

**Minutes of Bell's Brae Primary School Parent Council  
Held in Bell's Brae Primary School  
On Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 8.30pm**

**Present**

David Thomson	Chairperson
Louise Sandison	Vice Chair
Kerri Redfern	Parent Member
Sarah Moore	Parent Member
Caroline Henderson	Parent Member
Frances Tait	Parent Member

**In Attendance**

Melvyn Clark	Acting Head Teacher
Dawn Ratter	Clerk
Clr Amanda Hawick	Councillor
Clr John Fraser	Councillor

**1. Notice of Meeting and Apologies for Absence**

The notice of the meeting was held as read. Apologies for absence were received from Clr Peter Campbell, Leona Smedley and Katrina Nicolson.

**2. Approval of the previous minutes (Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020)**

The minutes of the meeting were approved by Louise Sandison and seconded by David Thomson.

**3. Review of Matters Arising and Actions arising from previous minutes**

Communication with Pupil Council

A discussion was held regarding integration with the Pupil Council and how to incorporate them into meetings while they are being held online. The Pupil Council representatives for this year haven't been selected yet but Melvyn hopes they will have identified the P7 managers prior to the next Parent Council meeting.

Crossing Patrol Lights

Melvyn noted the lights are now fully functioning and he has received no further reports regarding the lights.

**4. Treasurer's Report**

The balance in the bank account is £2,581.51. The grant form for 2020/21 has been submitted.

**5. Coronavirus measures update**

It has been a very strange few months and there have been a lot of changes implemented in the school. Melvyn noted congratulations to all the staff for their hard work and flexibility over the period of school closures. The return to school has gone relatively smoothly and Melvyn hoped it has been a positive experience for the pupils. There have been a few questions from pupils but they haven't challenged any of the changed and have settled back into life at school really well. It has been very special to see pupils reconnect with each other over the last few weeks. They are following all local and national advice which is ever changing and all new procedures have been implemented for the safety of pupils and staff. The lockdown period was a learning curve for everyone, especially with regards to remote learning. Melvyn noted P4-7 are continuing to use GLOW and MS Teams for homework and using the computer room weekly, in class.

The Parent Council expressed a massive well done and heartfelt thank you to all the staff for all their hard work during these strange times. They have done a fantastic job. David asked if there was anything the school felt they could have done but didn't have the equipment or ability to. Melvyn said he felt the school have done the best they can with what they have. It would be brilliant if they had fit for purpose ICT equipment throughout the school and enough devices available for all families/pupils who do not have access to these at home. He said they were very lucky to receive some devices from the Lerwick Community Council which were distributed to families. It is very hard and these are challenging times but the pupils and families have been very accepting. He added that he understands the later start in the morning is not ideal for many families but it has been implemented with the safety of pupils and staff in mind. Melvyn said he is very proud of all the staff and how they have embraced the additional work that has been expected of them. It has been a really hard term.

Cllr Amanda Hawick asked with more emphasis on online working, what the figure would be if they were to provide all pupils with a device. Melvyn advised they would need to do some work before they could provide a figure but this is something they could maybe come with at a later date. He noted a bid has gone in for a further 15-20 devices. This is an area the Local Authority are looking at and support the best they can. The school laptops are on a rolling review and there is a new batch due for renewal now. David asked if Cllr Amanda Hawick could enquire if the SIC have a view at strategic level of an approach to ICT equipment in schools.

## **6. Staffing Update**

Staffing is generally quite stable at the moment. Melvyn said they are in a good position at the moment and they haven't seen a huge level of staff absence related to COVID-19 so far. Daily information on staff absences are being submitted to the Local Authority.

There are two probationers this year. They are facing new challenges being newly qualified in the current circumstances.

Rachael Arthur has left her position as Clerical Assistant in the main school office and Helen Smith has been recruited into this post. Melvyn noted there was a huge number of applicants for this post – the most he has seen since working with recruitment.

Mary West who had been a Cleaner in the school for a very long time has retired. Mary was a very dedicated and committed member of staff and will be a big miss. The Parent Council noted a thank you to Mrs West for all her work at the school over the years.

Julia McGinlay, Depute Head Teacher for ASM has taken up a post as Acting Head Teacher at Ollaberry Primary School on a secondment for the school session 2020/21. Donna Murray is acting up as Depute Head Teacher and they are schedule to interview on Wednesday to appoint a replacement for Donna's post as ASN PE teacher.

Jennifer Wadley will return to her post as Head Teacher at the start of next term and Melvyn will return to his Depute Head Teacher role. Frances Tait will so return to her post as P1 teacher and Crystal Thompson will return to the Early Years teacher post. Melvyn noted thanks to Frances for her commitment over the last year while covering the Depute Head Teacher role. Her commitment has been fantastic and is appreciated by all the staff and the parent body. She has been admirable in the role of supporting the transition for pupils from early years into P1.

Melvyn said it hasn't been the year he expected when he took on the role as Acting Head Teacher but he has enjoyed it. Part of that has been attending the Parent Council meetings. It has confirmed for him what a fantastic school Bell's Brae is and he thanked the Parent Council for all the work they do which contributes to the successes of the school. The Parent Council conveyed their thanks to Melvyn and Frances on their acting up roles.

The ongoing areas of challenge is ASN and Early Years. There is an ongoing turnover of staff with several staff on maternity leave in Early Years. Melvyn noted there is an increase in workforce and no real increase in available staff.

## **7. Possible Social Events**

Due to the current restrictions, the usual Halloween and Christmas parties will not be able to go ahead. There were discussions on options for possible fundraising events but parent members would like to be mindful towards families' financial circumstances at the moment and feel it might not be the best time to hold events for fundraising. There were further discussions on how to create some fun activities for pupils to take part in, in place of the usual parties. Cllr Amanda Hawick and Chair of the Lerwick Youth Club said it is even more important to try and create something fun for pupils to be involved in this year. She suggested the Parent Council could work together with the Youth Club to create some competitions, e.g. a pumpkin display with photos submitted. The Social Committee will convene a discussion in the next couple of weeks to discuss options.

**ACTION: Louise Sandison**

## **8. Christmas Card Fundraiser**

Sarah agreed to take on the Christmas Card fundraiser again this year.

**ACTION: Sarah Moore**

## **9. Road Safety Campaign Conclusion Update**

David noted the yellow crosses have been marked on the pavements for the markings to be applied, when the weather allows. The SIC are now looking at traffic control around Gilbertson Road and are due to begin a wide consultation on the areas surrounding the school, including Hayfield Lane, Bell's Road and as far as St Sunniva Street. The Parent Council Road Safety Campaign has now officially concluded, however, they will continue to treat this as a very serious issue and participate in the consultation. David will take on responsibility to ensure the Parent Council coordinates, discusses and contributes to the consultation.

**ACTION: David Thomson**

## **10. Funding Objectives Overview**

Add to next meeting.

**ACTION: Dawn Ratter**

## **11. Correspondence**

All correspondence will be posted on the facebook page. All posts are highly viewed and shared.

## **12. AOCB**

None.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 8pm via Microsoft Teams.