

Whitelees Primary School and Nursery Class

Parent Council Meeting - Minutes

30th October 2024 – 18.30



IN ATTENDANCE:

Kim Bell, Dawn Macpherson, Elaine Stewart, Susan Graham, Eve Tennant, Emily Sands, Fiona Kerr, Deborah Brass, Lynsey Wright and Sandi Rankin

WPS & NC- Laura Murdoch, Carol Stewart, Gioia McAuley

Apologies: Kirsty Bowman, Alieen Lewis, Kirsty MacKenzie, Danielle Scott, Katie McGarvie

Minutes agreed by: Eve Tennant

Minutes seconded by: Dawn MacPherson

The meeting was held in school and hosted by the chairperson, Kim. The meeting was started with a warm welcome to everyone and a thank you to everyone for attending.

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

Kim welcomed everyone and said she was looking forward to working together.

The operation of the PC will change from the norm. They will operate in small groups such as stock, fundraising, social media, raffle, volunteers, parental contacts and Christmas cards. Each group will report separately on any action required.

The PC will compile guides for each group enabling anyone to pick up the reins in the event that someone is unavailable for an event/meeting and new members will be able to use the guides in the future.

Access to Zeto is currently restricted to the Treasurer and Vice Treasurer with the Chairperson as back up although the PC are keen to move away from card payment due to the costs.

Fiona has started a new PC chat which currently has 27 members.

Planning for upcoming events – Disco and Christmas Fayre planning is well underway. Prizes for the fayre are coming in steadily.

Our Asda cash pot is currently sitting at over £500. The PC will give a final push as this closes at the end of November. As this money was raised by the community it will be ring fenced for the school community.

The PC agreed to pay 50% of the cost of the P7 leavers hoodies which will be looked at in the New Year

Scotplay came out to requote last week and it has been agreed to go ahead. Payment will be made to the school and the order will be placed before Christmas to avoid the price increase in the New Year. An update will be sent to the parent forum once the order has been placed. A request for help with the edging and chippings will be sent out by the PC on social media.

The PC changed things at Parents Night this term. They decided not to set up a stall, as previously there had been little engagement from the parent forum. Instead they decided to add some questions into the parent survey which received good feedback. In light of this the PC may arrange a Family Night in May. Parents also requested First Aid courses however, this is too costly for the PC.

PC Twitter engagement is minimal however, Facebook engagement is excellent. To further engage with the parent forum the possibility of a PC Newsletter was discussed. It was agreed that this would be done termly and sent out to parents along with the termly school newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Whitelees PS Parent Council Treasurer Report August 2024

As the last PC meeting wasn't long ago the balance in the bank remains the same -
£13428.71

Bank Signatures
Elaine Stewart (Treasurer)
Debbie Welsford
Lindsay Wingate

The process to add an extra signatory to the bank account is underway and is currently awaiting approval from the bank. Debbie and Lindsay are still signatories until this process is complete then they will be removed.

We may have to change bank accounts as our account is now charging for each transaction. It was suggested we enquire about charitable status. This has been discussed in the past and didn't go ahead. The current PC are unaware of the reasons for this. This may be looked at again.

Elaine suggested the Gift It Forward Thanks fund be consolidated into the bank account balance as all monies are for the children and it is difficult to keep track of the GIFT spend. It was agreed to do this moving forward.

HEAD TEACHERS REPORT

Laura welcomed the newly form Parent Council.

The recent school fundraiser raised just over £3000 for school funds. The School Fund pays for things like Halloween parties, Christmas parties, school treats, birthday box prizes, Sports Day inflatables and all things that make us Whitelees. It also enables us to pay for trips for pupils who would otherwise miss out.

We asked the children what they would like for the school and they were keen to have our goals repainted and new nets put on.

Our school fund is audited every year. We are looking for a small committee who will help verify larger spending from the school fund. Susan agreed to verify larger spending amounts and pass this information on to the PC. It was also agreed that Susan would verify our books. Susan agreed to come in monthly to do this.

Eve enquired about the sports area at St Mary's PS and asked if this would be something we could push the council for in our school. Laura explained that this was a community facility and didn't belong to the school. She also explained that the Council are inspecting all blaze pitches at schools and will prioritise the worst. We had a contractor in today inspecting our pitch so will await the outcome.

School Improvement Priorities

Carol and Gioia will take the lead on the School Improvement priorities:

Carol Stewart

Priority 1 is attendance. We will be looking at patterns of absence, reasons for absence and what we can put in place to help raise attendance. Our absence rates are monitored monthly, and in line with NLC any parent whose child has an absence rate below 95% will be contacted by the school to see what we can do to help improve attendance. If there is an improvement the following month but absence rate still remains below 95% contact will not be made however if the absence rate continues to fall a further phone call will be made.

Eve mentioned she was at PC training and they were talking about absence and had carried out a consultation with high school students. There is a direct correlation between attendance and attainment.

We are working with our Educational Psychologist Elspeth Singleton for individual family and whole school support. Elspeth is helping us with an audit to identify what we can do to support children further.

Writing - Louise MacKenzie's remit is writing across the school. Writing will be one of our improvement priorities for at least 2 years. This will consist of identifying children who are not meeting their writing targets, why they are not meeting them and what we can do to help.

Rights of the child – Carol and Gioia do weekly workshops with the children looking at the different rights children have. They always explain that with rights come responsibilities. The children are always reminded they have rights as does everyone else around them and we should help each other.

Dawn mentioned that, as a parent, she lacks knowledge on how children are taught maths and writing in school today and suggested that we could think about running workshops for parents. Laura explained that we had run a P1 homework workshop recently and would gauge feedback. Laura said we would happily provide workshops for parents if they were well attended.

It was also suggested that if your child is struggling with something in particular to advise them to speak to their teacher who can spend a little time in the school day explaining it to them.

Gioia McAuley

Amy Robertson (P7) is working on project-based learning with Meghan Hart (P5). This is in the very early stages and will start at the senior end.

Play – an Education Support Officer is working alongside the infant teachers and play is well underway. P1 are using the nursery whilst the nursery children are at lunch which gives them outdoor play for half an hour.

The senior area are looking at lots of resources and want to make the area more like a play area. We are gathering views from the senior end children to see how they would like the area to be developed.

Outdoor learning is being lead by Paige Forrest. All staff have taken part in training by Love Outdoors. This is the beginning of our outdoor learning journey. Carol Murdoch from Love Outdoors will be in doing some more training on our In Service day in November.

Outdoor learning will take place with 5 classes initially with 3 sessions – Carol Murdoch will lead the 1st session, the class teacher will lead the 2nd session and they will work together for the 3rd session. After this, the other 5 classes will participate.

Gioia thanked everyone who came along to dig in day. This was a very successful day and lots of work was done however, there is still work to do. The PC will put out a plea for volunteers who might be available to come and help whenever they are free, we can cordon off areas during the school day so work can be carried out.

AOB

Disco – Laura greed to donate a team star as a prize and Louise will be the DJ.

Swimming lessons – On the parent survey it was asked if we were considering doing the swimming lessons for primary 5, Laura explained that this was not cost effective and would only benefit one year group, we want to ensure our funding benefits the school as a whole.

MacMillan Coffee Morning - we didn't hold a Macmillan Coffee morning in September as primary 7 were on their Strathclyde Park trip early this year. We will still hold a fundraiser later in the school year which the primary 7 children will organise.

First Aid – there was a discussion around providing links for online first aid training. Carol and Gioia will do a workshop with the children covering basic first aid such as how to call an ambulance.

Family events – the PC are considering a family quiz night in May 2025, venue to be decided. Lynsey said she could provide a current price list for Abronhill community centre.

Christmas Fayre Donations - We will do what we do every year and ask for tombola donations for Children in Need instead of monetary donations. The PC will then donate a sum of the proceeds from the Christmas Fayre to Children in Need. The PC will do a poster for the Christmas Fayre which will be sent out next week. The PC are also looking for Christmas jumper donations for the Fayre. Last year the PC put a rail of Christmas jumpers out at the school entrance however, people were reluctant to take them so it was agreed that it may be better to sell them at the fayre for a small donation. Lynsey will bring a rail to display these. The PC will put out a communication regarding donations.

Swap shop – It was discussed that parents may be reluctant to use the swap shop as an adult from the school has to escort them there, however this is for child protection, to ensure there aren't people wandering around the school building and that the swap shop isn't left in disarray. It was suggested that once a month in the morning for 30 minutes parents can access the swap shop and Lynsey agreed to man this.

The PC for Cumbernauld PS have a system whereby parents can make a donation and take what they need which makes them feel less like they're accepting charity. It was agreed to trial this at the Christmas Fayre. Eve will make the price list.

Future disco's – The PC asked the parent forum for ideas of themes for discos or different fundraising nights. The PC will create a form to go out to the parent forum. The PC will send the link to the school and the school will send it out to the parents

The PC asked for registers for the upcoming school disco. These will be provided on the day of the disco. The PC will come in earlier to set up for this.

Future Meetings

All meetings will be held via a combination of online platform and in person at 18:30 on the following dates:

30th January – online

15th May – in person