

MINUTE OF THE TINGWALL SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Held on Thursday 20th January 2022 at 8:00pm via MS Teams

Present

Emily van Tonder	Chairperson
Louise Moar	Vice Chair
Allason Peterson	Parent Member
Alicia Hunter	Parent Member
Maurice Jamieson	Parent Member
Toyah Peterson	Parent Member
Nicola Sinclair	Parent

In Attendance

Cheryl Spofforth	Head Teacher
Dawn Ratter	Clerk
Moraig Lyall	Councillor
James Johnston	QIO

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Jade Keenan and Anna Moar.

2. Approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 4th November 2021

The minutes of the meeting were approved by Allason Peterson and seconded by Louise Moar.

3. Matter's Arising

School Capacity

The letter has not been sent to Children's Services yet.

ACTION: Emily

Internet Safety

Cheryl has been in touch with Kate Gabb (Children's Reporter) and is now waiting for a call from Rona McIntyre, Digital Safety Group about organising a session for parents.

ACTION: Cheryl

Football League

P6/7 pupils did not want to participate in the football league this year. Many of the pupils enjoy playing football but do not want to take part competitively.

Review of Constitution

The Parent Council have been more active in sharing information with parents via the Facebook page.

Janitor

There is currently no janitor cover at the school.

Sensory Room

Cheryl is confident the school will receive some funds from the local authority bids that have been submitted.

Vision, Values and Aims

Aimee Gifford, P7 won the design a new school logo competition. It was very close with another two of the shortlisted entries from Zara Crossan, P4 and Emmie Farmer, P3.

Indoor/Outdoor Play Resources

The school has received funding for a half set of large wooden Community Play Blocks complete with storage unit from the ELC team at Children's Services.

4. Parent Council Matters

COVID

The school and nursery were adversely affected last term, especially in the P4-P7 group where 55% of pupils tested positive. All mitigations recommended by Public Health and Children's Services were in place. Over and above these mitigations, the school had been keeping classes in separate bubbles with staggered break times and lunch times, different play areas and staff were doing LFDs morning and evening. The school was guided through the outbreak by Public Health and Children's Services Management Team who kept in regular contact, monitored absences daily and discussed next steps with Cheryl. During the process Cheryl felt clear and prompt communication to staff and parents was key to ensure everyone knew what the situation was. However, it was extremely challenging at times to ensure there was enough staff to cover classes. Cheryl covered the P4/5 class who were most affected by positive cases. Children's Services Management Team were incredibly resourceful and deployed some of their own staff to provide cover in the. The school will continue to keep contingency plans for blended or remote learning up to date in line with local authority guidance. All mitigations remain in place at the moment and the school will follow Children's Services, Public Health and Scottish Government guidance.

Louise felt if the P4/5 class had been closed earlier, it might have helped control the number of cases in the school. Louise spoke to Neil Beattie, Catering and Cleaning Team Leader about the cleaning methods in the school and felt confident they were doing everything possible to keep the pupils and staff safe.

The whole Parent Council expressed their thanks to Cheryl and the staff for how well they coped during the outbreak.

Nursery Communication & Class Blogs

Last term, the school had to stop using their main communication tool – Class Dojo – due to it not complying with SIC GDPR regulations. Staff loved using Dojo as a communication tool, it was quick and easy to communicate with parents. Parents loved that they could access it on their phones and receive notifications for updates and could regularly see what their children were doing at school and in nursery. Children's Services have advised all schools to use Glow Blogs as the main communication tool as it is a secure platform. Glow is much more cumbersome and time consuming for staff to use. One blog update was completely wiped out by a Glow update, with a lot of information being lost. There have also been ongoing issues with web filters in relation to Glow which has caused further problems. Last term was a very stressful time for the school and staff. The priority was to stop pupils feeling anxious about COVID, keep them happy and engaged during their time in school and nursery, and provide work for pupils who were self-isolating at home.

Staff put all their energy into this and meeting the many individual needs of pupils. Due to the outbreak, visiting teachers (PE/Art/Music) were not always able to attend which impacted on teacher non-contact time. It is during this time teachers would normally be able to update things like class blogs. Cheryl said they have to be very mindful the mental and physical health of staff following the outbreak. Some staff are also still recovering from COVID.

Meg Laurenson has joined the school as the new Nursery Teacher. Meg will be updating the nursery blog weekly. Class teachers have uploaded the curriculum overviews to Glow so parents can see the learning intentions for the term. They are committed to uploading a weekly snapshot on a Friday when the Art teacher is in and they have their non-contact time. Although class blogs are more time consuming staff are committed to keeping the content up to date.

Tracy Langley, Operation Digital Lead for the local authority has been meeting with representatives of a British based firm who have a communication tool – Expressions. This is similar to Class Dojo and Tracy is currently running a trial with some schools in Shetland. Tingwall will take part in the trial. If this is successful it will hopefully be rolled out to all schools.

Louise acknowledged the pressures staff have faced last term and noted it is really encouraging to see some progress being made. Allason has been aware some other nurseries use an online tool – learningjournals.co.uk where each pupil has their own profile and staff can upload photos of what pupils have been learning and which targets they are meeting. Cheryl will check with other schools and central services to see if this is something they could use.

ACTION: Cheryl

Alicia fully acknowledges the struggles of working with Glow but has concerns around the lack of communication and updates from the nursery. She feels the staff are brilliant and are always there to answer questions or speak about any issues/concerns but feels it is difficult for parents who have never been in the nursery and seen the area where their children spend all day or know who their friends are. Parents would like to be able to have conversations with their children at home about what they have been learning at nursery and at a young age it is not always possible for them to communicate this. Cheryl fully understands where parents are coming from but she is unsure what more they can do at the moment to bring parents together and into the setting under the current restrictions.

Alicia raised concerns around Glow from a GDPR perspective. She advised you can type into google – Tingwall Nursery and child's name and their picture appears. She asked what the difference is with Glow compared to Class Dojo or Facebook as it does not feel like a safe space.

Class List App

ClassList is similar to Class Dojo. Emily and Louise met with Tracy Langley, Digital Lead and Kristen Johnston, Legal Services regarding the use of the app but unfortunately the SIC are not keen for schools to be using the app due to GDPR issues, despite it being used by many other Scottish authorities and promoted by Connect. However, there is no reason the Parent Council can't move forward with using the platform. The link has been shared with the parent members for feedback.

James Johnston, Quality Improvement Officer advised the Parent Council that the local authority is currently looking at an online tool for parent/teacher appointments called Parent Booking. This tool has many other functionalities which are being explored. There is work ongoing at the moment from the local authority perspective to help support schools communicate with parent councils, parent bodies and the wider parent communities. Louise asked if this could be pursued with some speed. James will take on an action to catch up with Tracy around timelines for communication tools for schools and parent councils. Louise feels there is conflicting advice from the SIC and Connect.

ACTION: James

Polycrub Update

Emily will email TWWCC regarding possible funding from the Community Benefit Fund for the Polycrub.

ACTION: Emily

Fundraising

A grant was approved from the TWWCC for part of the works on the Sensory Room but there has been issues with payment of the grant. The works were being funded by the TWWCC grant and the SIC. The SIC have paid the invoice from the contractor and the Parent Council should be invoiced for their share of the agreed funding. The Community Council have advised they are unable to pay out the grant as the Parent Council has not made the payment direct to the contractor. Cllr Moraig Lyall advised the TWWCC still have around £3,500 of funds available to disperse before the end of the financial year and it would be good if Tingwall could put forward another bid. Louise asked Parent Members to email any suggestions for bids.

ACTION: Parent Members

There was a discussion on how future funding could be accessed from the Community Council if the Parent Council are required to pay for the goods/services up front before the funding is released. The Parent Council only have an available balance of £88.70 in the bank account.

Louise suggested applying to TWWCC for funding towards new football goals and thermal playground markings. Louise asked for some parent volunteers to help level of the damaged areas of the grass where the goals have been and sow some grass seed. Magnus Malcolmson has advised moving the goals regularly to prevent any future damage. Cheryl will check with the SIC to see if the school playground is still on the agenda for resurfacing before any purchases towards thermal markings are progressed.

ACTION: Parent Members & Cheryl

Christmas Gift Update

The Parent Council secured funding from TWWCC for Christmas gifts for pupils.

Class Photos

Unfortunately the school are unable to organise school photos this term due to COVID restrictions but the Parent Council will liaise with the school to try and arrange for next term. Dawn will add this to the agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION: Dawn

5. School Report

Art

Sarah Mullay, Art teacher organised 'My Child's Art Project' where parents were able to order mugs, mouse mats, etc. with the children's art work displayed on them. The school has earned £186.11 commission from the purchases.

Swimming

Swimming lessons have started for P4/5 and P5/6/7 classes.

COVID

Cheryl said they are hoping to remove class bubbles by the end of the month. It will be brilliant to have pupils playing together again and reinstate the class buddy systems. This would also allow the netball after school club to get back up and running.

Staffing

There is a support worker vacancy in the nursery. Cheryl said they are hoping to short list next week with the hope to interview at the end of the month.

Leadership Groups

Sanna Onhauz, Active Schools Co-ordinator is coming in to work with P6's on their young leader's certificates for 6 weeks. She will hopefully run a lunchtime club with P5.

Parent's Evening

Face to face parents' evening are being planned for the beginning of March. If it is not feasible to have these face to face then they will be held virtually through Parents Booking.

School Reports

Interim school reports will be issued at the end of month.

Retirement

Cheryl informed parents that she will be retiring at the end of the school year. She would hope a new head teacher will be appointed well before the end of the summer term.

6. Treasurer's Report

The balance in the bank account is £188.70. The available balance for the Parent Council is £88.70. Dawn has submitted the updated signatory forms to the bank.

7. AOCB

Nursery Doors

There was a query regarding the removal of doors in the nursery. Cheryl explained the doors that separate the cloakroom from the playroom were removed during the refurbishment to maximise space and increase the capacity of the nursery from 24 pupils to 32 pupils. Unfortunately, it has created more unusable space as there is no longer a quiet, safe space for children. Cheryl has approached Estate Operations about having the doors reinstated but as the nursery is still under guarantee by the contractor for a year Estate Operations are unable to install them at the moment. However, they have confirmed there should be no problem with installing the doors once the year has passed. Cheryl said they are having discussions at the moment around providing a quiet area for children.

Learning Estate Strategy

James acknowledged there is limited space in the school and this is something being considered strategically by Shona Thompson, Executive Manager. Shona has developed a Learning Estate Strategy on the condition and suitability of schools. This is a 10 year plan. Louise expressed concerns around the capacity of the school being 100 pupils and how they are edging nearer the limit each year. James confirmed Children's Services monitor school rolls and projected rolls for a 3 year period and are very mindful of the rising numbers in Tingwall. Louise suggested arranging a meeting with parents to put forward their concerns to Children's Services.

ACTION: Louise

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 27th April 2022.