 

 FINAL

**STEPPS PRIMARY PARENT COUNCIL AGENDA AND MINUTES**

 **Monday 19th February 2024**

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| **Agenda item**  | **Minutes**  | **Decision**  | **Action**  |
| **Welcome and attendees**  | 1. Lorraine Kerr, Chairperson, PC Member
2. Diane Delaney, Secretary, PC Member
3. Lynne Blair, Treasurer, PC Member
4. Louise Laing, PC Member
5. Suzanne Ryan, PC Member (came in later)
6. Pamela Morrison, PC Member
7. Emma Dalziel, PC Member
8. Peter Russell, Parent, PC Member
9. Paula Nixon, Parent
10. Lauren Kelly, Parent
11. Julien Smith, Parent
12. Mrs Gardiner, Head Teacher
13. Mrs Jeffreys, Depute Head Teacher
14. Mr Dolan, Education and Families Manager

Apologies:* Corrine Booth, PC Member
* Laura Thomson, PC Member
* Mrs Carrie Ewens Principal Teacher

Lorraine welcomed everyone to the meeting and a special welcome to new parents attending and to Mrs Gardiner. Lorraine advised that the current meeting was rescheduled due to Miss Kennedy’s funeral. |  N/A |  N/A |
| **Mr. Dolan, Education and Families Manager - update** | DINING ROOMLorraine introduced Michael to the meeting and set out the context of his attendance briefly – to update the council on proposals to solve the inadequate dining space within the school.Mr Dolan introduced himself and provided a detailed context of the wider issues surrounding the school building. This included:* That the school estate is not owned by the Council, it is owned privately by Transform Schools North Lanarkshire (TSNL) via a legal contract
* Changes to be the building structure/ infrastructure therefore require to be authorised by TSNL
* The Council engages in planning activities with projections of local population and demographics within a 5yr time frame using census data
* The Northern Corridor has extraordinary growth aligned with housebuilding projects in comparison to the wider North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) area
* There is a significant increase in the population of the Stepps community – aligned with the recent house building
* Planning capacity for a school is calculated based on the square meters of the building
* Functional operation calculations are based on the actual learning spaces available in a building
* Functional capacity cannot change
* Stepps Primary School has been subject to building works for some time now which is taking a significant length of time
* Work to the community rooms is due to finish at the end of February 2024.

Mr Dolan advised that * There is spare capacity in the overall school estate (but not pupil capacity)
* The needs of the children are of paramount importance
* The current operating model for dining for the children involves
1. The children using the dining room
2. The children using the gym hall (mainly for packed lunches)

Mr Dolan confirmed to the group that the Council’s proposal to resolve the dining space is to use the Community Hall for a couple of hours every day to allow children to use both the dining room, school hall and the Community Hall space if possible during term time.Mr Dolan advised that there are some issues/ conditions in relating to this. These include:* The Council has advised Stepps community via Stepps Community Council that all lets accessing the Community Hall prior to the building works will be able to resume access.
* Stepps community members therefore have priority of access to the community hall whenever the let’s open up for booking.

Mr Dolan advised that the following actions would require to take place before a decision can be made to confirm that Stepps Primary School can book the Community Hall via the Letting Team for the children to use for dining/ lunch time:1. The Education and Families Department are working with the Letting Team Facility Officers to ascertain bookings during lunch time for the Community Hall
2. The Education and Families Department will ascertain if the school can make a block booking via the Letting Team for school lunches
3. If the school are able to book the Community Hall this will offer more flexibility for the children in using both spaces for both groups of children who take school meals or a packed lunch.

Mr Dolan advised that there is a further calculation included in the overall capacity in relation to the potential numbers of children who will take up school meals via the universal entitlement for free school meals (currently for P1 – P5). In the future all year groups will have this entitlement as per the Governments proposed policy on this. Mr Dolan emphasised that the Council are keen for as many children as possible to take up free school meals, but he also recognises that this will not suit all children. Even with an increased uptake of school meals whenever the universal policy for P6’s and P7’s is rolled out, Mr Dolan advised that the school would be able to cope.The current school capacity is 421 pupils. Mrs Jeffreys confirmed that most children take up their entitlement for free school meals at the moment.There was some discussion around potential risks of children moving along the school building to the Community Hall, particularly in relation to the movement of hot meals. Mrs Jeffreys assured that a risk assessment will be completed and there are options to manage risk, including having a hot plate trolly in the Community Hall. There would also be staff supervision along the corridor.Lorraine sought confirmation from Mrs Gardiner that the school already has bookings for the Community Hall all day on a Monday and Friday – this was confirmed. Therefore, the let bookings would be for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday lunch times, term time.Lorraine asked Mr Dolan about the situation if the lets are taken up by the community, resulting in the Community Lets not being an option for the school. Mr Dolan responded that this is the only viable option at present, but further solutions will be considered if required or necessary.We also discussed matters in relation to cleaning of the hall, supervision, and noise. Mrs Gardiner provided assurances that all of these issues can be resolved/ managed.Peter asked Mr Dolan about access to capital money, in relation to whether there is a timeframe for this. He suggested that we don’t want to miss an opportunity given that the current proposal is a gamble – as there are no guarantees that the Community Hall is an option at this stage. Mr Dolan confirmed that there are no additional capital funds for the school. Lauren enquired to Mr Dolan about potential funds via corporate social responsibility from house builders. Lorraine confirmed that following a number of discussions about this both with the parent council and community council, funds received from housebuilders go into one big North Lanarkshire pot. This means that Stepps as a community do not benefit specifically from these funds.Lorraine also highlighted that costs for PPP schools are also higher. Lorraine asked Mr Dolan if the school requires to pay for the let of the Community Hall to allow the children to have their lunch. He said yes, they would require to pay this. Peter asked when the PPP contract ends, Mr Dolan advised he believes it is in around 7-8 years’ time.Mr Dolan advised that teachers in some of the older schools are in awe of Stepps Primary School estate given the state of their buildings. Diane reminded Mr Dolan that the issues that we are raising about the school dining room are about children’s rights. Therefore, even if the school estate was the best and newest building, with the best staff, the voice and experience of our children are of paramount importance. As a Rights Respecting School, and with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) coming into law later this year, it is imperative that the voices and experiences of our children are heard, and that their rights are upheld in relation to the inadequate dining room space. Lorraine provided a summary to the group and asked Mr Dolan to confirmThe proposal to resolve the dining room space from the Council is:* The school will let the Community Hall every day for lunch time, if possible during term time.
* Time scale – when the community hub building works are completed
* Commitment made to the Stepps Community Council – to uphold the lets
* Settling in period of community hub
* No requests for lets so far
* Council is checking previous lets to see if they want to take up new let now in new hub

Mr Dolan agreed. Diane suggested that Mr Dolan could return to our next Parent Council meeting in April 2024.Mr Dolan left the meeting at this point.The group continued some discussion around the use of the Community Hall, recognising that the afterschool care group currently use the hall too. It was noted by a parent that the other afterschool care offering in Stepps via Buchanan Gate Nursery is coming to an end.  |  | Await completion of Community Hub building works.Await update from Mr Dolan on the Departments engagement with the Letting Team regarding uptake of lets from the Community.Proposal is that Stepps Primary School will secure a let in the Community Hall for lunch time every day.Mr Dolan invited to the next Parent Council Meeting in April. |
| **HEAD TEACHERS REPORT** | Lorraine welcomed Mrs Gardiner to her first parent council meeting with Stepps Primary School and invited her to present the head teachers report.Mrs Gardiner advised the group that she had met with Lorraine and Diane to discuss the format of parent council meetings and some of the ongoing agenda items/ work that we have been engaging in. INFANT REGISTERATION* 49 registered for P1
* 7 deferrals
* 2 placing requests

Total number registering 40Final numbers won’t be agreed until later due to the potential for further deferrals and placing requests. Mrs Gardiner advised that activities are underway regarding:* Induction visits for incoming P1’s
* Calculations of number of classes based on P1 intake

Everyone noted that 40 new P1’s is a significant reduction from previous years. Mrs Gardiner advised that this does not necessarily mean that staff will be lost from the school.Lorraine advised that the parent council (PC) are happy to participate in induction activities. Diane also suggested that new parents joining the school can be invited to attend our last parent council meeting in June. STAFFINGMrs Gardiner advised that staffing levels are more stable now with less staff absences. The update is as follows:* Mr Hunter will remain as the P2a teacher – a letter will be sent to P2a parents to confirm
* Mrs De Rosa is currently absent
* Miss McLaughlin has been retained
* Miss Carrigan is working 4 days (providing supports for groups of children)
* Ms Miller has started in the administration role and is a great addition to the clerical team
* There is still a vacancy for the administration team. This will be advertised again (it’s for one day per week mid-week).

PARKING/ ROAD SAFETYMrs Gardiner advised that there continues to be concerns over the parking in the school estate.The school have been working with the Council and Community Police in trying to resolve this. Actions include:* A parking and traffic management plan (via Gillian Finnegan)
* Members of the Senior Leadership Team being present on the school crossings (when possible)

Diane also advised that there was apparently another incident where a child was hit by a car at Bannantynes. Julian confirmed that this was the case. The child was not injured but appeared to have got a fright. It appears that the child ran out at the crossing, the car was moving very slowly up to the roundabout which meant there were no injuries from this incident.Everyone in agreement that road safety within and surrounding the school estate is a concern.Diane advised that Councillor Josh Cairns has requested a speed assessment on Cumbernauld Rd, just outside the school, across from Bannantyne’s. Lauren advised that a group of parents had contacted Councillor Cairns about their concerns about their P1 children walking along the path and the speed of the cars on Cumbernauld Rd. This led to the action Councillor Cairns has taken.Diane also advised that the issue is frequently discussed at the Stepps Community Council meetings. New signs have been installed indicating a reduced speed of 20MPH is required during school hours however the sign is supposed to have flashing lights, and these are not working yet.There is no crossing patrol at Blenheim Avenue either. The yellow line in this area seems to have had some positive impact but it was much better when the crossing patrol officer was present too.Lorraine advised that the PC requested a road safety assessment in November 2021. A report was returned from the Council in December 2021 stating that the area (at the Banantyne’s crossing where the roundabout is) was not deemed high enough risk to have a crossing patrol officer. This conclusion was made apparently using a calculation of the number of pupils on the path and the number of cars.There was unanimous agreement that the area is a road safety concern, with two recent incidents and a number of incidents witnessed by parents weekly using these paths/ roads walking to and from school.The issue is likely to be exacerbated in the near future when the school bus will be withdrawn. We currently have approximately 90 children using the school bus. This withdrawal is likely to see more cars on the road. Diane also advised the meeting that the Rights Respecting Committee (RRC) are proposing a protest/ campaign about road safety in the near future. The children are inviting both the parent council and community council to support and attend this event. More information will be shared as the plans are confirmed. Everyone in the parent council agreed to support the (RRC).The school are currently sharing registration plates of cars who continue to park dangerously. The police have agreed to contact these people about this behaviour. The community council meeting minutes also state that the police have said a fixed penalty notice can also be issued. The school have been issued with parking management banners too.Unanimous agreement that the PC will request an updated road safety assessment given recent concerns, incidents, and growing population.SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN/ PRIORITIES/ SELF EVALUATIONMrs Gardiner shared with the group the work completed by the staff team during the recent in-service day. The staff took part in an evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the school (a SWOT analysis). The outcome of this included the following:STRENGTHS* Good relationships
* High expectations
* Good attainment
* Leadership opportunities
* Good support for children

WEAKNESS* Overcrowded curriculum
* Planning cumbersome
* Updating resources
* Looking at outdoor learning – more structure
* Changes due to support for children due to staff absences

OPPORTUNITIES* Give staff more opportunities for leadership
* Plans for the community – the business links – good scope with that
* Outdoor learning
* STEAMO learning
* Transitions – policy – implement this
* Increased professional autonomy

THREATS* Increased pressure on role
* Lack of space
* Budgets/ savings
* Overcrowded curriculum

Mrs Gardiner said that the outcome of this evaluation has been linked to the inspection report and is informing continuing improvement work for the school.Mrs Gardiner advised that she would like to invite parents and carers to engage in a similar activity to look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the school from their perspective. Mrs Gardiner invited some suggestions in how to engage parents in this.Overall engagement with surveys is poor, therefore the group suggested a workshop or focus group type of activity, inviting parents to attend. Mrs Jeffreys also suggested there might be an opportunity to engage with parents on parents evening given the high uptake in attendance. Suggestion for a white board/ flipchart and stickies, or use of an iPad.Parents evening is scheduled to take place on the 19th and 21st March.Diane advised that the parent council can identify parent volunteers to help out with this activity on parents evening and will feedback to Mrs Gardiner.QUALITY INDICATORSMrs Gardiner advised that the school require to provide feedback to the council termly on quality indicators. This involves gathering evidence for particular indicators to demonstrate evidence of work and this is linked to the improvement plan. This is also part of a self-evaluation activity. The feedback from this recent activity was good/ positive.SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GROUP3 significant developments within the improvement plan to share:1. Talk for writing – all staff received training on this. Agreement from initial evaluations is that this is having a positive impact on overall quality of children’s writing. This is the first year that everyone is doing this, therefore it will continue to evolve and develop
2. Power maths - most staff have given positive feedback on this. Staff have identified areas for further development. Program has allowed children to develop a deeper understanding of maths concepts.
3. STEAMO –staff participated in digital training with Mrs Shaw – happens throughout the year. STEAMO room is nearly complete. Classes will be timetabled for use of this. Loose parts have also been purchased for outdoor play.

Louise also shared that her work has donated £2000 to the school to develop the STEAMO room. Mrs Jeffreys advised that everyone is really excited about this room. Pictures will be shared soon when this is completed. CLUSTER WORKMrs Gardiner advised that a focus of activity has been looking at school attendance. She advised that* Every school has responsibility to improve attendance
* Our attendance is good overall
* Cluster attendance is good overall
* An attendance policy is being developed

Diane asked that the PC be involved in the development of the attendance policy. Given that attendance in our school community is overall good, it is important that any policy uses language that isn’t going to shock parents or be conveyed as hostile. Mrs Gardiner agreed for the PC to be involved.SCHOOL LIBRARY/ COMMUNITY HUB REFORMMrs Gardiner confirmed the following:* Minimal impact to the school from the current building works
* Work seems to be on schedule
* Community room work completion due for 27th February
* Library work completion due 14th March – still lots of work to be done here
* Everyone excited about the return of the library
* The health and safety have been out to check and will return again

SCHOOL EVENTS* P7 – residential was a great success
* After school and club clubs going well – paused at the moment due to building works
* Young Enterprise Economy Challenge is going ahead for P7’s
* P5 continuing their enterprise work
* Connects challenge for P6 children
* World Book Day activities but no dressing up
* Scottish poetry and arts assembly was a success

HOMEWORKCurrent policy is:* Optional completion of homework
* Issued digitally unless requested a paper copy

Mrs Gardiner reported that return and/ or engagement with homework activities is very low and continues to decline. This is leading to an assumption that homework is not a priority for children and families. Mrs Gardiner would like to review the homework policy again, using a survey and with the help of the parent council.We discussed potential reasons for lack of engagement, despite a previous survey indicating that parents did want their children to receive homework. Potential barriers include:* Issues in accessing Glow
* Issues in understanding how to use Glow
* Access to the internet
* Access to devices
* Students unable to log in
* Parents unaware of homework allocation due to going straight to the pupils Glow Account (not the parent)
* Other priorities (parents working, afterschool clubs etc).
* Lack of understanding regarding what to do with the homework
* Children that don’t want to engage
* Parents that don’t have time
* Misconception that senior pupils require to learn how to do homework in preparation for going to secondary school. Reassurance was provided by parents who are secondary school teachers, parents with children in secondary school and by Mrs Gardiner that that homework in primary school is not a necessity in preparing young people for transitioning to secondary school.

Everyone agreed that there is value in receiving information from the class teacher on what our children are learning in class. There is a consensus that some training or a workshop is required in understanding how to use Glow – for both parents and their children. Diane suggested that the significant shift to going digital occurred during Covid-19 lockdowns and parents have never really had any training or support on how to use IT, technology, and software that North Lanarkshire Council Education and Families department is promoting. The pace of change in use of digital and virtual technology is possibly leaving parents and families behind. The parent council will assist Mrs Gardiner in the creation of a survey to gather views and experiences from the parent forum on homework.  | PC will support the RRC in their campaign/ protest on road safetyRequest a road safety assessment.PC to be involved in development of the attendance policyThe homework policy will be reviewed | Await information on classroom numbers from. Mrs GardinerMrs Gardiner to advise Lorraine of dates for induction activities. New P1 parents are welcome to attend the June PC meeting. Mr Hunter will remain as P2a teacher. Parents will be informed via letter. PC will await update on speed assessment via Councillor Cairns.Mrs Gardiner would like to invite parents to take part in a discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the school.The parent council will identify volunteers for a potential activity on parents evening.The PC will assist in the creation of a survey for the parent forum on homework |
| **PC Agenda Items** | COMMUNICATION Lorraine advised that there continues to be feedback from parents about how teachers and the school share information about their children’s day/ week at school. The current agreement from the school is that class teachers will post three times per week to X. These posts should include some pictures and information about activities. Lorraine advised that this is not happening consistently; that is, not all teachers post on X.There was a discussion about the importance of parents receiving this type of information, particularly to aid their engagement with their children on what they are doing at school. Pictures on X often facilitate conversations about our children’s school work. Lorraine and Suzanne also raised the suggestion again about an APP. Mr McKeever had been investigating the possibility of the school using an APP as an alternative method of how the school communicates with parents/ families. Mrs Gardiner advised that an APP is not the preferred option for North Lanarkshire Council because there is Group Call and Teams. The parent council are conveying that neither Group Call nor Teams is an effective method for this school community.Mrs Gardiner advised that the main issue with staff using X to post is relating to security, which means they cannot post outwith school. Staff cannot use their own devices either. This has created an obstacle for staff; however, Mrs Gardiner has emphasised the school’s commitment for each teacher to post on X three times per week. TEACHING OF LANGUAGESMrs Gardiner advised that there have been inconsistencies across many schools regarding teaching of languages. She advised the following:* Since Covid-19 languages priorities changed
* Lorraine McBride currently had the remit to engage in a fact-finding exercise to find out what schools were doing with languages
* Primary schools are led by their cluster high school
* Chryston High School teachers German
* Stepps Primary School have plans to teach German across all year groups and French from P5 – P7
* The criteria for staff delivering language teaching have changed, which will allow more teachers to take on this role
* A lot of staff are interested in bringing languages back into the school
* There are teachers who can deliver French and German right now and that has been happening recently
* Language teaching comes out of literacy time
* Language teaching does not require to run every term

Lorraine advised Mrs Gardiner that some of the P7 pupils are feeling anxious about the lack of language input they’ve had in relation to what expectations will be placed upon them when they transition to secondary school.SWIMMINGThe question was asked about why the school does not offer swimming to pupils. Lorraine shared the following information:* NLC decided to remove their budget commitment to swimming a few years ago
* Schools can use their Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) money to pay for swimming
* Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) can also offer funds to the school to pay for sessions
* Other schools locally in our cluster and beyond are currently using a combination of PEF and PTA funds to pay for swimming
* The biggest expense is often the cost of transport (buses)
* Stepps Primary School PEF allocation is fairly low (£48,000)
* No requests have previously been made from parents/ families for swimming at the school
* There is a presumption in this community that children are being supported to learn swimming with their families

FUNDRAISING / COST OF SCHOOL DAY Diane and Lorraine had met with Mrs Gardiner in relation to decision making by the school in relation to fundraising activities. This was in response to some parental concerns about requests from parents/ families to contribute to fundraising activities.The parent council is suggesting to the school that given the cost-of-living crisis and increasing fuel costs, that a plan is put in place to consider the calendar of events in the school year where parents are asked to contribute money.There was also a suggestion that a survey could be sent to parents asking them about their priorities, fundraising for a charity or fundraising for the school.The Parent Teacher Association are hugely successful in all the events that they run in raising a substantial amount of funds. The parent/ family and wider community always engage with this really well.Mrs Gardiner agreed that the school will continue to be mindful of the cost of the school day in considering future activities.Previous attempts at recycling clothes (Christmas jumpers) were not popular. | The PC will assist the school in planning a fundraising calendar of events for the year | Class teachers should post three times weekly to XFrench and German languages are being taught currently |
| **NLC PARENTAL STRATEGY REVIEW UPDATE** | Lorraine provided an update on the ongoing work that she is involved in with the wider local authority. Working alongside other parents and the parent involvement officer, a new parental engagement strategy has been devised.It’s currently with the digital team and NLC are also developing the action plan.The aim is for the new strategy to be discussed and agreed at the next Education and Families Committee meeting in March.Lorraine will continue to update and will review once the final draft is issued. |  |  |
| **REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES AND ACTIONS** | October 2023 minutes agreed.On the action regarding the outdoor classroom/park information Lorraine received confirmation from Peter McNally on 30th Jan that NLC have been unable to progress because the land isn’t owned by NLC and there is no permission from Equans. The £20k allocated was an indicative figure rather than allocated but NLC are potentially looking to try to develop Bluebelll Park in the future.  |  |   |
| **CORRESPONDENCE**  | * Emails from Catherine Sweeney/ William Collum (Parent Involvement Team) regarding training opportunities for the parents and staff at the school.
* Connect Training
* Workshop for parents on numeracy and literacy
* Criterion Led Selection Training
* Correspondence regarding the Parent Consultative Group Meetings and Parent Engagement Strategy Meetings.
* A survey from NLC on period product provision on schools has been sent to every PC in NLC. Lorraine has completed for our PC.
* Email communication with MSPs Fulton MacGregor and Monica Lennon in relation to the ongoing issues regarding the dining room and building works (Community Hub and Library).
* Receipt of Liability Insurance for Parent Councils
* Emails with NLC regarding the new PC Logo
* Emails with community members regarding a potential partnership to share skills and information about potential careers and occupations with the school.
* Emails from NLC Enterprise and Communities Team regarding the Community Hub/ Library reconfiguration/ building works
* Email correspondence with the Senior Leadership Team of the school
* Correspondence with Stepps Community Council
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| **AOCB (Any other** **competent business)**  | Transport* At the recent Council budget meeting, it was confirmed that both the Secondary and Primary School buses will only provide the statutory provision.
* There will be no impact for pupils travelling to Chryston High School from Stepps as there is no safe walking route – therefore the bus will continue to be provided
* However, from 2025, the change in the primary school bus will impact most pupils attending Stepps. There are approximately 90 pupils using the bus currently.
* Everyone agreed that this is concerning for this community given the current concerns about road safety. Removal of the bus will result in more cars on

Numeracy and Literacy Workshop for parents* NLC are delivering two workshops from an education support officer to parents. Diane is happy to collate names for those looking to attend.
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Draft Minutes completed by Diane Delaney 23rd February 2024

Next Meeting – Monday 22nd April 2024 at 7pm

**ACTION PLAN**



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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Completed by** | **Outcome** |
| A request will be made to North Lanarkshire Council for a new Road safety assessment | Lorraine Kerr | DONE |
| The Parent Council will support the Rights Respecting Committee with their road safety campaign | Parent Council/ Mrs Jeffries/ RRC | DONE |
| Mr Hunter will remain as the P2a teacher. Parents will be informed via letter | Mrs Gardiner | DONE |
| The school will seek to use the Community Hall for pupil lunches each day. Decision to be made following the completion of works to the Community Rooms | Mr Dolan  | AWAITING UPDATE |
| Any volunteers to support with a parent engagement activity on parent’s nights | Diane  | DONE |
| The Parent Council will be involved in the creation of an absence policy | Mrs Gardiner/ Parent Council  | AWAITING UPDATE |
| The parent council will support Mrs Gardiner in creating a homework survey for parents  | Mrs Gardiner// Parent Council | AWAITING UPDATE |
| The parent council will support the school in creating a calendar of events for fundraising activities  | Mrs Gardiner// Parent Council | AWAITING UPDATE |
| The Parent Council will support the school with the P1 induction days | Mrs Gardiner// Parent Council | ONGOING |
| Any volunteers to support with a parent engagement activity during the P1 induction days | Parent Council | DONE |
| The Parent Council will write to Councillor Cairns regarding ongoing concerns about road safety | Diane Delaney | DONE |