. This will be posted on Twitter * Twitter is the most popular choice of communication platform and will continue to be used * We will also have a section in the school newsletter going forward – including one before the end of this term * Welcome new families into the community as part of the P1 induction – presentation to be delivered on the parent council * PC Agenda will be posted on twitter * PC Minutes are already uploaded on school website, but many parents are not aware of this so there will be a post on twitter to direct parents there   Mrs Jeffreys also said we can use the window in the music room to display communications for parents. We can begin looking at this next term.  Also agreed that in future we could have a Parent council stall at the PTA events.  Pamela stated that she is happy to take the task of writing an update for the school newsletter starting in the new term. Diane advised that she could send on bullet points from PC meeting minutes if that helps.    Lorraine has been involved in the planning and development of a new parent engagement strategy for NLC. A draft version of the strategy has been sent out to all PC members for comments. Diane has provided some comments, suggestions, and questions.  Following on from the consultation period, the parent engagement strategy group will meet next Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss and update the strategy. The group is being led by parent involvement officer William Collum. It is hoped that the strategy will go live in the new term and there will be some discussion/ training on this across schools to help build knowledge and engagement with it.  Everyone agreed that this is very positive  Lorraine advised of another success for the parent council because Cllr Josh Cairns (SNP) has submitted a motion to the full council meeting for 22nd June 2023, requesting that two parents/ carers become members of the education and families committee to represent the parent/ carer voice. This s being done in the context of the parental involvement act but also in recognising the role and value of parents being involved in discussions about them. The parent council are grateful to the work of Cllr Cairns on this. Many other local authorities have unelected representatives sitting and voting on committees therefore this is not an unusual request. The motion states the following  “*Council recognises the important role that parents have in their children’s education. The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act (2006) includes parental representation. Parental input on education committees is recognised in other Local Authorities in Scotland with having one or two representatives on the committee. Council therefore agrees to make provision for Two parent/carer representatives, one from the primary sector, one from secondary sector to the Education, Children and Families committee with full voting rights”*  Diane updated the group that she has been a member of the school Rights Respecting Committee for several months now. The school are working towards achieving a silver award from UNICEF in recognition of the work of the school regarding the United Nations convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC). Diane advised that the group are wonderful, and the children are leading on many different activities within the school in raising awareness of children’s rights and creating a culture of everyone upholding these rights in their day to day lives.  Diane delivered a power point presentation on UNCRC, children and parents rights with some suggestions at the end on work that the parent council could do next term to increase awareness of the parent/ carer community of UNCRC, children and parent rights.   * We could issue a survey to gauge levels of understanding and then create an information pack for parents. * We could also link with the local authority to find out what work they are doing and support them * We could share our work with other groups like the community council, community boards etc * We could also invite the committee to present to the parent council, perhaps as a joint event with the PTA,   Everyone agreeing that there is lots of work that we could do. Planning and decision making on this to be done in the new term. | Mrs Jeffreys or Michelle O’Halleron will update the parent council via Lorraine Kerr whenever there is news to share regarding recruitment of a new Head Teacher (HT)  Mrs Jeffreys will update the PC via Lorraine whenever information is available about new staff/ staffing for the new term  Pupils and parents will be advised of teachers and classes before the end of term  Await any further update as the school terms ends  Await update from MSP Monica Lennon  Await update from Mr McLaughlin on school dining hall  Diane will write to the Children’s Parliament for advice on children’s rights and the dining room space issue.  Lorraine will await any further updates from Peter McNally or the Community Development team  Await any feedback via Councillors or  MSPs  Await updates.  Diane will write to MP Bonnar regarding any further support they can provide to us  Ongoing actioning of response to the survey  Pamela will provide updates on the work of the parent council to the school newsletter starting next term  Lorraine will continue her work with the parental engagement strategy and update the council at next meeting on progress  Any additional comments on the strategy to be sent to Lorraine by 12th June.  All parents should write to Councillors to ask them to support the motion.  Discussion to take place next term about further work from the parent council in raising awareness of UNCRC with the parent forum and wider community | There are 5 applicants going to Professional Dialogue on Tuesday 24th Oct. The last one will be 1pm and Michael Dolan has offered to either meet in person at the school for the parent council to go through the applicants and decide which to take to interview. Can do 3 or 5pm.  The interviews will then be Wednesday 1st November 1-5pm in the Civic Centre. At least 2 PC members can be on the panel.  No updates provided from the Council regarding the issue with the dining room as had been indicated by the head of education.  NLC had agreed at a committee meeting that Stepps Library was ear marked for closure, however this decision was later overturned.  Building works has recommenced within the school estate to widen the road behind the community hub.  No further updates have been received.  No further updates have been received.  Response from the co\_director of the parliament advising that the council must listen to the children. Suggestion that the children make a video or invite local councillors into the school to hear their views and concerns.  Done  No updates |
| **Transport survey report** | Lorraine advised every one of the report issued from the Council following the transport survey. Lorraine advised that the vast majority of parents don’t agree with the change, but NLC are proposing to go ahead with the changes anyway. This is despite the report and recommendations from Education Scotland that more work would need to be done by the Council before these changes could be made. Education Scotland met with the parent council (Diane and Lorraine) and parents in the school as part of their assessment of the situation. We are all very disappointed that once again, despite a survey the council are going against the majority, especially on such an important issue and area of support for both the school and families.  The changes come into force in 2025, therefore we can only hope that safe walking routes can be established.  This does not impact on Chryston High School  The changes will mean that most children in Stepps primary will not be eligible for school transport. This will likely result in more traffic and less independence for young people.  Pamela advised that she is aware that parents in Frankfield estate have been told that they won’t be eligible for the bus next term due to their location. This info has not been widely published; letters only sent to affected parents only.  Lorraine advised that NLC PC chairs are coming together to look at how to campaign/ challenge this – main issue being lack of safe walking routes.  Parents have not been asked about an option to pay for a bus themselves. Pamela is aware that other school communities do this. A drawback on this though would be the relationship between the school and a private bus company.  Information on the survey can be found in the links below  [School Transport Consultation Report May 2023 [136.87 KB]](https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/NLC%20School%20Transport_Consultation%20Report_May23.docx)  [Education Scotland - Home to School Transport Review - North Lanarkshire Council [128.54 KB]](https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/04%20North%20Lanarkshire%20Council%20-%20School%20Consultation%20-%20Home%20to%20school%20transport%20review%20-Publication%20-%20Final%20report.pdf) | Lorraine is liaising with other PC Chairs in NLC re a response to the Council’s decision on this |  |
| **Minutes of the last meeting – for approval** | Agreed |  |  |
| **Correspondence** | MSP Monica Lennon, Scottish Labour – Regional MSP  Cllr Josh Cairns, SNP  Cllr McLaren, Scottish Labour  Cllr Williams, Scottish Greens  MSP Fulton MacGregor, SNP – Constituency MSP  Cllr Angela Campbell, Scottish Labour - Education Convenor  Catherine Sweeney – NLC Officer – Parental Involvement Team  William Collum – NLC – Parental Involvement Officer (PIO)  Peter McNally – NLC - Community Partnership Officer  Stepps Community Council via Alice Morton and Sameeha Rehman (Chair and Secretary)  Education Scotland  NLC Collaborative Parent Group  Stepps Primary Parent Teacher Association  Stepps Senior Leader team at Stepps primary |  |  |
| **AOCB (Any other**  **competent business)**  **Parent Council membership** | Parent Council elections  Lorraine advised that parent council membership elections will be held next year. Lorraine advised that on reflection she felt that the process of doing this could probably be done better. She thinks that there was some confusion and mix up last year and this was probably linked with the timing of information being sent out and the timing of meetings.  At the start of the new term the following people are due to stand down as per the constitution (2yr term)  Lorraine Kerr  Lynne Blair  Suzanne Ryan  Angela Power  Emma Dalziel  Lorraine advised that she requires to step down as Chair. This means anyone can nominate themselves for this position. Lorraine advised that she would be delighted for someone else to take this role, however, if no one else stands for this she is happy to be re-elected as Chair.  Everyone agreed that Lorraine has done a great job as Chair and would be happy to see her continue.  Lorraine also advised that on reflection, there is perhaps reason to review our constitution. As it stands, 12 is the maximum number of parent council members. However, given the expanding school community, it may well be necessary to increase this number given that there are now 100 more children and their families from when the school was built.  Diane also made clear that even if parents are not elected as a member, this does not mean that they cannot attend meetings. Diane emphasised that everyone is invited to attend all parent council meetings and would welcome their attendance. The main difference between parent council members, co-opted and non-members is that only parent council members get to vote when decisions are being made. So far, the parent council have been very harmonious in our alignment of our views/ perspectives/ priorities, and there has never been the need for a vote.  Pamela would like to join the parent council next term. Next meetings will be held in September for the AGM. | Planning for the AGM and an PC member elections will start in the new school term in August 2023.  Spread the word about the PC, it’s worker and for people to join or attend meetings/ the group. | AGM completed and new PC members elected |
| **Golf It** | Louise advised the meeting that she has been in contact with Golf It who will have a venue at the new facility being built at Hogganfield Loch. Louise had invited them to attend the recent PTA hosted school fayre. She is trying to continue to collaborate with them on behalf of our school. The barriers are that Golf It is in a different authority (Glasgow), and it is unclear what work they might do with our school in NLC. Louise is aware that there is a partnership between them and Glasgow schools and wanted permission from the school to continue discussions about what they could do with our school. Mrs Jeffreys agreed that this was a good idea.  Louise advised that she is going to access a discount code for parents and carers.  The facility opening is now delayed and due to open at the beginning of August 2023. | Louise will continue to liaise with Golf it regarding any work they can do with the school and wider community. She will keep the council updated. |  |

Next Meeting Monday 5th September 2023 7pm at Stepps Primary School. This will be a joint parent council and parent teacher association annual general meeting.

Minutes completed by Diane Delaney

13th June 2023