

Aith Junior High School Parent Council Meeting
Monday 10th February 2020 at 6:30pm

Present:

Betty Ferrie, James Garrick, Frances Moffat, Jimmy Mercer, Sarah Quinnell, Inga Irvine, Lynn Ritch, Ingrid Smith, Michael Spence, Steven Coutts, Theo Smith, Robin Calder, Catherine Hughson, Angela Leask, Sheila Nicolson, Neil Beattie, Kirsty Nicolson

Apologies: Jacequeline Johnson, Erica Gadsby, Helen Budge

Kirsty Smith has been assigned as Parent Council Clerk

Approval of minutes Angela Leask and Ingrid Smith

Matters Arising - Photocopying last sessions minutes

1. English Teacher Provision

Michael gave short history of the ongoing issue. He explained the recent advert for a full-time post, three days in Aith Junior High School and two days teaching at the Anderson High School, had no applicants. Though the post was no longer advertised the job was still 'available'. At this time, he expressed his gratitude for Yvonne Malcolmson the substitute teacher for her continued good work.

Jim voiced his concerns of the length of this issue and still no closer to resolve. Highlighting the absence of a teacher in the first term and the lower teaching times for Aith, unbalanced in comparison to other schools. Suggesting more hours teaching would benefit the pupils as well as attract a teacher. Robin replied lots had been done to fill the position but

Ingrid then suggested a good way forward would be to look at how to attract the job to a potential teacher. Highlighting class sizes, high attainment and community suggestions. She then went on to back up Jim in his rejection of the 4-periods a week English lessons, stating English is core and must be done right. Lynn agreed, stating the school is stuck in the 4-period-a-week by the council. Robin explained the difficult position he is in with the lack of applicants and low budget and re-stated his offering to configure the ASN position and the English teacher post. In reply to Lynn, Theo revealed a weekly meeting with George Smith, Helen Budge and her team where this issue was regularly brought up. Reiterating his efforts to get the issue resolved.

Jim questioned if the budget is there for a 5-day job elsewhere, just not for this school. Stating he had been trying to speak with Helen Budge and Councillors since October and nothing has been done. He asked for the group to be mindful of the bigger picture, and future demand on the job. Angela supported this by adding, English is a priority and should be higher on the councillors list

Michael replied to the past comment of high attainment results arguing the reason for those were a good quality teacher. He has spoken to many parents who have suggested moving their children to the Anderson High School because of the lack of teacher. He understood the work behind the scenes of recruitment but expressed the pressure felt within the school and the urgency for resolve.

Catherine clarifies the barriers as employment law, illegalities, budgets, working with Hayfield House and lack of applicant. Robin adds the budget for children services is already exceeded.

Jim then countered the issue would be resolved if the budget was there for a longer contract at the Aith school. Without the guarantee of more teaching hours there would be very little probability of a new English teacher.

Robin then concluded the issue by stating he will continue to have more conversations and keep working to a resolve.

2. New menu

Neil Beattie, head of school meals, gave the council an introduction into the generalised menu. Explaining it was a result of new regulations for allergens, healthy eating and food traceability. Changes on the menu are less red meat and more chicken, pizza and pasta replaced by tatties. With two options available the first an 'alternative pack lunch' soup and sandwiches and the second a healthy cooked meal. The introduction of Dynamic Purchasing would allow for local produce to be used within the school.

A question raised by a parent not at the meeting asked what the guidelines are for packed lunches? Neil replied there are guidelines and the encouragement for a healthy meal. Michael added parents who ignore advice are contacted.

Francis asked if food could be donated to the school, Neil clarified it would be a benefit to get free food for the school, but the food traceability is still needed. Approval from the chef is needed.

Sarah expressed concerns about running out of one of the food options. Neil explained plans for a parent pay with children's orders or a daily lunch order but is still in working progress.

3. School Update

Nursery extension is going well, kit has been erected. To be finished by the early May. There will be 5 members of staff in the new nursery.

An accessible toilet will be put in outside the office during the summer holidays.

Ski trip going ahead, from the Friday the 13th to Tuesday the 24th of March – 31 bairns and 4 teachers will be attending.

Primary 6/7 trip to Stirling will include 42 bairns between Aith, Sandness, Skeld and Happyhansel and 5 teachers – from the Sunday 19th to Friday 24th.

Prelims are ongoing, exams to start on Tuesday 28th April.

Staffing

Sarah Quinnell has been appointed senior practitioner, to start 18th February.

Cheryl Mouat has left, interviews for her position will be taking place next week.

Cheryl Mackenzie will also be moving on at the end of the school year, her position will be reviewed before advertising.

Cover has been arranged for the continued absence of the ASN teacher.

Yvonne Malcomson will continue to see pupils through exams.

Transitions for secondary 4s going into the Anderson High School are taking place. Barney Redman and Michael Boxwell has been to visit the school

Extra help will be provided by Kevin Gillock and through the AHS Summer School programme – where there will be a week-long of activities in the school.

Vocational Pathways continues with input from employers and college staff. The S2's will have mock interviews.

Cooke Aquaculture will be coming to speak to pupils about careers.

Scottish badminton development has visited the school

Eva Clark representing Shetland at Scottish Schools badminton competition.

In the recent Euro Quiz P6 came a respectful 3rd.

Parents night will be:

Monday the 2nd of March for S3 and S4.

Tuesday the 10th of March for S2s

Scott Summers from Skills Development Scotland has been working with the children and will potentially come to the next meeting.

The polytunnel is growing lots of fresh produce that has been used in the canteen.

Safer Internet Day will be on Tuesday the 11th of March.

| Class | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| S4 | 16 | 13 | 28 |
| S3 | 13 | 28 | 18 |
| S2 | 28 | 18 | 25 |
| S1 | 18 | 25 | 29 |
| Total for Secondary | 75 | 84 | 100 |

School Role

| Class | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| P7 | 16 | 20 | 14 |
| P6 | 20 | 14 | 20 |
| P5 | 14 | 20 | 15 |
| P4 | 20 | 15 | 14 |
| P3 | 15 | 14 | 15 |
| P2 | 14 | 15 | 15 |
| P1 | 15 | 15 | 16 |
| Total for Primary | 114 | 113 | 109 |

4. Fundraising

Fundraising this year will be with the support of the Secondary 3s as they raise money for their project. The decision was made to have a bingo night sometime after the Easter holidays (specific date to be decided) and to have the event within the school to save running costs.

5. Photocopying last sessions minutes

The decision was made to save paper and to stop printing the minutes for meetings. Instead having a copy on mobile or laptop devices. Proposed by Lynn and Seconded by Ingrid.