**MINUTES OF THE PARENT COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT MONCREIFFE PRIMARY SCHOOL ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2012**

**PRESENT**

Angela Birrell (AB), Hannah Blair (HB), Barbara Boyd (BB), Iain Collin (IC), Adele Evans (AE), Heather Ferguson (HF), Ali Karley (AK), Kate Marshall (KM), Kirsty Stewart (KS), Kevin Wilkie (KW).

**WELCOME**

Chairman Kate Marshall (KM) opened the meeting and welcomed non-member Angela Birrell (AB). Apologies for absence were received from Sonia Hamilton, Sue Terras and Annelie Uwimana (AU).

**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes from the last meeting, the AGM, were approved unanimously.

KM informed the meeting she had set up a Parent Council (PC) facebook page and urged members to join. She also told members of the intention to set up a PC email address. With this to be used for the parent forum to bring forward issues/complaints it was felt this would remove the need to go ahead with appointing class reps from the PC for each primary year.

KM checked with Barbara Boyd (BB) whether progress had been made on the homework review.

BB brought up the ‘meet the teacher’ event and AB observed that it had appeared to not have been well attended, and that her teacher had not made a presentation, as she had been expecting. With three children at school she had not been able to attend three different classrooms but the information that had been available had been informative and she had felt able to ask questions.

KM referred to questions over P2 homework at AGM and informed the meeting that an explanatory letter from school to parents had gone out immediately after the meeting.

**Action:** KM to set up email account.

**Action:** BB to get homework review data from AU.

**Action:** BB to take up lack of presentation at meet the teacher event with staff.

**FrOM UPDATE**

In her absence, ST had forwarded a FrOM update ahead of the meeting:

“Friends of Moncreiffe haven’t had a meeting since the PC last met so just a short update from us.

  Our current fundraiser is the Peel2Save card campaign – discount cards sell for just £10 each with £5 per card coming to the school.  We are hoping to raise money from this campaign to fund utensils, pans and equipment for the teaching kitchen.  We are selling the cards every day this week in the playground; morning and afternoon beside the notice-board.  Please also sell to friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues – these cards are really good value; all the discounts are for Perth businesses and you can recoup the £10 investment very quickly.  Perfect for school holidays as there are vouchers for the Cinema, Noahs, Active Kids, Scone Palace and lots of restaurants and others too.

  Next up will be the Halloween parties on October 26th – a note for tickets will be coming out from school this week.  We are again being strict with the rules around collection of children from the parties; this is for their protection as it will be late, dark and busy when the parties finish.

  And finally, one for the adults, we are again hosting a wine tasting this year – 9th November at the Salutation Hotel.  This is a social evening, with the chance to try lots of different wines, a few nibbles and relax with friends.  Ticket information will come out after the holidays.  Perfect opportunity to buy some discount wine for Christmas too!”

**HEADTEACHER’S UPDATE**

Despite the low numbers, BB felt the meet the teacher event had gone well and indicated the feedback from staff had been positive.

BB detailed ongoing staffing issues with office staff and responded to a question from AB by indicating Perth and Kinross Council do not have a ‘bank’ of supply workers for office staff. BB said that an email regarding school office work had sent via council management system SEMISS and that the school were currently unable to use their parentline system due to it needing updated.

BB informed the meeting that the staff had started an audit of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in the school to formulate a three-year plan. She said that clearly there was a role for parental input in the audit and that another event could be arranged, possibly in November, to get feedback on areas that parents would like to see developed in school.

The conversation then moved to improving communication between school/PC and home, with KW posing a question about a twitter feed, having been made aware recently of one used by Milnathort Primary School. BB said that could be looked at and informed the meeting that the school had started the process of collating and updating data held by school on parents. Once this had been completed the school planned to operate text updates.

On the subject of media, BB agreed the school website was in need of updating and AB asked whether the PC minutes could be made available to everyone via the web. She indicated there was a feeling amongst some that the PC was a small group of people and that it was unavailable to the wider parent forum. KM said a desire to improve communication and profile had been behind the note on PC sent via the school before the meeting.

BB said she was keen to look at the school’s library provision. The school currently has an empty classroom that could be turned in to a learning resource area for all classes. Once the kitchen has been finalised she was hopeful FrOM could help with the library and also questioned whether families would be willing to donate books. AB asked whether any of the leftover books from the stall at the Christmas and Summer Fairs could be left for the school to choose from, a suggestion which was backed by KM.

Finally, BB indicated she wanted to look at revamping the playground, which she felt was ‘sterile’. She asked if there were any joiners in the parent forum who may be able to help with repairing the jungle play area and said that plans were in place to repair/replace the fence. She wanted to look at possibility of introducing benches for kids, who could use them to eat packed lunches outdoors in suitable weather. AK asked whether the children would be asked for their ideas on how best to proceed and was assured they would be.

**Action:** BB to explore joiner contacts in parent forum.

**Action:** KM to set up PC twitter feed.

**UPDATE FROM PARENT COUNCIL CHAIRS’ MEETING**

AE had attended the meeting on behalf of the PC on September 19 and said it had been a networking opportunity to meet other chairs. Presentations from PKC officials had emphasised the role PCs play and had asked for feedback on anything that PC needed to take to a higher level.

Attendees were also informed of a consultation on PKC’s anti-bullying policy to take place on November 22, with parent and children representatives being sought.

AE also informed the meeting that former headteacher Karen Young had given a presentation on CfE.

There will be another meeting on March 20.

**CEILIDH NEWS**

SH had informed KM ahead of the meeting that Dewar’s had been booked for the agreed date of November 23 and that it was now a question of numbers. BB said a school newsletter would go out on November 2 and that would be a good opportunity to inform parents of event/ticket details. As yet, no band had been booked.

AB asked if the previous event had been well attended, with those present at it indicating it had been so popular that people had, unfortunately, been turned away at the door.

**Action:** BB, AK and IC to look for band and information to be prepared for November newsletter (KM) ahead of ticket sales at parents’ evening.

**PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

BB then explored the issue of how parents can help in school, whether in the role of parent helpers or learning partners, etc. She said parental help could be welcomed in many areas and that the PC could help in bringing parents and school together.

KM agreed a bank of parents/family/carers willing to help out and bring skills to school would be a good idea.

BB informed the meeting that the school was closer to getting kitchen up and running and that a discussion had taken place with staff as to how best to use the facility. The school was looking at ‘double periods’ that children would spend in the kitchen area, learning not only cooking skills but using the facility to look at numeracy, literacy, etc. She said there would clearly be a requirement for parental help in this area.

AK felt there would be a number of parents/carers willing to help out in different school areas.

On the same subject, BB talked of setting up a ‘skills directory’ in the parent forum but also putting together a core team that, if helping out regularly, would need to go through disclosure checks (Protecting Vulnerable Groups – PVG scheme).

AE felt it may be difficult to get parents to commit regularly.

BB asked whether the PC could help with issuing a questionnaire asking parents their profession/skills and whether they would be willing to share their experience with pupils/give time to school?

KM stressed the need for the information to be acted upon, given previous experiences.

BB also told the meeting she had approached the head of Perth High School, Peter Flood, to ask if any sixth year pupils would be interested in mentoring Moncreiffe pupils, something that had worked well in her last school.

BB also talked of gardening work needing done and that was one area where a parent volunteer list could be utilised. KM indicated that help from SSE’s Communities at Heart scheme may be worth exploring.

**Action:** AK to draw up questionnaire on skills directory, etc. in time for PC members to hand out to parents at parents’ evening. Members are also to make themselves available to help man book fair stall at parents’ evening.

**ISSUES GROUP**

BB indicated there was a need to raise awareness of where/to whom parents/carers go if they have any issues they need to raise with the school. She explained generic issues, eg. school uniform, playground supervision, school dinners, etc., should come through the PC and other more specific issues should be raised directly with school.

**Action:** KM to publicise use of PC email address as avenue for raising issues/concerns.

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

BB raised the issue of the PC producing a handbook ‘for parents by parents’, indicating Perth Grammar had one that she felt was worth looking at. It was intended to be a pack that parents would receive when their children come to school. The school is currently preparing its own handbook, which has to be ready in November for the next academic year. BB asked whether an A4 folder, sponsored by the PC, could be looked at to include the information parents would need.

Areas to be covered could include how to raise concerns; what is an in-service day; what to probationer teachers do; how parents’ evenings work and how to prepare; what are golden groups/pupil councils.

**Action:** KM to contact Perth Grammar PC chair for access to their parents’ handbook.

**Action:** KM to email round list of possible areas to be covered in a parents’ handbook and volunteers sought to help with future writing of handbook.

**Action:** Board for post-it note suggestions of questions to be covered in handbook to be organised for parents’ evening.

**AOCB**

KM asked about Glow passwords and was told by BB that Glow was in the process of being taken over by a different company and that teachers Audrey Lindsay and Jill Cassidy had taken on the school management of Glow.

KM also suggested PC members’ mobile phone numbers should be collated.

**Action:** Members to pass on phone numbers where possible.

**TREASURER VACANCY**

AK volunteered for post and was subsequently elected to the position unanimously.

**Action:** AK to check rules for receiving PKC budget set aside for paying minute-taker.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was set as Monday, December 10.