

Minutes of Bell's Brae Primary School Parent Council
Held on Microsoft Teams
On Wednesday 18th May 2022 at 6.30pm

Present

David Thomson	Chairperson
Louise Sandison	Vice Chair
Anne-Lise Anderson	Parent Member
Louise Garriock	Parent

In Attendance

Jennifer Wadley	Head Teacher
Dawn Ratter	Clerk
Cllr John Fraser	Councillor
Cllr Neil Pearson	Councillor

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from

2. Approval of the previous minutes (Wednesday 9th February 2022)

The minutes of the last meeting were approved by Louise Sandison and seconded by Louise Garricok.

3. Review of matters and actions arising from previous minutes

Arnold Clark Funding

David confirmed the Arnold Clark funding can be accessed again in the future.

Parent Forum Questionnaire

The Parent Council did not send out a questionnaire to the parent forum last term as the school were issuing a school improvement questionnaire. David will look to issue the questionnaire to parents next term following the AGM as part of a recruitment drive.

ACTION: David

Road Safety

David received an update on the road improvement works from Neil Hutcheson, Roads. There is a plan to introduce more 20mph zones, and specific works planned around the school, for example, traffic calming measures on Gilbertson Road and Bell's Road. There has been delays with COVID but are now hoping to move forward with the Lerwick Traffic Order. The Roads department are now seeking approval to move onto the consultation process. David has informed them that the Parent Council would be keen to be a key stakeholder in the process. For the benefit of the new Councillors David explained the various road safety initiatives that have been carried out over the last few years by the Parent Council. Cllr Fraser added that the Lerwick Community Council would be a statutory consultee and it might be beneficial for the Parent Council to make representations to them at the relevant time.

4. Treasurer's Report (attached)

There is an available balance of £2,955.51 in the bank account. Jennifer thanked the Parent Council for their donation towards the school jumpers.

5. Staffing update

- Depute Head Teacher – Frances Tait has been appointed.
- Teacher of Primary 1 – Crystal Thompson has been appointed.

- Teacher of Early Learning & Childcare – Recruitment is underway with shortlisting due to take place tomorrow. This vacancy has been reduced to a 3 day post due to numbers.
- Learning Support Worker x3 – Preferred candidates for these posts.
- Head Janitor – Preferred candidate for this post.
- PE Teacher – Catherine Williamson started in post today. Delighted to fill this post.
- ELC Support Worker (temporary) – Vanessa Mainland has been appointed to this post.

Term 3 was the most challenging term since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. In the last week of term, there were 67 staff absences. The challenges were real and the school are still feeling the impact of this. Jennifer said they managed to keep the school open every day but there were times where it was extremely challenging and staff are exhausted. Arranging supply cover remains to be very time-consuming and there is still a lack of availability for cover. This is a Scotland wide issue. There are also issues with the recruitment process, with delays especially at preferred candidate stage.

Louise asked what level of absence would close the school. Jennifer advised they probably wouldn't close the school but might need to send a class home. Hopefully, the school won't be in this situation as they are now moving on from COVID restrictions. Children's Services have a rota of staff that can be deployed into schools when necessary.

6. Improvement Priorities

The school sent out a questionnaire to parents on the current priorities, progress of meeting them and future priorities. The same process was carried on with pupils, staff and support. The feedback provided a wealth of data, both qualitative and quantitative. A focus group of staff met at the beginning of the term and identified the priorities for the new school year. Feedback from the parental questionnaire has been shared with all parents.

Improvement Priorities for 2022/23:

1. Improve Attainment in Literacy – this will be a continuation from the priority in 2021/22. From all curricular areas, writing is the lowest. The current target was 76% of learners being on track but Jennifer does not think they will meet this due to staffing issues and a number of new pupils coming into the school who are not on track.
2. Improve Mental and Emotional Health – the school will continue with the work on the zones of regulation. All pupils can speak openly about their emotions and what tools they have to deal with them. The action plan will look at embedding the mental health pathway and also educating the pupils on what they can do to help their mental health. There is also a target involving parents and inviting them back into the school.
3. Interdisciplinary Learning – refine and improve on topic work, further exploring outdoor learning, play-based learning and skill development and giving pupils more of a voice on these.
4. ELC – action plan still to be drafted.

The Pupil Equity Funding for 2022/23 will be £33,000 and this will be used to continue with the breakfast club which has been growing recently. The PEF money will be used for the food and staffing costs towards this. The remaining funds will be used for nurture and supporting pupils who are struggling. The school will begin to take a register for the breakfast club next term. Jennifer has asked staff to identify pupils who would benefit from attending the breakfast club and encourage those to attend. There is a lovely atmosphere in the canteen in the mornings.

7. Next Social Events & Fundraising

David asked if the Parent Council can consider planning the Halloween/Christmas parties this year. Jennifer advised to go ahead with planning as she expects all restrictions will be lifted next term. These events are always enjoyed by pupils and a good source of funding

The Parent Council agreed to go ahead with a Bonus Ball fundraiser. Dawn has arranged online banking for the Parent Council bank account to allow entries to be paid for by bank transfer. David circulated a draft form for feedback from parent members. It was agreed that parents could email their entries to the bellsbraeparentcouncil@gmail.com email address and did not need to complete the form. David will circulate a draft copy of the form to all parent members for comment, with a view to issue to parents for return by 7th June. David will also ask parent members for suggestions on how to use the Northlink voucher.

ACTION: David

Jennifer suggested using the voucher as a way of getting families into the school, for example, a grounds evening where families will be automatically entered into a prize draw. Other fundraising suggestions were a treasure hunt around the school, a school dance, an online baking auction or a disco.

8. Review of the Action Plan

The action plan is a requirement of the grant conditions and was agreed by the parent members present. This is a working document and can be amended at any time, should any parent members not present tonight wish to raise any points or concerns.

9. Recruitment Drive

This will need to be looked at ahead of the AGM.

10. Correspondence

None.

11. AOCB

Easter Egg Donation

An email was received from a parent member raising the issue of the donation of Easter Eggs to the school. There were mixed opinions across the parent forum, both positive and negative e.g. this is inconsistent with healthy eating but on the side, some pupils may not receive any other Easter eggs. Jennifer advised all primary schools in Shetland were given the donation and the same information to share with parents – everyone was given the option to say no.

The relevant point to the Parent Council is that this donation placed an administrative burden on the school with distributing the eggs and also catering to pupils with dietary restrictions to ensure they were not left out. Jennifer has raised these points to Children's Services.

Parent Members

Two long standing parent council members are standing down, as their children move onto the Anderson High School. David thanked Louise and Sarah for their years of contributions, help, willingness, conversation and fun during their time on the Parent Council. They will be greatly missed. Louise thanked David and noted it has been an absolute privilege to support the school and wished the Parent Council every success for the future.

12. Date of AGM and Next Meeting

The date of the AGM and next meeting will be Wednesday 21st September 2022 at 6.30pm.