

WALLACE PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11th September 2017 at 8pm

PRESENT:	Head Teacher	Susan Dalrymple (SD)
	Deputy Head Teacher	Lynne Docherty (LD)
	Council Members	Claire Devine (CD)
		Charris Malcolm (CM)
		Kate Murray (KM)
		Barbara Pender (BP)
		Councillor Jacqueline Cameron (JC)
		Linda Dunwoodie (LD)
		Mariam Ashraf (MA)
		Sarah Kidd (SK)
		Elaine Wong (EW)
		Cat Robinson (CR)
		Charlene Murray (CM)
		Emma Beattie (EB)
		Kristen Russell (KR)
		Michelle McNairn (MMcN)
		Emma Rankin (ER)
		Lynn Yates (LY)
		Margaret McLeod (MMcL)
		Claire Graham (CG)
		Lesley Furmage (LF)
		Sarah Cooper (SC)
	Chairperson	Kenny Campbell (KC)

a) Welcome and Apologies

Kenny Campbell welcomed Mrs Susan Dalrymple to the meeting and noted that the meeting had a good attendance. No apologies had been received prior to the commencement of the meeting.

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b) Matters Arising

Use of Wallace Primary as a Polling Place

Councillor Jacqueline Cameron is kindly providing support to the Parent Council for a proposed change of venue from Wallace Primary to an alternative location.

Attached is the text from correspondence to Councillor Cameron from Renfrewshire Council, Corporate Services.

No objections were raised by Parent Council Members for a change of venue however it is noted that a move to an alternative location is unlikely to happen in the short term.

Parking

Concern is growing once again relating to parking and traffic issues around the perimeter of the school (during the start and end of the school day).

The Roads Department were most recently contacted by the Parent Council during September 2015 and a representative of the Roads Department visited the school at this time.

Councillor Cameron confirmed that she will contact the Roads Department advising of concerns raised.

Susan Dalrymple advised that the school has been in contact with the Police Scotland this term concerning a recent issue highlighted by parents

Vehicles causing an obstruction (i.e. parking on a pavement, in close proximity to a road junction, etc) do not come under the jurisdiction of the Roads Department and in such cases, are a police matter.

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c) Head Teachers Report for Parent Council

Delighted to have been appointed. So warmly welcomed by staff, pupils and parents. Fantastic group of children here who are hardworking, well-mannered and keen to learn.

Ambitious vision for Wallace. Best School in Renfrewshire – every child that comes through the school to get best possible experience and opportunity to reach potential.

Absolutely committed to driving school forward.

SD provided a staffing update including the need to appoint a new DHT.

School Improvement Plan (SIP) to focus on literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing. SIP and school attainment data to be discussed at future Parent Council Meetings.

School lunch arrangements have been rationalised to the benefit of pupils and teachers.

Surveys recently issued have raised issues which will be addressed. Results and comments will be published.

School communications improving through the website, email and twitter.

d) Any Other Competent Business

The condition of the School Playground was discussed.

Post meeting, Councillor Cameron contacted Renfrewshire Council Estates Management to arrange for an inspection of the playground surface.

e) Date of Next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parent Council will be on Monday 6th November 2017 at 8pm.

Correspondence to Councillor Cameron from Renfrewshire Council, Corporate Services.

Councillor Cameron,

I note the issue that has been raised with you with regards to the use of Wallace Primary School as a polling place at recent Elections. We are obviously aware of the concerns raised by parents, and this is not the only school that has recently been raised with us. Clearly this has been an unprecedented period with 7 major electoral events including 2 referendums and a snap General Election held in the last three years. The next scheduled election is European Elections due in May 2019. Given the ongoing situation with the Brexit negotiations these elections are now unlikely to take place. Thereafter the next scheduled election is the Scottish Parliament Elections due in May 2021.

As for the use of schools in general, the Council has actively sought to move away from the use of schools and does consider the use of alternative venues when these are available and suitable. The issue that often arises is that any polling Place must offer full disabled access, be located in easy travelling distance for the voters in the polling district and be of sufficient size to accommodate the number of polling stations and voters that will be allocated there. Often this means that schools are the only viable location within certain areas.

The location of polling stations is not determined by the Returning Officer. The Polling Plan for Renfrewshire is determined by Council i.e. by the Elected Members.

The Polling Plan is a matter which is subject to periodic statutory review. The last full review took place in 2013/14. That process involved detailed public consultation; notices were published and responses from the public sought. Community councils and local area committees were also written to. As a result a number of representations were received which were then included in a report which went to full Council in December 2013. That resulted in a draft Polling Plan being issued for further public consultation.

I can advise you that during that first stage a representation was made by one resident in respect of the use of Wallace Primary School. This suggested that Elderslie Village Hall be used as an alternative venue. The Village Hall was assessed by officers and found to be of suitable in terms of accommodation, disabled access and car parking. However, it was noted that the school was more centrally located within the polling district. Having considered matters, the Members did not approve a change of venue in the draft Polling Plan which was then issued for further public consultation at the second stage.

Following the second stage consultation, further representations were received. These were included in a final report which went to full Council on 27th February 2014. I understand that no representations were received at this stage in respect of the use of Wallace Primary School.

When the matter was considered on 27th February 2014 the Council decided to approve the Polling Plan including the continued use of Wallace Primary Schools.

In terms of the statutory position the Polling Plan is not due for review again until 2019 although this process is likely to commence in the second half of 2018. Alteration of the Polling Plan prior to 2019 would require a decision of the Council.

Correspondence to Councillor Cameron from Renfrewshire Council, Corporate Services (Cont.).

We do not propose to bring the review forward at this time. As you may be aware, the Boundary Commission is currently undertaking a review of the Westminster Parliamentary Constituency boundaries. There are proposals for significant changes to the boundaries of the two Parliamentary constituencies covered by the Council. Changes to those boundaries will almost certainly require changes to our Polling District boundaries and the Polling Places associated with them. Accordingly it will be necessary to make the boundary changes part of the statutory review of the Polling Plan. The Boundary Commission review is scheduled to be concluded at some point in 2018.

It will of course be open to any of the local residents to raise the matter when the next statutory consultation takes place in 2019. In particular, consideration would be given to any alternative venue in the local area that was suggested by them. It is likely that the Polling Districts covered by Wallace Primary School will be a significant part in the review. That Polling Place currently has voters allocated to it from two different UK Parliamentary constituencies and two Scottish Parliamentary constituencies. This is something we will seek to address as part of the review. There is also significant development within the Elderslie area that is likely to increase the voter numbers within the Polling District and consideration will be required to be given to that.

For your information I can comment on the circumstances of the other two schools mentioned in your email. I can advise you that we did not receive any representations from parents at either of those schools.

In respect of Kilbarchan Primary School this was last used as a Polling place at the Local Government Elections in 2012. At the stage two public consultation in early 2014 mentioned above, a representation was received from Councillor Andy Doig suggesting the use of an alternative venue. Four venues were assessed by officers, of which only one was found to be suitable. That venue (Kilbarchan Scout Hall) was approved by Elected Members when the matter was considered on 27th February 2014.

In respect of St Margaret's Primary School in Johnstone that was part of the Council's Polling Plan until December 2016. In 2016 the Scottish Government accepted the recommendations of the Boundary Commission to change our Council Ward boundaries. This necessitated an immediate review of our polling districts as in some cases they were no longer consistent with the ward boundaries. A report was taken to Council on 15th December 2016. At that meeting Councillor Andy Doig moved that the Polling Place at St Margaret's Primary School be moved to the adjacent St Margaret's Church Hall. It was unanimously agreed that the change be made subject to an assessment of the Hall in respect of disabled access.

I can also advise you at the same meeting Councillor James MacLaren moved that the British Legion Hall in Bridge of Weir be used rather than Bridge of Weir Primary School. The meeting was advised that the British Legion Hall had previously been assessed in 2014 and that there were issues in respect of disabled access. There was no seconder for Councillor MacLaren's motion and accordingly the motion fell.

I hope this reply is of assistance. Should you wish to discuss any of the above any further, please do not hesitate to contact me.