

MINUTE OF MEETING OF ST JAMES' PARENT GROUP

Monday 13th January 2025 at 18:00

Committee Members: Christina Waltham, Marie Prior, Claire Ferguson, LeeAnn Nelson and Sari Cabrera Valdivia

Chair – Claire McLaughlin and Michelle Martinson

1. Welcome

Michelle Martinson welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Claire McLaughlin, Sari Cabrera Valdivia, Father John, Mrs Pacitti, Mrs Gillies, and Mr Healy

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting from 11th November 2024 were noted, issued and marked as accepted with no revisions.

4. Feedback from Christmas Fayre

- Positives
 - Success - raised approx £2,000
 - Stalls
 - Variety
- Improvements
 - Mic issues
 - Busy and loud
 - Santa queue
- New ideas
 - Review potential for a softer start
 - Ticketing system for santa so we don't have everyone in the queue at one time for over an hour, 30 mins slots.

5. Treasurer / Finance Update – Marie Prior

Marie advised that the account was in a stable state and sitting at roughly £7,500.

Income:

- December - Christmas Fayre - Approx £2,000
- February - Valentines Disco - TBC
- March - Asda Cashpot - £389
- May - Tesco - TBC, and End of year disco - TBC

Outgoings:

December payments	January payments coming up	February - June (est)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Nativity costumes● Deposits for buses for leavers events● Christmas party snacks for all year groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● P6 production costumes● P7 leavers hoodies● Valentines Disco tuck	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 2024/25 - P7 Leavers event● End of year disco tuck

6. Participatory Budgeting - Marie Prior

Something the Parent Group has been looking into is Participatory Funding, where the Group would gift funds to each year group to make a purchase towards learning materials, topic materials etc. We understand that there is a lot of training and recommendations to review on this but we would like each year group to have a think about this and if there is something identified that we could donate funding towards.

We will review a figure as a group and in partnership with the head teacher and senior leadership team, which will be the same across all year groups and update further at the next meeting.

7. Health and Well-being Group Update - Pupil input

Miss Campbell and Miss Potter, alongside some members of the Health and Well-Being group gave the attendees an update on this year's focus.

The H&W Group have identified two key areas of focus this year - Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing. This includes things like outdoor learning, daily mile, and lunchtime clubs (cheerleading, dance and ball games) as well as a focus to beat the January blues where our students in the upper school have started clubs (art, bracelet making, paired reading and play-doh creations), mindfulness sessions and looking at links back to the physical health group.

The group will continue to make posters to highlight the wonderful things available across the school groups and carry out surveys for feedback and what other activities could look like.

Thank you so much to our Health and Well-being Group for being in attendance out of school hours and presenting this great work to the group, a huge well done to all involved.

8. Valentines disco - Michelle Martinson

- Times and dates -
 - Thursday 13th February
 - Disco 1 - P1 to P3 from 6.00pm to 7.15pm
 - Disco 2 - P4 to P7 from 7.30pm to 8.45pm
- Tasks to be completed -
 - Tuck shop run to Costco
 - Variety of on the night roles to suit all - more info will be share via email on the run up. Please continue to come along and support the events as we know the kids all love coming along.
- Feedback
 - The discos have been moved forward 30mins due to feedback regarding attendance and behaviour in class following discos previously. This is a trial which will likely also be the case at the June disco to see how this works with helper numbers and attendance at school. Please let us know your feedback.

9. Grant Funding – Claire Ferguson

Renfrewshire Partnership Funding 2024 - £5000 - A new sound and lightning system for school productions has been bought and the Disney licence has been paid. The Parent Group were delighted to be able to use the balance of funding to purchase the costumes for the Nativity in December, and the costumes for the Disney production this year.

The award grant has now been fully expended, the regular monitoring updates are up to date and the final report will be issued to Renfrewshire Council.

Asda cashpot - £389 - This initiative has now completed and when received, expected end term 3 - End March 2025, the money will be used for end of academic year activities for all year groups.

Tesco - 'We grow stars' - Initiative is now live in Tesco Renfrew Store - Please use your blue tokens at the checkout and vote for St James'. We could be gifted up to £1500 to be used for planters and equipment. One planter will be assigned to each year group for growing plants, fruit and vegetables and allowing more hands-on learning for the pupils. This closes 31st March 2025 and notification will be issued from Tesco in May 2025.

Renfrewshire Partnership Funding 2025 - we continue to monitor dates for applications for the 2025 submissions, and ask the school and parents to think if there is anything we require money for across the school to run any initiatives or continue the good work going on across the school community, up to a value of £5,000. We are expecting applications to be submitted March/April and will update when we know more.

If there are any other funding sources out there parents, guardians and teachers are aware of, please let us know and we can investigate further.

10. Uniform / Leavers / Communion Swap - Claire Ferguson

As Parents and Carers should be aware the Parent Group run a Uniform Bank within the school. This is there for anyone across the school community who needs access to uniform and helps reduce the amount of uniform going to landfill and creating more waste. The uniform bank is a free resource, requests can be made directly to the school for items required without having to speak to the group, we also have a form for anonymous requests. The Parent Group also set up and run the Uniform Bank at major school events, dates are advertised in advance.

To help keep up the good work going on, we are keen to try and assist with outfits for the up and coming Communions and Leavers events in May and June and would therefore ask for donations of dresses, suits, kilts, outfits, accessories and shoes, in good condition.

Once we have this up and running we will give out further information about dates when parents and pupils can view and collect the items available. Again this is a free resource.

Please note there is no pressure or formal requirement on dress codes for either of these events and is entirely up to the individual.

There has already been a number of Communion dresses donated to the school and further information can be received by emailing or popping into the school office.

If you require any further information, advice or support, please do not hesitate to reach out.

11. End of Year Trip / Event (PF) - Michelle Martinson

Parent feedback has been received by the group regarding a full school trip, Parents would like to know if this is a possibility.

Feedback from Mrs Fitzsimmons and the Senior Leadership team - It is something the school would love to do, but faces a number of difficulties, this includes, but is not limited to;

- The numbers of pupils in attendance
- The cost of organising travel
- The cost of the tickets (if required)
- Times of travel meant not a lot of time at the destination,
- Numbers of helpers
- Numbers of children with Additional Support Needs who require 1-2-1 support.

Other feedback included;

- St James' run the 'Big Day In' at the end of the academic year instead of a trip, which starts as soon as the school day begins at 9am, and has a number of activities.
- Inclusion - some pupils feel safer within school grounds.
- Numbers - school grounds means it's manageable for staff, without the requirement to ask for parent helpers and further support.

A trip won't be ruled out, but with support from the Parent Group it may be that this is identified for one particular year group. We will continue to work as a team to identify a way forward and review costs, locations and logistics.

12. Giglets Feedback (PF) - Michelle Martinson

Parent feedback has been received by the group regarding Giglets

Mr Moran gave an overview of the pupils' views on Giglets, with an overall score of 4.18/5 stars, and 82% saying they enjoy reading online.

There was a parent survey issued, which only 9 parents/carers completed, which means it's difficult to gauge feedback for the poor response rate. However, those that did respond were positive.

Feedback on the night of the Parent Group, which Mr Moran will take on, and where required feedback to Giglets -

- Not user friendly being web-based - have to log in all the time, layout can be difficult depending on which device you are using at home to access. Is there the possibility of an app?
- Parents are trying to limit the amount of time children spend on devices.
- Variety of books, some pupils are more interested in fact books.
- It is difficult to gauge reading ability at home with these books. Some weeks they are easy, some weeks difficult.
- Mixed messaging regarding the 'read out loud' function where the book is read to the pupil. Can this be disabled?

Giglets will continue to be monitored and reviewed for success.

Mr Moran stressed that if there are any families struggling, then to reach out via the class teachers, office, email etc, and let the school know. This can be issues with access, issues with Giglets, and/or individual requirements.

Physical reading books are still used in class and will continue. Another resource mentioned was Epic! Books.

13. Head teachers report - Mrs Fitzsimmons

With the school having just returned from Christmas break, Mrs Fitzsimmons made reference to the November school Newsletter by way of an update on activity in the school. This was issued by email and is linked in the school website on GLOW.

The next issue will be in the coming weeks.

The main item for discussion and parent support is traffic and parking around the school. At our last meeting in November some of the Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) attended the meeting to highlight the growing concerns with Road safety in and around the School Community. They showed a road safety video the pupils have created which discusses the importance of road safety and promotes a 'Park and Stride' initiative.

Gerry Hannah, the Head of Climate, Public Protection and Roads for Renfrewshire, as well as 2 of the local Councillors, were also in attendance at the November meeting where he discussed parking congestion and road safety concerns. Some issues with infrastructure have been identified which since the last meeting a number of interventions will be put in place;

- Refuse Collection Vehicles – Waste Services advise they will ensure this route is amended to keep the refuse collection vehicles away from the School during drop off and pick up times.
- Double yellow lines on McGregor Avenue – in the process of creating a temporary traffic regulation order to change these lines to double double yellows (this is where they have small blips on the kerb). This removes the ten minute grace period and creates an immediate parking contravention that the wardens can enforce.
- Pavement parking – taking a report to elected members in the middle of January and if approved this would allow the wardens to then enforce pavement parking.
- Gerry will schedule in a couple of visits around collection time just to see the situation for himself better.
- In terms of active travel and road safety – Lead Officers for these areas will arrange a meeting to discuss what specific support we can look at in these areas to improve active travel to the school as well as the things like park and stride that we discussed at the meeting.

The size of the school and the amount of cars are an issue and we need to try and encourage more people to walk or park further away. It was mentioned that the pavement parking ban is now enacted and from January fines will be issued on non-exempt roads.

Please note that there have been several instances of ambulances not being able to reach those in need and local neighbours not being able to access or leave their homes due to inconsiderate parking at drop off, pick up and discos, this is not acceptable and we encourage everyone to play their part in being respectful within our community.

This includes parking in the disabled bay, only those with a 'blue badge' are entitled to park in these bays, please leave them clear for people who require them.

During bad weather, in particular, snow and ice, the school gritting plan is followed and adhered to, this does not include the approaches to the school, which are under Council control and are a category B, which means they will be gritted after category A, so likely after school drop off times.

The school cannot be liable for individuals carrying out gritting in and around the school area.

14. Correspondence -

- It should be noted, as per Renfrewshire Council guidance, the School will not be using 'X' (Twitter) for any communications until further notice.
- Consultation on Religious Observance - Mrs Fitzsimmons
 - The Scottish Government are reviewing legislation that will allow pupils to make the decision to opt out of Religious Observance.
 - The school have formed a response, the parent group are forming a response and parents have been invited to also.

- It should be noted that no parents or carers across the school community have opted out to date at St James'.

15. AOCB -

- No other items to raise.
- Date of next meeting - Monday 17th March 6pm in school