**MINUTES OF THE PARENT COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT MONCREIFFE PRIMARY SCHOOL ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2014**

**PRESENT**

Hannah Blair, Barbara Boyd, Iain Collin, Carol Davidson, Adele Evans, Felicity Graham, Ali Karley, Audrey Lindsay, Kate Marshall, Cllr Alexander Stewart, Kirsty Stewart.

**WELCOME**

Chair Kate Marshall (KM) opened the meeting and indicated apologies for absence had been received from Kevin Wilkie. She also welcomed to the meeting Councillor Alexander Stewart, who had been invited following the previous meeting.

**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes from the meeting on September 2 were approved unanimously.

KM carried forward to the next meeting the collation of the homework survey conducted in the school.

**FrOM UPDATE**

Hannah Blair (HB) detailed a busy year for FrOM, including the Christmas Fair, Chrismas cards, ladies night and peel to save vouchers, with the Fair raising £1230 of a balance of £2,525.45.

FrOM had contributed funds for the panto visit, school Christmas parties and Santa gifts.

HB told the meeting of plans to host a quiz night on March 26, school fun run on May 16 and Summer Fair on June 7.

Barbara Boyd (BB) indicated that the community council had asked for donations for the South Perth Community Partnership newsletter and the meeting decided it was more of a Parent Council matter and agreed to donate £25 towards its publication. It was also agreed that the school/Parent Council should include information in the newsletter as it would represent a good chance to network and inform the local community of school events/news.

**HEADTEACHER’S REPORT**

BB detailed the various staffing changes that the school had undergone since the last meeting; recruitment for the 0.5 position was on-going and Heather Ferguson had moved on to a learning support role, with her replacement for P3 having gone off unwell. Mrs Ruse has stepped in but the post was proving difficult to fill with a supply teacher, possibly due to national issues with supply pay agreements. It was having a knock-on effect on BB and Principal Teacher Nicola Murray and reducing their available time for admin work. BB described the situation as leaving the school at ‘crisis point’, with the staffing levels having a ‘real impact’ on management.

BB indicated the commitment was to have Mrs Ruse in P3 until new teacher able to return, although that was not expected to be in the short-term.

**Action:** It was agreed that the PC would write to the council to express concerns about the issue and highlight to the other PCs. Councillor Stewart would also raise the issue with PKC.

BB also discussed the staffing for the next school year and indicated that, as the school roll is sitting at 154, the staffing levels should be reduced from eight this year to seven, including BB. BB said she anticipated PKC allowing for eight members of staff so that the current seven classes – one for each year – could be maintained.

BB indicated there may also be issues surrounding reduced class sizes, with the Scottish Government’s stated aim being 18 pupils. That would mean composite classes – mixing pupils from more than one year group - right through the school. Presently, a composite P6/7 is under consideration as P7 next year would only number 14 and there are 28 in the current P5. BB said she would rather not composite the classes all the way up the school as this would cause ‘upheaval’. There are clear guidelines on how to composite; generally on age criteria, but also with consideration for gender and special circumstances, such as twins.

BB told the meeting that the grant application for the play area had been successful and KM offered the help of SSE in removing rotten apparatus, thus saving money that could be spent on further equipment. There was a discussion over children still using the area and it was agreed that the school and PC would reinforce message that it should not be used.

BB also asked for help with another project, the planting of 500 fresh shrubs.

**Action:** Volunteers to be sought for tree planting.

BB detailed the changes that may be required should the Scottish Government go through with changes to offer 600 hours of childcare, which would be an increase of 125 hours and would have a ‘significant’ impact on nurseries.

BB spoke about the curriculum evening from October when the numbers had been disappointing but the feedback good. She praised the staff and KM said that feedback to her from other parents had been ‘really good’.

There was detail of a CEOP evening on March 6 at Perth Playhouse on ‘keeping children safe’. KS and Jill Cassidy had taken a lead on this subject in school. BB said the event would be detailed in the next school newsletter.

**VOLUNTEERING**

BB indicated a letter had been drafted to go out to parents/carers re volunteering, with progress having been made in finding help for gardening group, kitchen work, reading and football. It was agreed that the PC could fund disclosure checks where required.

**Action:** Letter seeking volunteers from parent/carer group to be issued.

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

AK and KM had completed a lot of work on the parent handbook but had had no feedback from other PC members.

**Action:** Draft to be sent round again for feedback within two weeks. AK also asked for feedback from school to ensure details were correct.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

The PC had agreed to fund a laptop and paper for the school but AK asked for receipt so the PC could reimburse the school.

**Action**: BB to get Mrs Donaldson to chase PKC for receipts.

It was agreed that the PC would share the funding of FrOM’s monthly printing costs.

AK indicated she would applying for the PC grant for the new year.

**SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION**

KM detailed that she had received a lot of correspondence indicating concern that parents/carers had been hearing things from children first and not from school. One example had been the prospect of composite classes in the next school year. She said there were concerns over the possibility of mixed messages.

BB asked if there were other issues and hoped that the topic of next year’s P6/7 trip had been dealt with at a recent meeting.

HB said there was a feeling it may be ‘small things’ that parents might find out about through children.

It was agreed that the school should aim to strike a balance between using paper communications and text, email and social media.

**HOMEWORK**

The topic was raised of the level of homework and classwork in P2, and following a lengthy discussion BB reiterated that if individual parents have concerns about anything relating to the school they should contact the school and speak to BB or approach the class teacher. AL stressed, backed by KS, that teachers would always welcome a parent/carer with a concern.

It was stressed that the PC was not the appropriate forum to raise individual issues, but that general issues of concern could be.

It was agreed that the Parent Handbook should include a guide as to how to raise concerns with the school.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was set as April 28, with a further meeting provisionally set for May 28 due to the cancellation of the November 4 meeting.