**MINUTES OF THE PARENT COUNCIL MEETING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT MONCREIFFE PRIMARY SCHOOL ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2012**

**PRESENT**

Hannah Blair, Barbara Boyd, Alix Butterfill, Iain Collin, Kirstine Cook, Meike Cooper, David Dalziel, Carol Davidson, Mark Davidson, Pamela Davidson, Adele Evans, Heather Ferguson, Sonia Hamilton, Ali Karley, Tina MacNeil, Morag McKay, Kate Marshall, Carol Moir, Karen Neil, Kirsty Stewart, Sue Terras, Annelie Uwimana, Kevin Wilkie.

**WELCOME**

Chair Annelie Uwimana (AU) opened the meeting and welcomed such a large attendance. AU gave a brief clarification for new attendees of the difference between the Parent Council (PC) and Friends of Moncreiffe (FrOM), explaining the PC’s role is to represent parents and support staff, whilst FrOM carries out vital fundraising for the school.

**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes from the last meeting were approved, proposed by AU and seconded by Sue Terras (ST).

**HEADTEACHER’S REPORT**

AU introduced and welcomed new headteacher Barbara Boyd (BB) and expressed the PC’s appreciation that her appointment had brought a sense of security to the school after a period of change.

AU also expressed the PC’s gratitude for the tremendous job done by William Oliphant (WO) in filling in ‘with integrity and commitment’ as acting headteacher in such a challenging year. AU asked BB to pass on the PC’s thanks to WO. **Action:** BB

BB gave a brief explanation of her career, which she said had started 17 years ago in Edinburgh in a school similar to Moncreiffe and for the past four years had been spent at the Community School of Auchterarder, and explained that she had made the personal decision to seek a return to a primary school.

She described the initial challenges she had faced of dealing with a spate of ill-health within the staff in her early weeks at school, but that her initial impressions of Moncreiffe and its staff were positive.

BB explained she had heard of Moncreiffe having a really strong parent body before her arrival and this was to be welcomed. She said she would operate an ‘open-door’ policy to ensure she made herself available where possible for parents to express any concerns. At Auchterarder a small issues committee had been set up and she said that may be something to look at implementing at Moncreiffe, thus allowing the PC to deal with ‘more meaty’ issues.

Whilst she had discovered a lot of ‘good learning’ at the school, BB said some areas could be improved and developed. BB explained she had already asked one class to detail five things the children liked/didn’t like/wanted to see happening in the school and said it may be something to be carried out with the wider parent body. **Action:** To consider at the next PC meeting (IC/KM)

BB - who said the current school roll stands at 191, including the nursery - gave an update on staffing issues, welcoming the summer appointment of new teachers Cara McKillop (probationer) in P2, Jill Cassidy in P4 and Sarah Ruse, who is working with P2 and P5. She also described the temporary staff brought in to cover for absences in other areas of the school.

BB finished by thanking those present for attending and supporting the PC and proposed the idea of parents making themselves available as class representatives to liaise with PC in future. **Action:** To consider at the next PC meeting (IC/KM)

AU thanked BB for her input and welcomed a lot of fresh ideas.

**FrOM REPORT**

ST explained that the money raised by FrOM allows the school to buy things they would not otherwise be able to buy from regular school funds.

She detailed that for the 2011/12 school year FrOM had raised £7,365.

ST explained that FrOM had held their AGM the previous week and had set up a kitchen sub-committee to progress the new kitchen with the intention of raising funds to cover new utensils and ongoing costs.

Funds are also needed to carry out a possible overhaul of the school library and to repair rotten wood in the jungle play area.

ST revealed that the Hallowe’en parties would take place on Friday, October 26.

AU thanked ST for her report.

**CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

AU admitted when she took over last year the plan had been to involve the PC in ‘big projects’, but she detailed how the year had taken a different turn due to being involved in looking at staffing issues in the school. As PC chair, AU had liaised with Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) in getting more support for staff at school during Karen Young’s secondment away from school. The PC had tried to push for a new headteacher to be appointed as soon as possible and for staffing gaps to be plugged. Initially PC was to be represented on interview panel for new headteacher and had also met to pull together urgent issues to be presented to PKC on staffing concerns.

AU admitted it had been a trying year but felt lots had been achieved and that PC had performed a valuable, if unexpected, role.

She detailed the homework review that PC had undertaken, which had sought feedback from parents and children on homework. These were to be collated and passed on to BB. **Action:** AU

AU indicated she would be standing down from role and thanked all the PC members for their support through year/s.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Mark Davidson (MD) said the accounts were in good order and explained that only a small amount of money had been spent in the past year, and that at March 31, 2012, the balance had stood at £1,388.37. He had spoken to staff at PKC education services, who had indicated a budget of £400 would be available to PC for the current year.

MD also indicated he would be standing down from the role.

In addition, AU indicated discussions had already taken with BB as to how best to use PC’s funds, explaining that the money can only be used for specific purposes promoting ‘partnership’.

AU thanked MD for his report.

**ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

AU explained that the PC’s constitution requires that half the PC members, and those who have been members for two years, stand down, but that these members could be re-elected.

It was confirmed that the following members were standing down/had stood down and would not be seeking reappointment:

Mark Davidson (who indicated his willingness to assist incoming treasurer)

Jill Honeyman

Jaime Lidstone

Thanks were recorded for the contributions of these members.

In seeking a successor, AU indicated there was scope for chairperson’s role to be broken down into smaller responsibilities that could be shared. KM also explained that constitutional change made in the last school year means any votes can be carried out electronically if members cannot attend meetings.

The following parents expressed an interest in becoming members and were nominated by KM seconded by Kirsty Stewart (KS):

Hannah Blair (HB)

Adele Evans (AE)

Ali Karley (AK)

Kevin Wilkie (KW)

Following discussions:

KM indicated a willingness to chair meetings and was proposed by ST and seconded by SH

AU stood down but was re-elected as member, nominated by ST and seconded by IC.

IC indicated he would be willing to continue as minute-taker/secretary.

The position of treasurer remained unfilled and it was agreed that filling the post would be considered at the next meeting. **Action:** KM/IC

PC membership is therefore as follows:

Kate Marshall Chairman (P5 and P2)

Iain Collin Secretary (nursery and P4)

Vacancy Treasurer

Sue Terras From representative (P5 and P2)

Hannah Blair Member (P1)

Adele Evans Member (P2)

Sonia Hamilton Member (P3 and P7)

Ali Karley Member (P2)

Annelie Uwimana Member (P3 and P6)

Kevin Wilkie Member (nursery and P4)

Barbara Boyd Headteacher

Heather Ferguson Staff representative

Kirsty Stewart Staff representative

It was emphasised by KM and AU that anyone from the Parent Forum can attend any/all PC meetings and contribute to discussions. However, as set out in the PC constitution, there is a need for a quorum of Members to make decisions about actions or spending funds. All present were encouraged to come along to future meetings.

Pamela Davidson (PD) asked if there should be a role for someone on the PC to bring forward issues raised by wider parent body. PD also asked if there was merit in a postbox or email address for parents to bring forward issues/concerns. **Action:** Consider at next meeting (KM/IC)

AU admitted the PC could improve on publicity and canvassing parents’ views.

**CEILIDH**

AU explained that the PC had proposed holding a ceilidh in the last school year, with a venue provisionally booked, but that because of involvement in staffing issues the event had never taken place. The hope was that the ceilidh could go ahead this year as it was felt to be a good way of welcoming BB and new staff, breaking down the barriers between staff and parents, etc. and to involve children.

It was decided that Friday, November 23, should be looked at as a provisional date. **Action:** SH is to continue work she carried out on the ceilidh in the last school year, with the help of AU, and to report back progress at next meeting.

**FUTURE PROJECTS**

AU said PC would welcome ideas for future projects to be carried forward in the next year. Amongst those already suggested had been a school handbook/leaflet.

ST proposed a handout for parents to detail difference between PC and FrOM.

Meike Cooper (MC) asked about an event detailing roles of staff within the school.

BB asked whether it would be an idea to produce a parents’ handbook by parents in a format that is easily updated and ideas from those in attendance included how/to whom issues/concerns should be brought to school. **Action:** All

AU admitted the PC could improve ways of getting information out to parent body.

BB mentioned at last school they ran a clinic event where people could bring forward issues.

AU indicated BB had suggested improving the extra-curricular activities at the school. BB said PC at last school was involved in helping organise after-school tutors, etc. May be something to look at, but a certain level of interest would have to be guaranteed.

BB also proposed a database of parents’ talents or jobs to be utilised in school. This was supported by AK.

**AOCB**

MC asked whether a ‘meet the teacher’ event could be arranged to allow parents to meet new staff and BB indicated she would take that back to staff. **Action:** BB

PD asked about learning logs and BB said dates were in the school calendar for those to be sent to parents.

KM indicated concerns had been expressed to her re class sizes, in particular P2. BB addressed the issue, indicating that the legal maximum is 33 and that the recommendation is for no more than 30 in P1-3. Other numbers are the wishes of the Scottish government and not legal limits. She also explained that composite classes cannot be larger than 25.

BB explained that P2 is currently sitting at 30 and she had been made aware of concerns. She explained that PKC cutbacks had meant the removal of additional staff, who had been a ‘bonus’ from PKC. She indicated that one parent at the previous week’s FrOM meeting had raised the prospect of creating a composite class. BB explained that no less than five children can be moved to create a composite but doing so would raise P3 to the 25 limit for composite classes. This would not be possible because space has to be left for new pupils to come into P3.

KM said that, last year, four P1s had moved into P2 and it had worked well.

BB explained that P2 had been getting additional support and that she had spoken to the P2 and P3 teachers and they were now looking at the timetable to look at grouping P2s and P3s for subjects. She indicated it was felt that would be better for children than a composite class, as that would have to be created based on the oldest P2s moving to P3.

Carol Moir raised a question about homework in P2, where it was felt there had not been enough and confusion over when it should be returned. This was backed by other P2 parents present. BB indicated she would look into the matter. **Action:** BB

BB asked that any concerns in future could be included on the agenda for PC meeting so that she could look into issues in advance of meeting and provide more detailed feedback. **Action:** KM/IC/All

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was set as Thursday, October 4, but was thereafter brought forward to Monday, October 1.