

## Minutes of Meeting, Balfron Primary School Parent Council, 5 June 2023

### Present:

Anita Crozier (Chair); Angus Black (Head Teacher); Graeme Mayes (Depute Head Teacher); Gillian Macmillan (Principal Teacher); Michelle Montague; Emma Sutherland

### Apologies:

Michelle Conway (Treasurer); Moyra Coull (Secretary); Lorraine Gribben (Secretary)

### Minutes from Last Meeting, 20 April 2023:

Approved

### Treasurer's report

No formal update. Bank balance remains healthy with circa £3,400 in the account.

### Head Teacher's Report

Hilary at the High School had been in contact with the school to offer running a "café" (teas, coffees, etc) at Sports Day. All profit (after costs deducted) would go back to the school.

It was agreed that whilst it was a kind and helpful offer, the Parent Council would continue with having a tea, coffee stall at sports day. In the past, this has been a good generator of cash for the Parent Council. Moreover, the Parent Council is visible to all parents/carers attending sports day.

Mr Black confirmed that Gillian Macmillan has been appointed as the new Depute Head Teacher, taking over from Graeme Mayes when the school returns in August 2023. The Parent Council Chair was involved in the recruitment process and attended interviews with potential candidates. There was a good leet with strong candidates. Gillian was appointed and the school is delighted to have Gillian onboard. Having worked as a teacher then Principal teacher at Balfron for a number of years, Gillian knows the school and the pupils well.

Gillian is presently a Principal teacher. There will be no Principal teacher next year. Gillian will focus on her role as Depute Head and will have limited class time. Gillian will focus on attainment raising. There is a big P7 group leaving in June – 41/42 pupils. There will be approximately 20 P1 children starting in August 2023. The school roll is dropping. As such, the school will not receive the same amount of Council funding. 3 new teachers are coming in at the start of term.

All present thanked Graeme Mayes for his support with the Parent Council and wished him well as he embarks on his new challenge.

School Improvement Priorities for the year ahead include:-

1. Health and wellbeing – inclusiveness. The school will look at its policy on inclusiveness and its approaches to that. The school will look to the parent council to support it with its "inclusive" initiatives. Following on from previous parent council meetings, the school will review and if required renew its bullying policy. It will also have the children prepare a children's bullying policy. There will be a focus on neurodiversity this year. The school will also be considering "safe routes to school" and fully tackling travel plans.
2. Engaging learning experiences – The school is looking to build on play learning experiences for children. Gillian will be leading on this. The school is also looking to work with the Parent Council to refresh/create a Parent Directory.

3. Literacy – Gillian will again lead on this to help improve literacy levels within the school. Gillian will also work alongside teachers to enhance teacher’s skills in this important area. There will be a focus on writing.

### **School Uniform**

The Chair explained that the Parent Council had considered the Scottish Government Consultation Paper – National School Uniform Policy in which it is recognised that school uniform plays an important part in (i) the engagement of pupils with school (ii) promoting a sense of identity, belonging and connectedness to the school. A key aim of the national guidance is to support a reduction in the cost of uniform.

The Chair expressed views of parents who supported the wearing of school uniform – such as the wearing of uniform promotes equality, reduces the cost to parents (and pressure on parents) if unbranded items are not permitted; promotes a sense of identity and inclusiveness; safety (i.e child can be recognised as being a pupil of the school). The Chair also expressed the views of parents who were not in support of the wearing of school uniform – such as the cost (or additional cost) of uniform.

The Chair noted that there was a range of views with regards to uniform and that it was for the school to make the decision on uniform.

Mr Black confirmed that he and Mrs Macmillan had been discussing the wearing of school uniform and that the school were keen to implement the uniform policy from the start of the new school year. In particular, the wearing of school uniform had slipped considerably on “PE Days” so the wearing of uniform on PE days was to be re-introduced. Mrs Macmillan also explained that children had de-skilled and needed to learn how to change quickly particularly before moving up to the High School. Furthermore, with older children being more active during PE, it was cleaner and healthier to change out of clothes pupils had sweated in following their PE lesson.

Agreed the school will review and revise its uniform policy and will seek input from the Parent Council before sending to parents. The policy will take account of children with neurological conditions – i.e., can’t wear jumpers. Should parents have concerns about the uniform policy, they should contact the school.

The Chair confirmed that the Parent Council has tried on several occasions to promote pre-loved uniform and make it accessible to all but there has been very little uptake. The Parent Council has sorted the uniform that has been donated and only the best quality uniform has been retained. All other pre-loved uniform that is not in a good, re-useable condition has been put in the recycling bin at the school. Despite the poor uptake, the Parent Council will continue with the pre-loved uniform stall at Parent Council events and set up a system at the school for the deposit/collection of uniform.

### **Parental Engagement**

Mr Black confirmed there was minimal response to the school questionnaire sent out recently. As such there was no reliable data to rely upon and no conclusions could be drawn.

The Chair confirmed that the Parent Council has a questionnaire prepared ready to go out to families. Mr Mayes suggested that the questionnaire is shortened to 3 key questions – Mr Mayes would review and comment. It was agreed that rather than email the questionnaire out to parents/carers, house captains would hand out the questionnaire to parents/carers for parent/carers to complete at upcoming school events, such as the meet the teacher afternoons (at start of next

term) and the forthcoming open afternoons for P3, P5 and P7 (other classes open afternoons were by this year).

### **Activities & Events**

#### **Fun day at end of term**

End of Term fun day planned in Donaldson Park for last day of term. Will include inflatables, sports activities, tuck shop etc. No need for teachers to attend unless they want to. Event is aimed at all nursery and primary school children – children from local villages are welcome to attend. This is not a supervised event and parents/carers are to remain with their children. There may be a small cost for entry. A separate meeting has been arranged to finalise details.

#### **P1 parents' welcome morning/coffee with PC members**

The Chair suggested that the Parent Council host a “welcome” meeting for P1 parents and carers to introduce the Parent Council and help answer any questions that parents/carers may have. It will also allow parents/carers to meet other parents/carers whose children are in the same class.

Date to be confirmed. If let Mr Black know date, he will pass details on to P1 parents/carers.

### **AOB**

Mr Black raised that the planters in the school garden need to be replaced as several are broken. The bark in the playpark area also needs “topping up”. Mr Black has obtained quotes and the cost is £1000. Given that both the garden and the play park are legacy Parent Council projects, Mr Black asked the Parent Council to cover the costs. The school’s maintenance budget is insufficient to take financial responsibility for ongoing costs associated to previous Parent Council initiatives, like the school garden.

Agreed that the Parent Council will cover the costs for replacing the bark and the planters. Parent Council noted that in future, given it is a parent council initiative, it would look into more economical ways to cover the costs of such items. Noted the school garden and grounds are looking very unkempt. A “tidying up of the school” may be something the parent council considers organising with parent volunteers. To be discussed with the school before embarking on this.

### **Date of next meeting**

AGM – Thursday 24 August 2023. Agreed to pull date of the AGM forward this year to allow the Parent Council to start earlier in its plans for the year ahead.

Parent Council – Thursday 7 September at 7pm, in the school.