

Lunnasting Parent Council Emergency General Meeting (EGM) Minutes

Date: Thursday 15th February 2024

Time: 18:30

Location: Lunnasting Primary School

Attendance:

Louise Malcolmson (LM)	Head Teacher	Charlotte Allam (CA)	Chair
Abbey Thompson (AT)	Treasurer	Louise Manson (LMa)	Secretary
Tori Johnson (TJ)	Member	Carol Nicol (CN)	Member
Karen Hay (KH)	Parent/Carer		

Apologies:

Allison Christie (AC) Vice Chair

Proposed changes to the Lunnasting Parent Council Constitution.

CA confirmed the EGM was called to agree proposed changes to the current Lunnasting Parent Council Constitution. The reason being that the current constitution hasn't been refreshed in 10-15 years and requires modernising (for example, reference made to circulating paper minutes where this has now moved on with the use of the internet). The proposed changes were mainly format, layout, and modernising; however some change in wording was to be discussed.

Parent Forum (PF), Parent Council (PC), Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Some discussion took place around what the difference was between PF, PC and also PTA.

The PF describes all parents/carers of children who attend the school, whereas the PC is a constituted group with elected members who meet, bring forward items raised by the PF and also report back to the PF. There is not currently a PTA. The closest comparator was felt to be the PF, which organises parties and social gatherings

Co-opted members

The current Constitution makes reference to PC co-opting 3 members; one being a teacher and two being members of the public. CA raised that having a teacher member wasn't standard practice throughout the guidance. Guidance from Connect around PTA outlines requirements regarding teacher members and it is likely this is where it came from. The current Constitution has been updated to state "3 members," generally (meaning this could be teacher, parent/carers, member of the community).

Finance

This section currently refers to Parent Council accounts being “audited by an auditor.” Decided that the best terminology to use would instead be “independently verified by an individual,” rather than making reference to a professional auditor – which is not required.

Layout

The layout in the proposed Constitution flows as follows: Number of members; Annual General Meeting; then Parent Council Membership. It was queried whether it might be better to keep items referring to membership together and then move on to speak about the AGM (i.e. Number of members; Parent Council Membership; then Annual General Meeting). On discussion it was felt that, as the AGM was a key constitutional point and Members are appointed at the AGM, the current proposed layout flows best, as it is important to outline what this is prior to then describing membership.

Parent Forum

Some discussion took place as to whether having both a Parent Forum and Parent Council was required, and whether the term ‘Parent Forum’ could be dropped as a means of streamlining. It was raised that, at some schools, all parents and carers are members of the Parent Council. It was felt the PF couldn’t be dropped as it still exists – it describes all parent/carers of children who attend the school and early years who come together to discuss and also fundraise for the school. In the past the PF appeared to run more as a “party sub-group,” coming together largely to discuss Halloween and Christmas Parties.

It was felt to be a good idea to reach out to other schools to see how they are set up in terms of PC/PF, and that the set up may depend on the size of the school.

Early Years

The wording ‘Constitution of Lunnasting Primary School Parent Council’ was queried and whether this included the Early Years. As it refers only to the PC of Lunnasting Primary School, Early Years parents/carers may think it does not include them. It was discussed whether the title should be changed to “Constitution of Lunnasting School and Early Years Parent Council,” and the private Facebook page too. It was queried whether parents/carers of early years children were invited to the Facebook page, and it was confirmed that all parent/carers should have been invited. It was highlighted that the school (early years and primary) was referred to as “Lunnasting Primary School” and not “Lunnasting Primary School & Early Years.”

It was discussed that an email reminder could be sent out to reaffirm that all parents/carers across the entire setting (Early Years & Primary), are members of the PF and welcome to attend PC meetings (as well as become elected members of the PC).

As this seems to be a shift in how the meetings have been run in recent years, it may take some time to see a change in attendance to meetings. It was discussed that a flyer could be put together to encourage participation across the PF and PC, and to make people aware of what the PC is. In addition, it was highlighted that the Constitution should be regularly looked at and updated.

Action: CA To look at flyer.

“Parent”

It was raised whether the term “parent” (i.e. Parent Council) was inclusive/reflective of the parent/carer body. It was discussed whether considering renaming this “family council” or “carers council”. Currently the recognised term is “Parent Council” (likewise for parents evenings – although there is a shift here in terms of naming these “learner-led events” for example). It was decided that for now it would remain as “Parent” Council; however, this should remain an item of discussion if it is felt that it should be changed.

“Chair”

Currently the Constitution doesn’t state that the Chair needs to be a parent/carer of a child who attends the school. The wording then inferring that any member of the community could be Chair. Clarity from Connect was referred to which stated: Chair, by law, to be a parent of a child at the school.

Action: CA to make agreed changes to Constitution and circulate.

With no further suggested changes to the constitution, meeting closed at 19:10.