

Burra Parent Council

Minutes of Meeting of Burra Parent Council held on Webex on Tuesday 15 February 2022 at 1800 hours

Present: Kay Anderson (Chair)
Denise Duncan (Vice Chair)
Ken Naquin (Parent)
New parents

In Attendance: Suzanne Inkster (Clerk)
Helen Robertson (Head Teacher)

Notice of Meeting

Kay welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies received from Sam Gibney

Approve Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved. Proposed by Denise, seconded by Kay.

Matters Arising

Essy Kert - Sam emailed to say that it has been decided that the Essy Kert will go to Papil first, which will avoid arriving in Hamnavoe at the time where bairns are coming to school. Helen thanked Kay and Sam for the work done on this.

Parking – Helen informed us that Shona Thompson and Neil Hutchison are coming to school to look at the parking challenges and safety issues around 3pm, with a view to improve safety around the west side area and potentially to improve parking and paving. Representatives will attend from the Community Council and Playgroup. Helen will update the parent council with any information arising from this meeting.

Defibrillator – Peter Tinkler had joined the last parent council meeting where he discussed both statistics and benefits of having a defibrillator in the school. It would be something we would have to fundraise for. Looking at approximately £1500 to

put in place and in addition to that, maintenance fees and training. It would be an immediate access defibrillator where no 999 call for an unlock code is required. Helen said that nearly all staff in school is paediatric first aid trained, and could carry out life support while another member of staff went to the hall to obtain the community defibrillator. Helen suggested as a parent council we could write to the authority regarding financial assistance, and also we could find out from other schools if they have defibrillators on site. Kay and Helen agreed that we should address the whole parent forum for their feelings on the matter. It was decided that Suzanne would send an email to the parent forum to ask for their opinions.

Netball goals (funded by Active Schools) have arrived and will hopefully be fitted in the multi in the next couple of weeks.

The mural is completed and everyone is delighted with the work done.

John Coutts will take class photos in front of the mural, when the weather improves.

Netball club has started; Football club to start soon; Knitting club is delayed at the moment.

Digital Christmas Concert – The school hadn't received much feedback from parents, however the parent council agreed that it had been a great success and parents were grateful for the efforts of the school staff to make this happen. Ken said they had experienced some blurring of their video.

Update on School Management related to Covid

Following the Covid outbreak in Burra in January, Helen reported that the schools highest absence experienced was 48% on one day – covid and other sickness, and there are still pupil testing positive. Across the term there were only 2 days when the school had been fully staffed and this has had a significant impact on their ASN timetable. Only 3 days supply cover was found, and Helen was required to do a lot of class cover.

The school was thrilled with the pupils' resilience, and there are only a few bairns still recovering from being ill.

From 28th February visitors can return to the school eg Ken could come in for assembly. The school will initially take small steps on this. Soon the wearing of masks wont be mandatory in school, however Helen thought they would leave staff to decide on this.

Kay asked Helen to pass on our thanks to all staff for the extra mile gone to support our bairns through this difficult time.

What's new at Hamnavoe

The ASN sensory room is in full swing. It was initially shared with music and assembly, however it became evident that it was needed fully as an ASN room. This is working really well.

Across the whole school there has been a focus on 'talk for writing'. Lauren Smith has been coming in on Thursdays to support and increase teacher confidence in improving writing across the school. Lauren is very happy with the progress, which is having a positive affect, and there is great excitement and enjoyment from the pupils in their writing.

Pupils have been creating lighthouse pictures, which are being displayed in shop windows in Lerwick. This has been done as part of the 'Tending the Light' festival of care, to show support for children who are care experienced.

Sex education is currently being delivered using the Scottish program RSHP.

Technology & Science - Emma Chittick has been in school doing robotics, computer programming and renewables with P567. P1234 are also doing science projects on weather and forces.

Helen stated they would welcome any feedback about the curriculum and if parents feel there is anything needing refreshed.

Report on Bi Annual Meeting

Kay reported that Parent Council Chairs in Shetland meet twice a year (November & May). This meeting is chaired by the Quality Improve Officer for Parental Engagement. There is usually good attendance from both primary and secondary. The previous meeting very much focussed on the impact of Covid, and how things will progress. Leanne Moss (Chairperson) did an update on Education Reform. Kay can send Suzanne a link to share to anyone who would like more information on this. Carol Smith (Police Scotland) discussed the work done in secondary schools on drug awareness. Other items discussed were enquiries from some schools on funding for polycrubs, and vandalism problems in Whalsay. The next meeting for this is Thursday 19th May.

Funds

Helen reported a very healthy school fund of £1106.00. Outdoor fund is £1240.00. The School trip fund £252.00. Local Authority has given £500 for sensory purchases and £250 from Connecting classrooms for Topsoil.

There are ideas for spending this on: slide cemented into the slope; putting the netball hoops up; growing our own vegetables; buying more outdoor toys; outdoor excursions. Helen welcomed any more ideas on what could be purchased.

Parents Appointments

Dates have been changed to the 15th & 16th March. These will be in 7-minute appointment slots. There have been quite a few schools to use this system, with positive feedback. Kay spoke about her experience of using this system recently and said it was very straightforward. The layout of the website is good. Initially parents are given a link to click, and then are required to key in details such as email address, pupil & parent names and date of birth. There are appointment times that can be booked, On the night of the appointments it was a simple process of logging in and then parents are informed of when the meeting will start and a countdown in minutes is shown on screen. When the timer hits zero, the teacher appears. The quality of sound and video was good. Helen hoped this would be a similar experience with our appointments, as with only 1 teacher to see parents need only book one appointment. Helen felt that for our ASN pupils there is regular communication with the school, so no appointments should be needed unless parents specifically request this. Appointment times will be shared on 1st March.

Family Engagement Virtual

For the purpose of our new parent council members, Kay explained about family engagement night. A theme is chosen, and different workshops relating to the theme are held. Pupils bring an adult and sign up to workshops of interest. Various topics have been held over the years such as languages, internet safety, Stem. These engagement nights are well attended by pupils and their family members. Unfortunately Covid has put a stop to this at the moment, so discussion was held about themes that may work for a virtual event. Helen advised that we should communicate with parents to find out interest and inform them of possible workshops, before inviting guest speakers. Suggestions made: drugs education; internet safety; helping your child with phonics; importance of play; making best of outdoors; information from teacher of what goes on in each class. Helen will organise a letter to go out to parents with details about possible workshops and also to ask if there is anything else parents would like to see included. Provisional date set for the engagement night is Tuesday 19th April.

Parent comments

Kay mentioned that it might be a good idea to do something specifically for P7s regarding transition, and suggested something relating to drug awareness. Kay thought Carole Smith might be willing to do a soft introduction to this linking in with what may be covered once they are at the AHS. Helen will speak with Carole about this.

Helen spoke about the possibility of an early Friday finish (8.45am start and 1.45pm finish). There are a few schools already doing this. Kay said that this could be difficult for working parents and also wondered how it would tie in with the early years. Helen will send a letter asking all parents for their views on this idea.

Helen asked for opinions relating to the school curriculum, perhaps anything that the parent council feel we are missing or suggestions of purchases we could make. Any ideas on this can be forwarded to Kay or Helen. Helen suggested the purchase of more ipads, which would work in with grants offered at the moment for robotics equipment. Helen will speak with teachers and pupils for their ideas of what could be purchased.

Ms Reeves suggested having inspirational speakers to school eg history group, Burra Bears.

AOCB

Nothing further discussed.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Mini parent council meeting will be held on Tuesday 22nd March at 1800 hours on Webex.