

LUNNASTING PARENT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE ABOVE HELD ON THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2023

Present:

Mrs C Allam
Mrs A Christie
Mrs T Johnson
Mrs A Thompson

In attendance:

Mrs L Malcolmson – Acting Head Teacher
Mrs L Hughson – Clerk
Vivian Anderson

1. Apologies and Welcome – Carol Nicol, Louise Manson

Mrs Allam welcomed Vivian Anderson to the meeting. As the Parent Council is a constituted group which is mandated to act on behalf of Parent Forum, she is keen to make parents aware they are welcome to attend meetings - there should be no barriers to the Parent Council.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting were held as read and approved
Proposed – Tori Johnson
Seconded – Allison Christie

3. Matters Arising

Any matters arising have been added to the Agenda.

4. Financial Report

The Balance of the Parent Council account is £1111.86. Of this, £16.04 is money allocated for Administrative purposes (e.g., grant money) and £1095.82 is money raised by the Garden Gang for school garden improvements. There are two mileage payments outstanding for £18.90 and £2.25 which will be paid out once grant money is received. Mrs Hughson contacted Finance today, there have been problems accessing their system to process grants and they could not confirm when this would be resolved. A grant of £220 was requested in May.

4.1 Online Banking

Mrs Hughson had looked into this but, as the Constitution stands at the moment, two signatures are required for withdrawals. It will need to be decided who these signatories are to be and do the necessary checks. Mrs Hughson realised that online banking would have been useful when the mud kitchen was purchased but as this was a one-off she reiterated that she did not feel online banking was necessary for a handful of mileage payments a year. Mrs Allam outlined some of the benefits of online banking - the funds are not restricted to the garden or mileage payments; it is easier and more convenient than cheque when reimbursing; it reflects the world in which we live; it is useful to download bank statements when applying for grants; there will be more transactions going forward. Others present agreed. Mrs Johnson pointed out that changing signatories has been problematic in the past and wondered how this problem could be minimised. It was highlighted that Mrs Christie has been a signatory for a number of years, despite not having been a recent member of Parent Council.

Mrs Hughson had spoken to some other Parent Council clerks and most don't do online banking. One Parent Council - who do have online banking with the Bank of Scotland - didn't like having the Parent Council account among their own personal online banking.

Mrs Christie is a signatory on the account at present. She is happy to remain as signatory and will also explore different banking options. Some banks have the facility to allow you to apply funds to different areas of an account e.g. Parent Council/Fundraising etc. As a starting point, it was agreed that we would start by looking at options with our existing bank. **ACTION:** Mrs Christie to look into.

Mrs Hughson informed the Parent Council that she was resigning as Clerk and Treasurer. She will stay on until present paperwork is up-to-date. The appointment of new Office Bearers will be discussed at the next Parent Council meeting.

5. Music Tuition

Parents have contacted the Parent Council regarding the lack of communication around music tuition. There were various points raised:

- Parents were not made aware that lessons would be online rather than in person.
- All instruments are not available - this is not clear.
- Other schools rotate between online and in-person lessons.
- Very difficult to learn online when you are a beginner. Difficulties replacing broken strings, tuning instruments.
- Parents have not heard whether or not their child is to receive lessons. Why have they not had a reply?

ACTION: The Parent Council is to write to Noelle Henderson voicing concerns. Parents are to be asked in the first instance if there are any points they would like to add and also if they would like to add their names to this letter.

6. School Dinners Booking System

Feedback from parents regarding the new school dinner system is that the system is not very efficient. Parents would prefer to either opt in or opt out rather than having to select individual options every day. It was queried whether there could be vegetarian options available for each child, every day, as this happens in other small schools. It was felt that the option of beans on toast, or a cheese toastie for a vegetarian isn't comparative, or of similar value to a roast dinner. This is in no regard a reflection of Mrs Williamson, the school cook, for whom there was a great deal of praise and appreciation. Mrs Johnson highlighted how other small schools were catered for by Brae High School. Therefore, having options for each child, every day may not be available at our school as we only have one cook.

ACTION: Mrs Malcolmson to contact Mr Beattie to see if this is something that could be an option.

7. Review of Constitution

Mrs Allam recently attended an online session on Constitutions and AGMs for Parent Councils with Connect, and had drafted some ideas for amendments based on the session using Connect's current template. These were shared with Parent Council before the meeting. Mrs Allam highlighted that Constitutions are working documents and should be updated at least every two years. The Constitution was discussed and worked on collectively at length. The proposed amendments will be sent to all Parent Forum members and an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) will be held to discuss/approve them. Parents will be given two weeks notice to consider amendments, make comments or bring points to the next Parent Council meeting.

An individual needs to be appointed to review annual accounts at the Parent Council AGM. It was stated that this can't be a parent of a child attending Lunnasting Primary. It was suggested approaching VAS in this regard or to ask someone local. There will be more to be audited when the accounts are amalgamated with the Parent Forum accounts. **ACTION:** Mrs Allam to look into.

7.1 Clarity on Parent Forum/Parent Council

Mrs Allam outlined that the set up of the Parent Council/Parent Forum at Lunnasting with some separate Office Bearers and a separate bank account is not the typical set up. Others agreed that it causes confusion and that Parent Council and Parent Forum have shared aims. It was decided to align the Parent Council and Parent Forum and going forwards they will have the same Office Bearers and

funds. **ACTION:** Mrs Allam to write to parents explaining in more detail the reason for this change (please see attached document)

8. Website Feedback

There are ongoing issues with the new website going live and people doing searches and seeing the old website with 'under construction'. Mrs Malcolmson would welcome feedback on the new website - it is hoped it is more up-to-date than the old one and easier to find relevant items.

There is a link to Easy Fundraising on the website but it was suggested that a link to the app or QR code on the page would be useful.

8.1 Who's, who in Parent Council

Mrs Allam shared with the group a document from Brae Parent Council that tells parents about members. It was agreed to add details of Parent Council members to the school website with a little information about each member. **ACTION:** Mrs Allam and Mrs Christie to organise this and send to Mrs Malcolmson.

Parent Council members contact details should be readily available but due to security issues in the past Mrs Christie offered to setup a Google email account for the Parent Council. This would provide an easy way for parents to contact the Parent Council members and avoid individuals phone numbers/emails being on public display. **ACTION:** Mrs Christie to set up.

9. Garden Update

- The Community Benefit Fund application has been submitted.
- There are Sunday Teas on 19 November.
- There is no update on the Wind Turbine.
- The film night fundraiser has been postponed for now.
- Mrs Allam to liaise with Mrs Hughson about Christmas card deliveries.

10. School Improvement plan

Mrs Malcolmson showed members the School Improvement Plan; parents can access this through the school website.

11. Reporting to Parents

Termly Reports will be replaced by a detailed large report during Term 4. There will be a child-led evening for parents in May.

12. Action Plan

Steps have been taken to involve parents and the community in Friday Fun activities and Mrs Malcolmson is very grateful to parents who have offered to help. A new Pupil Council has been elected.

13. Connect

Members were signposted to Connect resources. Connect correspondence is emailed out to all Parent Council members and there are a number of online resources. These documents cover what is happening in Scottish Education and are very accessible.

14. AOB

- Our PE teacher is absent at the moment. Mrs Margaret Duncan is covering PE on supply until the end of term.
- Mr Travins, itinerant Music Teacher, is in post until the end of term
- Parents have asked if it would be possible to have an earlier start for the Christmas Party. A poll is to be put on Facebook asking if they would prefer the party to start at 2pm, 4pm or 6pm on Sunday 10th December. **ACTION:** Mrs Christie to create poll.

15. Date of Next Meeting Thursday 15th February

Mrs Christie thanked Mrs Hughson for her longstanding contribution as Clerk/Treasurer to Parent Council over the past 20 years and this was echoed by all present.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50