

**Minutes of Bell's Brae Primary School Parent Council
Held in Bell's Brae Primary School
On Wednesday 25th November 2020 at 8.00pm**

Present

David Thomson	Chairperson
Louise Sandison	Vice Chair
Sarah Moore	Parent Member
Caroline Henderson	Parent Member

In Attendance

Jennifer Wadley	Head Teacher
Dawn Ratter	Clerk

1. Notice of Meeting and Apologies for Absence

The notice of the meeting was held as read. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Peter Campbell, Cllr Stephen Flaws, Kerri Redfern and Frances Tait.

David welcomed Jennifer back.

2. Approval of the previous minutes (Monday 8th October 2020)

The minutes of the meeting were approved by Louise Sandison and seconded by Caroline Henderson.

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

Communication with Pupil Council

Jennifer met with the Pupil Council on Friday to discuss how they can make Pupil Council meetings work while they are unable to mix class bubbles. They have developed a programme of fortnightly meetings. There are 3 members of staff – Yvonne Johnston and the 2 probationers – who will support the Pupil Council. The P7 pupils – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Vice Secretary will attend every meeting and the P5/6 pupils will meet with them one fortnight and the P3/4 on the alternate fortnight. An online Teams group has been set up for them to hold their meetings. The first action the Pupil Council have taken is to write to Tesco and ask if they would be willing to donate crackers for their Christmas lunch, U rated movies to watch and a carrier bag for each child to use to take home Christmas cards/crafts at the end of term. David asked Jennifer to let the Pupil Council know if they have any ideas which the Parent Council can help with or support, to get in contact.

ACTION: Jennifer

Road Safety

Nothing has moved forward with the SIC consultation process. The pavement markings have been put in place.

4. Treasurer's Report

The balance in the bank account is £2,429.51. The only expenditure since the last meeting was £152.00 for photocopying and postage costs relating to the Christmas Cards.

5. Staffing Update

Vacancies

- Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner vacancy (maternity leave) – Preferred Candidate.

- PE Teacher (temporary) – Post advertised. Kerri Redfern is the preferred candidate for a secondment opportunity. As per the SIC Secondment Policy, Kerri will only be able to take up this post if the school are successful in recruiting to the vacancy.
- Senior Practitioner, Early Learning and Childcare vacancy – Interviews are scheduled for the end of the week.

Crystal Thompson will continue as the P1 teacher for the remainder of the school year as she has established relationships with the pupils in that class and Frances Tait will cover the Early Learning and Childcare teacher post. This is a good opportunity for Frances to work with the staff in the Early Years that she has been working alongside during the last year in her Acting Depute Head role.

Jennifer expressed her thanks to Melvyn and Frances for their acting up duties during the time she was away – to take on the running of a school during a pandemic is not an easy task.

Jennifer noted the school has been back for 21 days since the October holidays and they have had 154 days of staff absences. These are predominately for sickness, compassionate leave and staff working from home due to self-isolating. There were 3 Learning Support Workers absent on Monday and the school couldn't secure any supply for these absences. Jennifer wanted the Parent Council to be aware of the strain this is putting on the staff that are currently in the school setting and to be mindful of the pressures on schools at the moment with regards to staffing. This is one of the reasons there is a contingency plan in place. It might be that pupils need to learn from home due to self-isolation or because there is no staffing available in school. Jennifer noted Children's Services staff are fully aware of the situation, the size of the school estate and the pressures that have been putting on all schools and they have tried really hard to recruit to the supply list but there is limited staff available for supply. The team within Children's Services is very short at the moment, they only have Robin Calder as Quality Improvement Manager and one Quality Improvement Officer, James Johnston for the whole of the school estate. They are currently having to keep on top of all the COVID issues but also be on standby in case they need to go into a school to provide cover and support track and trace.

David concluded, the Parent Council have taken record of the challenges faced by the school.

6. Remote Learning Contingency Plan

Jennifer advised that schools have been encouraged by Education Scotland to draft these Remote Learning Contingency Plans, consult and share with staff, parents etc. so that if there is a need to go into remote learning it would be very clear what was expected of everyone. It would also allow the school to put measures in place to upskill pupils so they know what to expect. The school have issued a number of devices through the Digital Inclusion Fund which was based on the questionnaire that came Children's Services at the end of the last school session. The school have also been successful with a bid to Connective Scotland for more devices and are awaiting the details of the award.

David asked if the school are satisfied that the equipment is in place should there be another period of school closures. Jennifer said this will depend on the amount of funding/devices received from Connective Scotland. There is still currently a list of pupils who do not have a device at home. The school used to have a car purchased through Pupil Equity Funding but this has now been replaced with funding which will be used to buy more digital devices for use in school. This funding is to be used to close the

attainment gap but if needed there would be extra devices to loan to families during any closure periods.

The devices distributed through the Digital Inclusion fund is given to the pupil to use until they leave education. However, there is an expectation that pupils will take these devices into school on a daily basis if required to do so. This increases the devices available for use in school.

Jennifer asked how parents feel about the homework pupils are getting at the moment and how pupils are engaging with the technology. All parent members happy.

7. Improvement priorities 2020/21

The advice from the Scottish Government and Local Authority regarding Improvement Priorities for 2020/21 was to continue with the same priorities as last year as school didn't have a full year to progress with these and also to reduce pressure on schools. Jennifer confirmed that the school have carried forward the priorities from last year although there are some different implementation strategies. The priorities are Raising Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy, Employability Skills (focus on continuing to develop digital skills), Early Learning and Childcare setting (continuing to look at the pedagogy and ensuring consist approaches across all staff) and Pupil Equity Funding. The Pupil Equity Funding is supporting the purchase of digital devices, extra staffing to support closing the attainment gap in literacy and numeracy and also supporting the subscription for Sumdog. The Standards and Quality Report is now on the school website.

As a staff, the school have been trying to capture the positivity of the current situation and identify changes they will keep moving forward. For example the success they have had with the Pupil Council Team. Virtual assemblies have been a great success and there is a huge saving on the time by doing these online.

There was a questionnaire done with pupils before the holidays on the things they were enjoying being back in school and the things they are missing. Predominately pupils were missing the library. This is being introduced back slowly with P7 pupils to start. They are missing the canteen but this is not possible at the moment due to the cohorts the pupils are in. The third item being missed is wider achievement but this is not possible at the moment as it involves mixing classes.

8. Next social events – Christmas activity?

Christmas Cards

The Christmas cards were very popular and raised £811 for the Parent Council.

Halloween Competition

The Halloween craft/picture competition went really, really well and the engagement was very good.

Proposed Christmas Activities

The Parent Council has arranged virtual pantomimes for the pupils.

Louise said if the Parent Council were looking to run further events this year, it would require some more volunteers to contribute to the organisation. David will put forward a message on the Facebook chat for a co-ordinator for a Christmas craft competition.

Each class are going to decorate the door of their classroom to make the school look more Christmassy for the pupils. Jennifer will also arrange for the Christmas tree to be put up. This was donated by the Parent Council last year.

The Parent Council will make a donation to the school to support the purchase of a Christmas item/gift to all pupils. Jennifer will take this forward to the management team to discuss what they can purchase and let the Parent Council know.

ACTION: Jennifer

All pupils will be given the opportunity to have a Christmas lunch, even if they are not opted in for meals for the term.

9. Funding Objectives Overview

The main funding objective has been continuing to fund the replacement of the blinds in the school. David asked if due to the current pandemic, there was anything more important to fundraise towards. He asked all Parent Members to have a think and bring ideas forward to the next meeting. This would allow clear targets to be set for when fundraising can resume. There might be a need to go down a route of more direct fundraising, rather than social fundraising. David asked Parent Members to have a think about options for more direct fundraising. Louise asked if the Pupil Council could be included here and ask if they have any ideas.

ACTION: All Parent Members

Jennifer said funding towards technology would always be welcome. Although the school will be purchasing devices through the Pupil Equity Funding, these will be for a specific purpose. Jennifer has had conversations with the Art and Music teachers who would like to develop digital skills. The devices funded through Pupil Equity Funding are gold badged – they are purchased and looked after by the IT department, but at the end of their life they are not replaced because they are funded over and above the allocation by IT. Jennifer said she feels the Local Authority need to move towards a device per child, in order to have really digital literate children and digital literate adults.

10. Correspondence

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

11. AOCB

Prodigy

A parent raised concerns with the Prodigy site displaying subscription options and inviting pupils to purchase items. Jennifer will look into this.

ACTION: Jennifer

COVID Measures

Jennifer said she has been very impressed with how smooth everything has been since returning to the school. All pupils and staff are delighted to be back and there is a lovely atmosphere in the school.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th February 2021 at 8pm via Microsoft Teams.