



Minutes of the Dunrossness Parent Council Meeting
23rd January 2023
Dunrossness Primary School



Present: Michaela Leask (Chair)
Gina Finch (Head Teacher)
Kathryn Lomax (Vice-Chair)
Catherine Puxley

In Attendance: Honor Rosie (Clerk), Michelle McAdoo, Judith Fenton.

1. Welcome and Apologies:

Apologies – Jolene Johnson, Sam Adamson.

Michaela Leask welcomed Michelle McAdoo and Judith Fenton who attended for the first time. Michaela extended an invitation to both parties to join the Parent Council as members following this meeting.

Kathryn Lomax shared that Sharon Waddell will be stepping down as Treasurer due to the time commitment, although she will remain involved with the Parent Council where possible. As a result, a replacement Treasurer is now needed. Nominations for the role were called for but no suggestions were made at this time. All members agreed it would be a priority to recruit a new treasurer for the council.

2. Approve Minutes of Last Meeting

Kathryn Lomax approved minutes from the last meeting. Michaela Leask seconded.

3. Head Teacher Report

Attendance:

- Gina reported that although the Shetland Island's Council has a stretch aim of 97% attendance, our overall school attendance is currently sitting closer to 94%. The majority of this absence is due to illness, particularly in the aftermath of Covid-19 but some of it is due to holidays or events during term time.
- Gina noted, however, that there are no formal measures in place for improving attendance in Shetland Schools. It was agreed by members present that this made it difficult to improve attendance figures and suggested that perhaps it might be useful to share information regarding the impact of attendance with the school community.

Staffing:

- Gina reported to the Parent Council that Staffing remains one of the key challenges the school faces. Recruitment in particular remains a challenge. This has a knock-on effect on locating available supply teachers/support staff as many are already filling vacant posts on a relief basis.

- There is currently one supply teacher who is regularly available to provide cover, which makes it increasingly difficult to cover staff sickness if that individual is not available. Gina informed the council that although school staff would make every effort to avoid individual classes having to close or a partial school closure, this remained a risk due to the difficulties surrounding supply.
- Gina advised the council that the ASN teacher's role has been reduced this term to 3.5 days despite having 12 children on Stage 2 or 3 Plans, a number that does not include new-starters in Nursery with complex needs. There are two 1-to-1 support staff and two part-time Learning Support Worker/Assistant(s) spread across the school. This presents a challenge in meeting the various needs within the school.
- Gina provided an update on the roles the school is currently recruiting for. Play practitioner post for NOOSC is currently being advertised with a closing date of 2 Feb. Miss Roberts is providing cover in the meantime. Early Learning Support Worker post has been re-advertised with a closing date of 26.01. LSA post supported by PEF funding has been advertised twice and is currently going through the interview stage.

Breakfast Club Proposal:

- Gina reported that staff have noticed many children reporting that they have not had breakfast when they come in to school. She proposed that the school would look into providing toast for those who are still hungry when they arrive at school.
- Kathryn suggested that perhaps if the school did set up a breakfast service then the Parent Council could fund the toast. Kathryn enquired what sort of termly cost the school envisioned and Gina said she would check with our Head Cook to confirm costs and if staff would be available to prepare the toast.
- Catherine read out a message from Sam Adamson who was unable to attend stating that she would be interested in setting up a parent-run breakfast club perhaps in the NOOSC building.
- It was agreed that the first step in this regard would be to create a survey to find out if parents would be interested and how often they would make use of a service of that kind and who would be willing to volunteer. Kathryn and Michaela both offered their help if the club went ahead.

School Improvement Policies:

- Gina reported that encouraging outdoor play and improving participation and inclusion in play-based learning is a key priority for improvement. This is being reviewed across the whole school with consideration being given to how learning through play develops as children progress through the school.
- Gina said one limiting factor in the play pedagogy in school classrooms is that with the ratio of one teacher to 24 pupils it is not possible for every child to participate in an individual activity. This makes it more difficult for children to direct their own learning.
- Gina reported that one area of improvement would be to expand the outdoor learning offer. Health and safety and funding presents a barrier to serious upgrading of outdoor spaces. These will require the school to be imaginative in developing these spaces.
- Catherine mentioned the Hoswick playground, which have an excellent playground which ideas could be taken from.

Bronze Award Rights Respecting School

- Gina informed the Parent Council that the School has signed up to the bronze award of the Rights Respecting School Programme, which aims to embed the United Nations Conventions for the Rights of the Child into all practice.

- The starting point with this initiative will be to educate children regarding their rights. Gina said that several members of pupil council had indicated they were willing to be part of steering group for the project, she suggested it would also be good to have some parental involvement as it is a school wide initiative. Perhaps this could be a parent council member who could meet with the children to develop an action plan.
- Michelle suggested that her husband might be available to help with this as he used to be an assessor for Rights Respecting School. She will speak to him to see if he would be able to help in this regard.

4. Parent Council Blog

- Gina raised the issue of access to the Parent Council Blog. Kathryn and Michaela reported that as far as they were aware no member of the Parent Council Blog has access to the blog to make posts as the blog is hosted on Glow.
- Honor confirmed that she has access to the blog, as does Gina, and she is happy to upload minutes, Head Teachers Reports and anything else the Parent Council wishing to share on the blog.
- Kathryn suggested it might be useful if the Parent Council could post more regularly on the blog to engage with the school community. She said she was willing to take on a role of updating the blog every term at least, if other members were happy for her to do so. Members present agreed they would be happy with this.

5. Finalisation of School Uniform

- Kathryn and Michaela reported that uniform is now complete and ready to be ordered but a decision needed to be made in regards to what uniform options to go for. Gina suggested that it would be better to proceed without the ‘Dunrossness’ text down the arm of the hoodie as it raises costs for parents and often washes off and doesn’t last. Kathryn suggested that offering a choice of colour for P7 school hoodies might be seen as unfair by children in other classes and members present agreed the choice was probably unnecessary as P7 pupils have the chance to choose the colour and nickname for their leaver’s hoodies.
- Michaela asked Gina if the school intended to update the logo used on school communications/documents as well seeing the uniform is changing. Gina agreed that theoretically the logo would be changed across the board but mentioned that the school had not received a jpeg or digital image of the logo. Michaela said she thought one had been produced and would check with Gemma and those who previously worked on the uniform whether the council has access to a copy.
- The issue of the best way to set up the ordering process was raised. Kathryn suggested that the school could send out order forms to parents and once initial orders had been received, a bulk order could be placed to reduce costs. Then for subsequent orders, parents could order directly from the supplier.
- Kathryn stated that the parent council would like to fundraise to help parents who might struggle with the cost of replacing uniform. Members present agreed and recognised that as time went on and the new uniform was more widely used parents could donate old uniform. Catherine mentioned that Sam had suggested having a swap-shop in her shed and that uniform could perhaps be included in this. Kathryn raised the concern that in such a tight knit local community people are often unwilling to be seen to be receiving charity and suggested that distribution via the school where information could be confidential might be a better option.

- Michaela and Kathryn expressed their gratitude on behalf of the whole Parent Council to Gemma and Jillian – who have put a lot of work into the new uniform in getting it to this point.

6. School Dinners

- Gina reported that the Pupil Council had met with Norma, our Head Cook to discuss issues raised by parents and other pupils. They discussed issues such as the last minute changes to menus and portion control. Norma explained to the Pupil Council that the menu is designed by head office, however, she has to change items quickly when there has been disruption- maybe delivery has not arrived or not been able to get something out of the freezer to defrost. The portions offered follow Scottish Government guidelines.
- Catherine reported that Sam Adamson had offered to liaise with the canteen to do daily posts on the Parent Council Facebook Page showing the menu board, so parents could be aware of what their children have eaten on a given day. Gina advised that Norma would need to be contacted to discuss this further.

7. Adverse Weather Policy

- Gina reported on the school closure procedure, which has now had the opportunity to be tested both last term and this term. So far, all closures have been snow-related and dictated by the Shetland Islands Council. Most of the closures have been the day before and in these cases, there have been no issues in notifying parents.
- It was noted that when the closure comes a short notice, as it did last Monday the 16th, it is more challenging to ensure everyone is aware quickly. However, all parents/carers who requested a phone call via the initial form in November received one.
- Gina clarified the Parent Calling Tree procedure as this had caused some confusion on the last snow day. The calling tree is in place for use in the event that the school has to close early and there is limited time to share this message or in the event of the school's communication channels being impacted by a power cut or similar. It will not be used when the notice of closure is given prior to the school day. Gina also reported that not all parents have given consent so those who have not done so will not be included on the parent-calling tree and it will be assumed that they can get messages via email and Facebook/ blog or school will phone them.
- The Parent Council were given the opportunity to have a look at the School Closure Folder, which includes the procedures in the event of various kinds of closures and checklists used by staff to ensure all parents have been contacted regarding closure.
- Michaela asked if Gina would prefer the Parent Council to wait for her to officially confirm the closure before sharing notice of closure on the Parent Council Facebook Page. Gina suggested that ideally yes the Parent Council would wait until she receives official confirmation from Hayfield House but understood it cannot always be this way. She noted that during the most recent closure the update was being shared on social media by bus companies etc. before she received initial confirmation from the Shetland Islands Council.

8. Fundraising – Mother’s Day Teas, Talent Show, Panels for Hall

Teas

- Kathryn suggested that the Parent Council could host a Mother’s Day Tea as a fundraiser in the Bigton Hall. Gina offered the school hall as an alternative venue if required.
- It was suggested that crafts could be offered again for the children, as this was a great success at the Christmas Fair. Judith suggested that people might be busy on actual Mother’s Day so perhaps the Saturday would be more suitable.
- Catherine reported to council that Sam had offered to make quiches and homemade sausage rolls and wanted to donate a lot of sassermaet for the teas if that could be used. Michaela said Jolene had suggested a bacon roll event, which the sassermaet could be used for. Kathryn noted that parents are usually really good at bringing in baking if requested.
- Kathryn suggested a Mother’s Day gift bag with a candle or something similar in a paper bag with leaflets for local financial help/organisations could be a way of reaching out to parents during the cost of living crisis without singling individuals out.

Panels for Hall

- Gina mentioned the idea of fundraising for panels for the assembly hall and the playroom. She said many children find the volume and echoing acoustics of these areas difficult. Ewan Adamson from CASE Shetland who is also a parent has reached out and would like to assist with funding and installing noise-cancelling panels. It was suggested that Jonathan Ritch would be a good contact to advise on what would work best in the space.
- Gina suggested the possibility of holding a disco to fundraise for this as the Pupil Council have already requested one be held this term. A date of the 23rd of February was proposed as this is immediately before the half-term holiday and would give the children a chance to relax the next day.
- Members present agreed the Parent Council could take responsibility for organising this and providing drinks and snacks such as ice-creams at the Disco.
- Kathryn suggested Liam Brannen the youth development worker at Sandwick who used to be a DJ could perhaps come to help with the music. She offered to speak to him and ask around for other alternatives.

9. Update on Playground

- No further information from Jolene at present. Catherine reported that she and Jolene went to the local lottery-funding meeting and that this funding can be given for anything that can benefit whole community; however, plans and quotes have to be in place to apply for this funding. Catherine also reported that the Council would match the money we raise for playground.
- Gina suggested a move towards more low-level equipment such as balance beams, construction toys, walking trails etc. as this would take out the additional cost of safety surfacing which is required for higher-level play equipment. Kathryn raised the concern that many different imaginative play areas might place a strain on staff to supervise. Catherine suggested that some kind of shelter for children could be constructed for children in the playground.

- Judith asked if a 'day of action' could be arranged for parents to help build and set up new playground areas, fencing etc. She asked if there were regulations or health and safety concerns that would prevent this. Gina said that John might have some reservations about this but she would speak to him. Michelle suggested that parents/carers could instead be involved in tasks such as planting flower beds etc.
- Michaela suggested it would be helpful to set up a meeting with John to discuss the playground, Gina agreed to facilitate this.
- Gina suggested that finances needed to be finalised in order to move forward with plans. Michelle commented that many grants require exact quotes and plans to apply for them so might need to be approached from a different angle.

10. Grants and Funding

- Kathryn suggested 'blue chip' Tesco fundraising as a possibility. Judith said she was happy to organise this as she has done so before but that there is quite a long waiting list to be included in this. Judith also suggested Co-op fundraising and is happy to look at this as well.
- Catherine confirmed that Jolene had been told funding was available from the community council.
- Kathryn has heard that funds are available through the Shetland Islands Council to help families struggling in the cost of living crisis. She suggested that perhaps if the school could be a point of contact for parents to access this fund to avoid stigma and confidentiality issues. Gina agreed this would hypothetically be possible if Parent Council were happy to look into the funding. Kathryn agreed to do so. Michelle suggested the funding could be offered or given to all as an alternative if it was felt families might not feel able to approach the school directly.
- Michaela reported that people have been questioning what the money fundraised from the clothing sale has been spent on. It was agreed it was important to let parents know that these funds have not been spent but have been allocated to the playground development which is still in the planning stage.

11. AOCB

None arising.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meeting agreed as: **Monday 15th May 2023 – 7pm**

Meeting closed at 9:40pm.

Agenda Item	Action	Person Responsible
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance - share information regarding the impact of attendance with the school community • Breakfast Offer – confirm approximate costs and if staff would be available to prepare the toast. School to trial this term. • Parent run Breakfast Club – send out a survey to parents to ascertain interest and whether parents would be willing to volunteer • Ask Rodger McAdoo if he would be available to meet Pupil Council with regards the Rights Respecting School Award 	G.Finch G.Finch Parent Council M. McAdoo
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload Head Teachers Report to Parent Council Blog as well as blog posts produced by Parent Council • Produce termly blog posts for Parent Council Blog 	H.Rosie K.Lomax
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with Gemma if a JPEG or digital image was produced of new school logo 	M.Leask
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Liam Brannen to see if he would be available to act as DJ for the disco fundraiser • Organise Disco for 27th of February and provide snacks and drinks • Look into options for a Mother's Day Tea or similar option this or next term 	K.Lomax Parent Council Parent Council
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to John to arrange a meeting to discuss options for the playground development 	G.Finch
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the possibility of obtaining funding for families from the council • Look into fundraising through Tesco and Co-op 	K.Lomax J.Fenton