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**STEPPS PRIMARY PARENT COUNCIL AGENDA AND MINUTES**

**Monday 28th October 224**

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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. Louise Laing (part), PC Member 4. Suzanne Ryan, PC Member 5. Pamela Morrison, PC Member 6. Emma Dalziel, PC Member 7. Peter Russell, PC Member 8. Claire Wilcock, PC Member 9. Laura Thomson, PC Member 10. Julien Smith, Parent 11. Yorkjean McKinley, Parent 12. Fiona Adam, Parent Mrs Gardiner, Head Teacher 13. Miss Harrington, Deputy Head Teacher   Lorraine welcomed everyone to the meeting, and everyone introduced themselves. | N/A | N/A |
| HEAD TEACHER REPORT | *COPY OF HEAD TEACHER REPORT – REPORT IS IN ITALICS.* THE DISCUSSION IS IN NORMAL FONT  ***Parent Council Meeting***  ***Monday 28th October 2024***  ***HT [*Head Teacher] *Report***  ***Staffing***  *Teaching Staff*  *Introduce Miss Gina Harrington. Delighted to have her join the team and already settled in really well.*  *Mr Hunter is now covering Miss Hood’s Mat leave.*  *Mrs Elaine Black is covering 0.5FTE* [Full Time Equivalent] *for Mrs De Rosa’s absence. Mrs Black has been 0.5FTE for several years but was keen temporarily to return to full time, so this worked out well for us just now.*  *Support Staff*  *Our Breakfast Club assistant resigned so I am currently in the process of recruiting this. No staff in the school wanted to do this additional role.*  *I am currently covering this, but this may not be sustainable as it is not a teaching staff role. Hopefully we get a replacement soon as it may threaten the running of the Breakfast Club.*  *Miss Farrell has now begun her role in Chryston HS* [High School] *and her new hours with us are Monday 9.30am – 1.15pm and Wednesday 11.00am – 1.10pm.*  ***NLC* [North Lanarkshire Council] *Central Team***  *There are more changes at Education and Families Central Team.*  *Gerard McLaughlin leaves his post as Chief Officer for North this Friday to take up a new post in Renfrewshire Council. Michelle O’Halloran, current Acting Senior EFM* [Education Families Manager]*, will take up Acting Chief Officer Post in the interim.*  *There is another restructure within the authority central team and all Heads of Establishment have been called to a meeting on Wednesday about this.*  ***Positive Relationships Policy***  *This term we are beginning our consultation on our Positive Relationships Policy. At Inset in a few weeks we will be working on our vision and values and then open this out to the children are parents.*  Lorraine asked Mrs Gardiner what type of input she would like from the parent council in devising a new behaviour policy. Mrs Gardiner confirmed the following:   * Staff will draft a behaviour policy and send out to the parent council for feedback * The school will start with the creation of a vision for the school underpinned by the schools’ values * Children will be involved in this * The school want to create a concise and memorable vision and policy and therefore it should not be too wordy/ lengthy * This vision and policy will link with the school’s status as a UNICEF Rights Respecting School * The policy will take time to develop, this is fine because Mrs Gardiner wants to get it right.   Mrs Gardiner and Miss Harrington confirmed when asked if they had behaviour policies in their previous school’s that they did and that both were helpful. They will use this previous experience and knowledge to feed into our school’s policy. Miss Harrington noted that her previous school received positive feedback via an inspection on their policy.  Mrs Gardiner is keen to keep children’s wellbeing at the centre of the policy.  Lorraine suggested that the development of this policy will help parents to understand current and new practices in promoting positive behaviour.  ***Poverty Proofing/Cost of the School Day/Tackling Poverty Team***  *On 8th October the Tackling Poverty Team worked with a focus group of children. After a successful pilot in the CVHS cluster, they are now visiting all schools to capture information from all children.*  *For primary pupils a short fun exercise around ‘Your Money Your Choice’ followed by the three questions”*     * *How is the cost of living affecting you?* * *How is the cost of living affecting others in the community?* * *What would you like us to do about it?*     *The team were really impressed by the discussions they had with the children and have sent me their responses.*  Mrs Gardiner read out some of the responses as examples (see attached appendix for more information on responses and the report from the Tackling Poverty Team).  *I also spoke to them about coming to work with yourselves on our own Policy. They are happy to do this but have asked me to ask you what we are trying to achieve and how they can help support us in doing this?*  Mrs Gardiner confirmed that the Tackling Poverty Team can help the school develop a cost of the school day policy. We need to decide as a school what we are trying to achieve and how they can help.  There was a discussion about the balance of all the activities that the school engages in including fundraising for charities as well as fundraising for the PTA. Taking account of the cost of the school day model, moving forward the school will need to prioritise which events are most important alongside the costs of events.  The parent council are happy to work with the school to provide feedback on their views and experiences on this.  There was some discussion about Halloween for example and there was recognition that this can be costly for parents and also many children do not like Halloween.  The next parent council meeting is in February; therefore, Lorraine was suggesting that the parent council could get started on some work in looking at all the events that the school have previously engaged in.  Lorraine asked if there is a current list of events that the parent council could look at between now and the next meeting to feedback on. Mrs Gardiner said there is a list that could be shared. The parent council will compile a list of recurring events we are aware of and send to Mrs Gardiner.  ***School Clubs/Sporting Events etc***  *Update from Mr Galloway about various events etc.*  *Football, Cross Country, Bikability, Rugby Festival, Choir, Playground Leaders etc.*  Mrs Gardiner advised that Mr Galloway was going to attend the meeting to update on clubs and events but could not manage. There is lots going on just now in sports and activities for the children. Lorraine advised she had volunteered to support the P6 football games recently and the children seemed to enjoy themselves.  ***Diary Dates***  *Just a reminder about what is coming up this term:*  *Tuesday 29th – P7A and P7B Pupils as Teachers, Parents as Learners (PATPAL) event at 9.30am (Further details to follow)*  ***November***  *Friday 1st – Nursery Halloween Celebration*  *Wednesday 6th – P7 Inverclyde trip Parent Information Evening at 6pm*  *Thursday 7th – P2A and P2B Pupils as Teachers, Parents as Learners (PATPAL) event at 9.30am (Further details to follow)*  *Friday 8th – P7 Football with St. Josephs (For those children interested and selected)*  *Tuesday 12th – P5A and P5B Pupils as Teachers, Parents as Learners (PATPAL) event at 9.30am (Further details to follow)*  *Wednesday 13th – Flu Immunisations*  *Thursday 14th – P1D and P1S Pupils as Teachers, Parents as Learners (PATPAL) event at 9.30am (Further details to follow)*  *Friday 15th – Children in Need*  *Monday 18th – Inset Day*  *Monday 18th – Friday 22nd – Book Week Scotland*  *Friday 22nd November – Dress Down for Donations Day for PTA Christmas Fayre*  *Wednesday 27th – P4A, P4B and P4’s in P4/3, Pupils as Teachers, Parents as Learners (PATPAL) event at 9.30am (Further details to follow)*  *Thursday 28th – P3A and P3B and P3’s in P4/3, Pupils as Teachers, Parents as Learners (PATPAL) event at 9.30am (Further details to follow)*  *Saturday 30th – PTA Christmas Fayre*  ***December***  *Tuesday 3rd - Nursery Stay and Play Session at 2pm*  *Wednesday 4th – P6A and P6B Pupils as Teachers, Parents as Learners (PATPAL) event at 9.30am (Further details to follow)*  *Thursday 5th - Nursery Stay and Play Session at 2pm*  *Tuesday 10th – P1 Nativity morning performance at 9.30am*  *Wednesday 11th – P1 Nativity afternoon performance at 1.30pm*  *Thursday 12th – Christmas Dinner and Christmas Jumper Day*  *Carols by Candlelight at 7pm*  *Friday 13th – Christmas Service at 9.30am (Pupils and Staff only due to hall capacity)*  *Monday 16th – P7 Party at 10am*  *P6 Party at 1.30pm*  *Tuesday 17th – P5 Party at 10am*  *P4 Party at 1.30pm*  *Wednesday 18th – P3 Party at 10am*  *P2 Party at 1.30pm*  *Thursday 19th – Nursery Party at 10am*  *P1 Party at 1.30pm*  *Friday 20th – School closes for Christmas Holiday at 2.30pm*  *Monday 23rd – Friday 3rd January – Christmas Holiday*  Mrs Gardiner also advised the following:   * There is not much to put in the Newsletter for October however she will add in the diary dates again. * P7 PATPAL event starts tomorrow * The PTA are requesting volunteers for the Christmas Fayre   Pamela asked about the frequency of the bikability event raising concerns about the number of bikes in the school estate on the day the event was held. Pamela described the situation as chaotic with her child becoming hurt in an accident. Pamela advised that she had tried to contact the school to discuss and share concerns but was unable to speak to anyone.  Mrs Gardiner advised that the bikability events are being organised for other year groups too.  Children are not supposed to be on bikes or scooters when they enter the school estate. There is not enough space generally with narrow paths and the huge volume of people at pick up and drop off times. The children will be reminded of this at an upcoming assembly. Lorraine advised that these concerns have been raise before with request to extend the path for children’s safety, but they’ve been rejected due to the school being a Private Partnership and not council owned.  Diane asked about the candles by candlelight event as the communication around this last year was not great resulting in disappointment and frustration amongst parents in accessing tickets, especially to see their own child performing. Diane highlighted that this is another consequence of the inadequate size of the school because previously the school held whole school events with the entire parent community invited and this no longer happens.  Mrs Gardiner will look at the communication and ticketing for this and ensure parents of children in the choir get priority tickets. The event is on 12th December.  Peter asked about school buses dropping children off in the school estate when there are no adults present to ensure their safety/ wellbeing. He advised that there are some concerns especially for P1’s who have been left in the school estate without adult supervision when the buses have driven off.  Mrs Gardiner advised that the buses are arriving before the school staff are available. Mrs Gardiner advised that staff are available from 8.45am and if the bus arrives before then, there will be no staff to supervise. The arrangements of the school bus and the responsibilities of the driver are the responsibility of Strathclyde Passenger Transport, not the school.  There was unanimous concern across the parents in the meeting about the safety of children. Emma advised that it’s not the driver’s responsibility to supervise the children or become involved at all with the children. Their job is to pick up and drop off. There was an agreement that someone needs to take responsibility for this issue which is clearly a risk to the children using the buses.  Diane shared her concerns and unease about the situation, coming from a social work background, she relayed apprehension about risk of harm to these children and concern that there is not safety measures in place. This type of risk of harm requires to be assessed and managed.  It was noted that P1 children are wondering down the path away from the school estate when they have been dropped off. There are also serious concerns about this in the context of road safety within the school estate.  Lorraine enquired if parents have raised this directly with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), and if not, they should. Lorraine also advised that she would write to them to raise the serious concerns of risk of harm to primary school children being left unsupervised on a busy school estate. | Mrs Gardiner will share some of the children’s responses from the Tackling Poverty Team event – see attached appendix  . | The parent council will support the school in the development of a positive relationships policy  The parent council will consider some of the key events of the course of a school year and identify priorities in the context of balancing the cost of the school day  The parent council to send a list of all recurring events to Mrs Gardiner  Mrs Gardiner will look at the communication and ticketing for this and ensure parents of children get priority tickets. The event is on 12th December.  Lorraine suggested that all parents using the SPT bus write to them to raise concerns  The parent council will write to the SPT to raise concerns about this issue |
| SCHOOL LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY HUB UPDATE | Lorraine advised the meeting that she was invited to attend a community hub update meeting on 2nd October 2024. A number of people attended this meeting including council officers, Stepps Community Council, Councillor McLaren, Miss Harrington and Mrs Gardiner.  The meeting confirmed that the Community Hub is on target for completion. The following information was shared:   * Two permanent ramps will be in place * There are two general rooms * A storage space has been created for the afterschool group * The council will begin letting the community hub during the day * Nighttime lets have been ongoing for some time * The security issues have now been resolved * Access to the community hub will be managed via the library. * The school janitor is not involved in access to the hub * Entry to the hub is via external doors and not via the school * The multipurpose room has access to an additional room which means during the day if you let the multipurpose room, you also have access to this additional room. In the evening, this space will become communal. This space also has the community kitchen   Lorraine advised that the only issue raised as this meeting was via Stepps Community Council and Cllr McLaren about the lack of cooker available within the community kitchen. Cllr McLaren advised if a cooker is not installed he will escalate a complaint to the Chief Executive. Since Transforming Schools North Lanarkshire (TSNL) own the building, they have taken this request to process.  The Council are keen to get bookings for the community hub up and running again for daytime lets.  Previous lets will be given first refusal to access daytime spaces. Thereafter, the let’s will be opened up to the wider community in the New Year.  Lorraine also updated the meeting that during the October holidays, after much persistence and complaints about the pathway between Cumbernauld Road and the school, the path has been upgraded. Lorraine advised that the parent council send a big thank you to Councillor Williams who pursued the completion of this work. Everyone agrees that this will make a difference. |  |  |
| School Dining Room | Lorraine advised the meeting that following the Community Hub meeting on the 2nd October she was surprised to be informed by Mrs Gardiner that a further meeting would take place; an ‘education meeting’. This was a surprise because no information had been communicated to the parent council, and thus only Lorraine had attended for the Community meeting. Lorraine also advised that as a result of not being informed of this meeting which began at 4.50pm, she had prior arrangements and had to leave the meeting earlier.  The parent council remain unclear about why this education meeting was arranged in such a manner which prevented other members of the group to attend. It also meant that Lorraine was not prepared for the meeting.  Mr Dolan (Education Manager), Ann Hanlon (responsible for facility supports), Miss Harrington and Mrs Gardiner were also in attendance.  Lorraine advised that she was informed that the meeting was to discuss the ongoing issue with the dining room and access to the community hub.  Lorraine provided context to the meeting for the newer members who may not be aware of the timeline of the situation.   * For over 7yrs Stepps Primary School Parent Council have raised concerns about the inadequate dining room space, * School capacity has increased since the school was built * In February 2024 Mr Dolan attended a parent council meeting and informed the meeting that the Council are considering utilising community space as part of a solution for the inadequate dining room space. * This solution was not guaranteed, neither was it set out to be a permanent solution. * The community are given priority over the community hub spaces over the school * For a couple of years now senior officers of the council have indicated that a solution would be found to the inadequate space in the dining room * The two head teachers in post prior to Mrs Gardiner both agreed that the dining room space is a problem. * The issue has been raised directly by the children via Mrs Jeffrey’s and the Rights Respecting School Committee * Children have raised the issue to their parents who have contacted the parent council   On the 2nd October, at the impromptu meeting, Mr Dolan told Lorraine that the community space is no longer being considered for use in addition to the school dining hall as he states there are no issues in relation to this space.  Lorraine advised that the basis for this decision was in the context that Mrs Gardiner is able to move the entire school population through the dining room in the space of one hour, and thus, the conclusion that there are no issues.  Lorraine had to leave the meeting early and left unclear as to why Mr Dolan’s position had changed in the space of seven months, and with concern that the views and experiences of the children appear to be disregarded.  Lorraine advised that a suggestion was made from Ms Hanlon that a ‘Mystery Shopper’ be arranged in order to gather feedback from the children on their dining room experiences.  Lorraine advised that following the meeting she attempted to seek clarity from Mr Dolan about   * The arrangement of the meeting (i.e. no invitations were sent) * The change in position * The disregard for children’s views and experiences   Mr Dolan told Lorraine that the parent council should direct communications to Mrs Gardiner. Therefore, Lorraine asked Mrs Gardiner the following questions:  1. Could you please clarify the council’s official stance on the adequacy of the dining room facilities? Is there any documentation we could review? Additionally, could we receive a copy of the Head Teacher’s report that was referred to during the meeting  2. Could you provide details on the “Mystery Shopper” Exercise as we remain concerned about how the children’s feedback will be gathered in a way that makes them feel comfortable being honest. How will parental and child consent for participation be handled?  3. We would appreciate your support in issuing a survey to gather a broad range of views from both parents and children on the dining room space.  Additionally, Michael referenced a protocol that he mentioned should be followed.  Lorraine asked Mrs Gardiner to share this protocol with the Parent Council?  Mrs Gardiner advised the following:   * She has put in a request to the Lets team for Tuesday’s, Wednesday’s and Thursday’s (as the school already has lets on Mondays and Fridays). * Mrs Gardiner is awaiting a response from the Lets team on this request * Mrs Gardiner is of the view that the request could go ahead * The council position is that the dining room facilities are adequate * There is no documentation pertaining to the assessment that the dining room facilities are adequate * She provided a report outlining the process children accessing the dining room to Mr Dolan and Cllr McLaren had access to this * Mrs Gardiner will share this report with the parent council * 144 children can access the dining room in one sitting * There are two sittings however children move through in a flow of the number of children leaving, the same number can enter, this is co-ordinated via walkie talkies * First sitting is 12.15pm – 1pm (the younger children) * Second sitting is 12.30pm – 1.15pm – (the remaining children)   Diane enquired to Mrs Gardiner about the number of children able to sit in the dining room at one time. Previous records indicated that 104 children was the maximum capacity of the dining room. Mrs Gardiner advised that since she has been in position, 144 children can sit in the dining room at the one time. Diane enquired if there are additional seats/ tables, Mrs Gardiner confirmed that it’s always been 144 since she arrived.  Peter stated therefore that this means in two sittings only 288 children can get through the dining room and therefore this does not add up. Miss Harrington confirmed that although there are two sittings, there is a flow of children moving in and out.  Peter advised that the children are rushed through as a result. Mrs Gardiner stated that they were not rushed. Diane clarified that multiple children have stated directly to staff (Mrs Jeffrey’s and Ms Grant) and their parents that they are rushed through.  Diane conveyed her concern that the experiences and views of the children are being dismissed and disregarded by the council.  Lorraine enquired about the Mystery Shopper approach. Mrs Gardiner stated that this is going to be organised via Ms Hanlon (Facilities Support Manager). Mrs Gardiner is awaiting instruction as to what will happen here, and she confirmed that this is nothing to do with her and neither does she know what it is about.  Diane raised her serious concerns about the lack of insight from the head teacher on a matter with serious ethical considerations including that consent will be required from parents for this to go head.  Lorraine also raised the issue that as a Rights Respecting School, a mystery shopper approach does not appear to align. Lorraine suggested that children’s rights are centred around informed consent, transparency, and a right to privacy.  Diane repeated her concerns again in hearing the response to the mystery shopper approach, that in the 6yrs as being a parent at the school, she has never felt so dismissed. Diane conveyed serious concerns that the council are not accepting the views and experiences of children and parents and would rather use and external person, a stranger to the children to verify what both have been saying for years.  Lorraine continued to advise that she is also concerned. The parent council have on record the issue of the dining room for a number of years. Previous head teachers – Mr McKeever and Mrs Jeffrey’s agreed that there was a space issue in the dining room, however, without sufficient information or justification a view has been established that the dining room space is adequate.  Lorraine is concerned about the council taking a position that the space is adequate by the simple equation that 404 children access the dining room in one hour. This is purely an operational and the children’s experiences of this are being ignored. The children are saying that it is noisy, they feel squashed and rushed and this does not feel good.  Mrs Gardiner stated that she doesn’t know what to say. She advised that she needs to follow process, and she will speak to Ms Hanlon about what is going to happen during the Mystery Shopper experience.  Lorraine again highlighted that the Rights Respecting Committee have already raised the issue and there’s clearly an issue where the adults cannot see what the children are experiencing.  Julien also questioned the process in relation to the facts. Mr Dolan attended the parent council meeting at the start of the year acknowledging a space issue, thus the solution of the community space. Julien also noted that the Rights Respecting Committee were creating a dining room charter on the basis of it being so busy and thus an uncomfortable experience. He suggested that this position does not make sense. Mr Dolan told the meeting he would return, and he has not.  Diane also relayed her disappointment that the council are taking a position to ignore the views of parents and children forcing parents into a position of requiring to complain. This is against the principles of parent engagement. It make sense to resolve this locally, together.  Lorraine advised that in comparison, she spoke to the Chair of Chryston Primary School who stated that in designing their dining room, it was made for half the capacity of the school so that there could be two proper sittings for children. Lorraine advised that for 7yrs this space has been an issue and thus the school has always had to use additional spaces in the school.  Mrs Gardiner confirmed that no other additional spaces can be used in the school at the moment as she does not have the staff to supervise this.  Claire asked the meeting what the ideal solution would be. Diane advised Claire that during the Covid-19 pandemic (2021) the parent council had proposed the Community Hub as a solution and the Council rejected this idea.  Therefore, the parent council were surprised in February 2024 to hear Mr Dolan state that the Community Hub was now an option.  The other options would be a further extension to the school, and this would be hugely costly. There was talk about outdoor hubs however the playground space is also an issue and thus this is not a viable option.  Suzanne advised that over the years the parent council have made numerous suggestions to the council for ideas and solutions to this problem.  The community hub is also used for PE because of the poor infrastructure of the playground resulting in many areas being out of action following heavy rain. The school uses the community hub two days per week already.  As a result of the growing capacity of the school, the school is no longer fit to accommodate the whole school community. In the past all parents and carers were invited to whole school events. This is no longer possible due to the increased capacity of children attending.  The PE Hall cannot accommodate all of the children in the school. Thus, school assemblies must take place in the community hub on the days that the school lets these spaces.  The winter months are very challenging as the children are unable to access the playground due to poor weather, e.g. huge accumulations of water, ice etc. The children cannot access the astroturf either because there is insufficient staffing to supervise.  Lorraine concluded this agenda item reflecting that she continues to lack clarity on the position of the school in their assessment of the dining room issue and reiterated that the parent council will continue to pursue this issue as we do not agree with the council’s position that there is no issue. | Mrs Gardiner confirmed Mr Dolan’s position that the dining room facilities are adequate and therefore no additional space is required.  Mrs Gardiner could not provide any information as to why this decision had been overturned.  The parent council remain unclear about Mrs Gardiner’s position or assessment of the school dining room experience for children in the school  The parent council notes concerns about the Council adopting a ‘mystery shopper’ approach in terms of children’s rights and ethics. | Mrs Gardiner will share the report provided to Mr Dolan and Cllr McLaren about the school dining room operations  The parent council will continue to pursue support via elected representatives and will consider a formal complaint as a result of the lack of information pertaining to the overturn of the decision to increase the dining space.  Concerns have also been raised about using a mystery shopper approach with children in relation to their rights.  Furthermore, there are serious concerns that the views of children as per article 12 of UNCRC are being disregarded.  Mrs Gardiner will update the Parent Council on further information about the mystery shopper exercise |
| School bus update | Lorraine advised that the school bus concerns continue. The most recent updates on this are:   * An SNP group motion put forward to create a working group to review the walking routes, this was agreed, and the membership has been confirmed * Cllr McLaren and Cllr Williams are on this group * No parents are on the group yet * The parent council are advocating along with other parent groups that parent members sit on this committee * MSP Gillian McKay and Councillor Claire Williams are currently supporting the parent council on this issue and have also written to the council suggesting parents are involved * The SNP group has said it is their intention that parents are involved in this working group * The council are due to deliver findings in February 2025 for the new walking routes for the primary schools – and it will be retrospective for secondary school routes * The Stepps/Millerston to Chryston route was previously unacceptable then acceptable. Since the start of the school term there has been a number of incidents and issues causing major concern to parents, children and community members * Parents have been let down by the Council who made promises to address the safety issues regarding the walking route, but they never did * Furthermore, the public bus service has been causing serious problems most weeks for children with the bus turning up late, not at all and being overcrowded * Despite the change in bus timetable in the mornings, the bus service has been worse than ever thus continuing to cause stress to children * Freedom of Information Requests have now revealed that the previously claimed independent robust assessments is a misrepresentation of the reality of the actual assessments that took place * Assessments were not independent as North Lanarkshire had the final say on decision making * Assessments were only gap analyses for crossing and not an actual assessment of the waking routes. * MSP Gillian McKay and Councillor Claire Williams continue to support local parents and have a number of actions ongoing at the moment. * As it stands next August 2025, 4yr old children will not have access to a school bus and it’s clear for everyone that a 4yr old child could not walk the proposed routes, neither could they negotiate the public bus service.   There was unanimous agreement that the consequences of the removal of the bus has been more cars on the road, more traffic and thus higher risk of road traffic accidents, as has been the case.  Parking is already a huge concern in the school.  Mrs Gardiner advised that the police attended this week and as is always the case, the cars parked around the roundabout were not there on that day. The community police continue to offer support.  Fiona suggested that there are other options and it’s frustrating that the Council cannot consider these. For example, Fiona notes that the bus for St Joseph’s children could be combined with a bus for Stepps children.  Diane agreed, the problem with many of the decisions that the council take is that they take the decisions without the involvement of those impacted most- children and families. |  | The parent council continue to represent the school community in campaigning against the decision to remove the school bus.  The parent council continue to liaise with elected members and journalists about this matter.  All parents are encouraged to get involved in this campaign and write to their elected members too. |
| COMMUNICATION | Lorraine advised that communication is a recurring theme of complaints and concerns from parents, and thus it remains on the agenda.  Although parents have noted an improvement of posts on X, not all teachers are posting and thus remains a lottery of which parents are able to receive updates on class activities via X.  Mrs Gardiner advised that it is being monitored.  Diane asked for confirmation about parents’ ability to email class teachers. Mrs Gardiner confirmed this was the case. Diane advised that the email addresses have not yet been sent out to all parents. Mrs Gardiner will follow up on this.  The administration team can share email address with parents too, | Mrs Gardiner advised that posts on X are being monitored. | .  Mrs Gardiner will send out information to the school community on how to contact classroom teachers and senior staff members |
| BEHAVIOUR POLICY | Covered in head teacher’s report |  |  |
| COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY | Covered in head teacher’s report |  |  |
| PLAYGROUND AND OUTDOOR INFRASTRACTURE | Lorraine advised that recently concerns have been raised again via children and parents about the playground. Issues include:   * Insufficient space * Poor infrastructure * Children not permitted to play on the grass (thus reducing space further) * Lack of access to the astroturf   Lorraine updated the meeting that the parent council have raised issues on the inadequate playground space for a number of years, alongside the dining room space issue.  As a result of increasing concerns about the dining room, particularly the stress and distress it was causing children, this became the focus of parent council activity.  There had been ongoing discussions about the playground space particular the size as well as the problems with flooding as a result an assessment was conducted of the space. However, the parent council never received access to this report.  Lorraine advised that she will pursue access to this report in order to begin discussions again about these issues.  Miss Harrington advised that the school are trying to address the playground space and infrastructure issues. She advised that the playground has been sectioned into three different spaces to allow for different types of activity.  There will be a space for P1 – P3  A space for P4-7 to play ball games  A space for P4 – P7 as a quieter area to play games  Miss Harrington stated that there is not an issue for playing on the grass. Diane advised that the children are stating they are being punished for playing on the grass. Miss Harrington stated this is not the case and the issue was addressed at assembly.  Miss Harrington advised that restorative practices are used in the school and the children are advised not to play on the grass when it is wet as it becomes muddy.  Miss Harrington advised that they are trying to redesign the playground space so that it is a safe space for everyone to play. Miss Harrington confirmed that there is one staff member in the playground for children.  Emma advised that staff in the playground are not necessarily for supervision more of a point of reference for children to access support if needed.  Diane asked if the children have been involved in the discussions around the playground arrangements, given that some are unhappy, and also this is a children’s rights issue. Mrs Gardiner advised that some children have been involved.  The design of Stepps Primary playground would make it impossible for one staff member to observe all of the children, and there are too many children.  Lorraine enquired about the playground markings that the PTA were previously going to pay for.  Yorkjean advised that there are some ongoing conversations about this.  Mrs Gardiner also advised that there are discussions with TSNL about the installation of a metal shed for storage. |  | The parent council will follow up on a Freedom of Information request about the historical assessments of the playground area.  The parent council will discuss further how to respond to concerns from children and parents about the inadequate playground space and infrastructure |
| RIGHTS RESPECTING COMMITTEE | Diane confirmed she met with Miss Davidson who will lead the Rights Respecting Committee this year. The plan is to achieve gold status. To do this, the school require to embed children’s rights into the heart of all their actions and activities. This means children being involved in planning and decision making at all levels.  Diane also suggested that in order to achieve Gold, the school will require to address the dining room issue too.  To achieve Gold the school, and particularly the children need to understand the wider children’s rights issues, outwith school, within their local communities, nationally and even globally.  Diane and Miss Davidson have some ideas about how to achieve this.  The children were keen in presenting information to the parent council as well as local councillors and MSPs. |  | The parent council are happy to support the Rights Respecting Committee in their work |
| Previous Minutes | Outstanding actions   1. Astroturf – Mrs Gardiner Confirmed that chairs cannot be used on the Astroturf. Anyone requiring a seat needs to sit outwith the pitch.   Yorkjean advised at the previous event (sports day), those sitting on seats could not see because of everyone standing in front of them.   1. Parent Engagement Strategy – Lorraine advised that since William Collum left there was no update or progress on this strategy. However, a parent has followed up with new parent involvement officer Lorraine McBride, so Lorraine will await any further updates 2. STEAMO room video. The video has not yet been made | Mrs Gardiner confirmed that seats are not allowed on the astroturf |  |
| AOCB (Any other  competent business) | 1. Parent Council information sheet in P1 induction pack needs refreshed  * Transition planning and work will be starting soon  1. Display at front door for parent council activity requires refreshed. A new photograph and information about this year’s group will be added. Lorraine is looking for ideas for what else can go in this space. 2. An online survey will be created to go out to the parent forum again this year covering issues relating to communication and the dining room.   At the moment the parent council uses X, and the PTA uses Facebook however engagement in both is minimal.  Yorkjean confirmed that most communication from PTA occurs via WhatsApp as this is the easiest method.  The parent council will ask this question again this year to parents.   1. Yorkjean asked about homework whether it is all online or on paper. Yorkjean advised that both she and her child had some difficulties understanding the purpose of allocated homework.   Peter also suggested that parents need more support and guidance as to how to do the homework, especially when it is online activities.  Diane advised that there is a significant gap in knowledge and understanding on the use of Teams and online activities that neither the council nor the school has addressed since the Covid pandemic. Diane advised that this issue has been raised many times, including recently at the Thematic Inspection of the Council. Despite the Council driving forward their online/ virtual school work, they are leaving many parents and children behind. This is a concern.  Mrs Gardiner advised that individual parents should speak to their class teachers about any specific homework issues. Homework is the responsibility of each teacher.  Mrs Gardiner confirmed that homework was changed to be more flexible following the homework survey  Laura asked if every class has a Teams page as she cannot see one for her child. Mrs Gardiner confirmed that Mrs Shaw set up a Teams page for all classes.  Mrs Gardiner will feedback these issues   1. Diane advised that she attended the Education Scotland Thematic Inspection last week along with a few other parent council representatives. Despite the parent groups not knowing one another’s schools and priorities, there were consistent themes raised. These included the numerous issues with the local authority failing to authentically and consistently engage with parents and parent councils as evidenced in a number of decisions they have made in recent years. There was a clear consensus of dissatisfaction. |  | Parent Council information sheet in P1 induction pack needs refreshed  Parent council display at the front door will be refreshed and updated for this year  Any ideas about how else to use this space is welcomed.  An online survey will be sent to the parent forum to gain their views and experiences on school life, including the dining room and the role of the parent council.  Parents should speak directly to class teachers regarding any homework questions or issues |
| CORRESPONDENCE TO AND FROM THE PARENT COUNCIL (JUNE – OCTOBER 2024 | * Cllr Josh Cairns (SNP) * Mrs Gardiner (Head Teacher) * Catherine Sweeney * Stephen Watt and Monica Lennon (Scottish Labour MSP) * Greg Lennon (Local Councillor and Leader of the Progressive Change North Lanarkshire Group) * Cllr John McLaren (Scottish Labour) * Cllr Claire Williams (Scottish Greens) * Fulton MacGregor (SNP MSP) * James McEnaney and Garrett Stell (Herald Journalists) * Derek Watson and Gillian MacKay (Scottish Green MSP) * Katrina Murray (Scottish Labour MP) * John Ashcroft (NLC Roads and Asset Services Manager) * Scottish Youth Parliament * Peter McNally (NLC Community Partnership Officer) * Michael Dolan (NLC Education Manager) * Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland * Andrew McPherson (NLC Depute Chief Executive) * Kerry Tierney (NLC Partnerships and Projects Officer) * North Lanarkshire Council Parent Council Group (support group) * North Lanarkshire Council – Save the Bus Campaign Group * Chryston High School Parent Council * NLC Mainstream Transport |  |  |

**Draft Minutes completed by Diane Delaney 10th November 2024**

**DRAFT**

**OCTOBER 2024 ACTION PLAN**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Completed by** | **UPDATE** |
| The parent council will consider some of the key events over the course of a school year and identify priorities in the context of balancing the cost of the school day | Parent Council |  |
| Mrs Gardiner will share some of the responses from the Tackling Poverty Team work with the children (these will be included in the minutes) | Mrs Gardiner |  |
| Parent council to send a list of recurring events to Mrs Gardiner to support the development of the Cost of the School Day Policy | Parent Council |  |
| The parent council will discuss further how to respond to concerns from children and parents about the inadequate playground space and infrastructure | Parent council |  |
| All parents using the SPT bus service for their children to commute to and from school should write to them to raise concerns about leaving the children unsupervised in the playground in the mornings due to arriving before 8.45am | Parent Forum |  |
| The parent council will write to the SPT to raise concerns about this issue | Lorraine Kerr |  |
| Mrs Gardiner will look at the communication and ticketing for this and ensure parents of children in the choir get priority tickets. The event is on 12th December. | Mrs Gardiner |  |
| The parent council will follow up on a Freedom of Information request about the historical assessments of the playground area. | Lorraine Kerr |  |
| Mrs Gardiner will share the report provided to Mr Dolan and Cllr McLaren about the school dining room operations | Mrs Gardiner |  |
| The parent council will support the school in the development of a positive relationships policy | Parent Council |  |
| The parent council will continue to pursue support via elected representatives and will consider a formal complaint as a result of the lack of information pertaining to the overturn of the decision to increase the dining space. Concerns have also been raised about using a mystery shopper approach with the children. | Parent Council |  |
| Mrs Gardiner will update the Parent Council on further information about the mystery shopper exercise | Mrs Gardiner |  |
| The parent council continue to represent the school community in campaigning against the decision to remove the school bus. | Parent Council |  |
| The parent council continue to liaise with elected members and journalists about the school bus issue | Parent Council |  |
| All parents are encouraged to get involved in the school bus campaign by writing to their elected members too. | Parent Forum |  |
| Mrs Gardiner will send out information to the school community on how to contact classroom teachers and senior staff members | Mrs Gardiner |  |
| Mrs Gardiner advised that posts on X are being monitored. | Mrs Gardiner |  |
| The parent council are happy to support the Rights Respecting Committee in their work | Parent Council |  |
| Parent Council information sheet in P1 induction pack needs refreshed  Transitions will be starting soon | Parent council |  |
| Parent council display at the front door will be refreshed and updated for this year. Any ideas about how else to use this space is welcomed. | Lorraine Kerr - all |  |
| An online survey will be sent to the parent forum to gain their views and experiences on school life, including the dining room and the role of the parent council | Parent council |  |
| Parents should speak directly to class teachers regarding any homework questions or issues | Parent Forum |  |

**APPENDIX – TACKLING POVERTY TEAM WORK WITH STEPPS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**The Three Questions – Stepps Primary School – Tuesday 8th October – 24 pupils p4 – p7**

**How is the cost of living affecting you?**

Don’t buy branded items x 3

Soft plays etc are more expensive x 2

Wear more clothes instead of putting the heating on x 2

Normally run the shower for a while, now I don’t x 2

It’s affecting pets, food costs and vet bills x 3

Electricity, gas costs more x 11

Stop leaving lights on x 2

Not as many holidays

Food is more expensive x 8

Less time on gaming consols

Less time in the bath as water is expensive to heat

Christmas dinner is more expensive

Swimming

Halloween sweets x 2

If you break something you might not have enough to replace it

You might keep your lights on too long and the power might go out

Trips are more expensive, not going as often x 6

Clubs are more expensive x 6

After school care is expensive x 5

Life essentials are expensive

Petrol is more expensive x 8

Water costs x 6

Clothing is more expensive x 3

Less at birthday x 2

Turning lights off and PlayStation off when finished x 4

Having a budget for the month

Don’t spend as much money

Childcare

Christmas and Halloween are expensive

Sweets and drinks cost more

I notice that my mum doesn’t buy as much as she used to

If we are going out with our friends on the weekend and were going to the shops no one can afford the sweets

In the winter it’s freezing but it’s way expensive to put on the heating

If I turn the heating on my dad yells turn it off!!

Less food waste

Turn off the heating and wear a jumper

Going into the shower after you put it on, not letting it run for ages

I notice that my mum tells me to turn off my ps5 when I am not using it

It affects me because when I go to the shop my dad says buy the cheaper one

When I get in my shower, I never turn it off and then I get yelled at

It affects me because when I have the fridge open for too long, I get told to hurry up

Not enough money to go out for dinner at a restaurant

**How is affecting the wider community?**

Health and safety and care is not there for them

Rent, fuel, health care, spending on junk

Your house might have burned down and couldn’t afford a new one

People’s bills are higher x 7

Need to budget x 4

Poor health x 6

They could be homeless or can’t pay their bills

It can affect them because of tax

The cost of car fuel

The cost of car insurance

The taxes and car insurance are going up and they want us to get electric cars but they’re really expensive

Rent and mortgages are going up x 7

For older people who are retired so it will be harder to pay for the expensive stuff

The bosses are taking more of the money and the prices for petrol, car insurance is going up

Can’t pay tax

It would cost a lot to see someone from a different country (visiting family abroad)

The cost of fuel to visit family members x 2

People don’t spend money wisely x 4

When people are homeless, they can’t afford food, see them on the streets x 2

Homeless people are unable to look after themselves, afford a shave or haircut

Old people are out less and spend a lot on electricity

Because Scotland is a rainy country, people have to use a lot of electricity and heating, but the prices are really going up

More homeless people need help x 4

People losing houses

Getting a job

Cost of medicine

Drugs, betting

Lighting

People in India try to get money, but they are very poor

**What can we do help?**

Build more houses for less money

Lower the costs of after school clubs and clubs as they are very expensive x 6

Reduce the price of food x 7

Make hotel prices cheaper

More council houses

Give food to people who need it (homeless) x 2

Cut the cost of things

More food banks x 5

Lower the price of stuff we use in school

Make giant fields into houses

Lower the cost of electric cars

Lower the price of food in school x 2

Lower the cost of essentials x 2

Make the rent less expensive

Donate more to charities and foodbanks x 7

More carers for people

Lower the cost of rent that shops pay and then they could lower prices in the shops x 2

Make council flats for homeless people x 2

Lower the price of everything x 5

Paying for school lunch is not fair

They should send people out to buy them food

They should not make some people pay and some not (breakfast club and school lunches) x 2

Free breakfast club and school lunches x 9

Pay for parking x 2

Lower parking charges

Lower the cost of car insurance x 2

Giving homeless people food instead of giving them money

Open more local food banks