



Minutes of Meeting held 17th November 2020

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Approval of Minutes from previous meeting (17th September 2020)
3. Head Teacher Report / Covid Response
4. Treasurer Update
5. Fundraising Group Update
6. Outdoor Equipment / Grant Funding
7. Actions from previous Minutes:
 - a. Polytunnel Fencing / Security of School Grounds
 - b. Remembrance Garden
 - c. Project Playground
 - d. School Entrance Signage
 - e. Fundraising/Counting Cash
8. Dates of Future Meetings

1. Welcome & Apologies

Present:

David Williams (Chair)

Anneli Spence (Secretary)

Susan Henderson (Treasurer)

Andrew Buchanan (Vice-Chair)

Alison Webster (Member)

Kirsten Rodger (Member)

Diane Jack (Member)

Mhairi Bowley

Liz Wilson

Kerry Morrison

Emma Carter (Member)

Rona Lockyer (Member)

Jo Falconer (Member)

Lorraine Slabbert (Head)

Ruth Allan (Depute)

Shirley Gallivan (Depute)

Alison Bonner

Nicola Bonham

Lesley Steven

Apologies:

Morag Sorbie (Member)
Laura Whyte

Joanne Gudgeon

David welcomed everyone to the meeting (held as a virtual meeting over Google Meet due to the current social distancing rules). David extended a particular welcome to the new office bearers and those who were joining a Parent Council meeting for the first time.

2. Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved by all.

3. Head Teacher Report / Covid Response:

David explained that there was no usual HT report for this meeting as the decision had been made to focus on the school's response to the Covid 19 crisis, in light of recent events at school.

Lorraine confirmed there had been 4 active track & trace teams in school this week with 6 classes affected. Several staff are currently self isolating. This might mean it is difficult to keep consistency of staffing in classes in the short term but the staff will do their best to keep things as consistent as possible for the children. Where class teachers are isolating but not actually unwell, they can support planning and learning from home. That has been happening over the last week or 2 and working well.

Support staff (SLAs etc) have been badly affected and several are self isolating. This has meant that the school has had to prioritise the need for support for the children and focus on supporting needs such as intimate care, mobility needs, etc.

Lorraine felt it would be helpful to explain what had happened over the last week or 2 with positive Covid tests in school and the process that the SMT had to follow as a result:

The first positive case was last Sunday morning. Lorraine as HT was alerted by the Stirling Council link officer and had 15 minutes to prepare for the track & trace meeting. Lorraine was pleased to report that the school was well prepared for this, records were organised and much of the necessary information was to hand. The school is comfortable that the procedures they have in place meant they could identify all close contacts quickly.

In the track & trace meeting, decisions were made about who needed to isolate. The health board made the first call on this but this was based on information from the school.

The official letters from the track & trace team were then prepared and approved by Stirling Council and the health board. The SMT could not contact any affected families until this was

done. The letters were then issued to all parents/carers. There are 4 types of letter in each case - 1 for parents of children who are close contacts; 1 for staff who are close contacts; 1 for the general parent body; and 1 for the general staff body.

Originally the whole contact process was intended to be dealt with by the health board only but the SMT felt that in the circumstances families would much prefer to hear the news in the first place in a telephone call from the school. The SMT therefore individually called all staff and families who would need to isolate. The whole process was complete on that first Sunday by around 6.30pm.

Andrew Buchanan commented that it was excellent that the school were calling families individually as this was a personal touch that was much appreciated. Andrew queried how it is decided who has to isolate for each positive case?

Lorraine explained that each case is looked at individually depending on who has had contact. The track & trace team asks the school if they can guarantee that a child has not had close contact with the positive case. If not, the child needs to isolate. This means for example that children in another class in the same year group may also need to isolate if they have played in the playground at the same time at break or lunch.

Lorraine stated that at the end of the process for each positive case, the school then also needs to send information to the health board about each isolating child as well as completing forms for each child/staff member who tests positive.

The school had to repeat this process several times over the following days and Lorraine felt things had improved and got quicker and more streamlined over the week. The SMT had also held debrief meetings with Stirling Council to check how the process had gone.

Lorraine acknowledged that the sheer volume of what needed to be done had led to some errors such as emails going out without attachments and apologised for that. There had also been some confusion about the letters, for example if a family had a letter saying that a child needed to isolate but then got another letter saying that they don't in relation to a different positive case. Lorraine was aware that had caused some anxiety and hoped that the explanation she had already sent out by email had cleared that up.

There were also some concerns that some families did not seem to realise that isolating children were not allowed to go out of their home/garden at all, not even for a walk. She would clarify this in an email later this week and asked for the PC also to reiterate this to other parents/carers.

The SMT is confident after this week that the school protocols are robust. There has however been a question raised about classes sharing playgrounds, given the impact of one positive case meaning that 2 classes need to isolate just because of being in the playground at the same time. Lorraine wanted to make clear that there had been no criticism of the current procedures by the track & trace team or the health board, it was simply that the school wanted to review matters in light of the last week to see if anything could be improved. The school has therefore looked at the possibility of classes staying in a single class bubble at all times, including break & lunch, with staggered breaks and lunches. This could reduce the number of children who need to isolate in the case of a positive test in their bubble.

The SMT has looked at this carefully but thinks the cons outweigh the pros. The negatives are:

- Composite classes could not play/socialise with others in their year group, something that has been identified by parents/carers and children as one of the main ways to mitigate the issues of composite classes.
- The staff could not cover this unless all support staff and all of the SMT covered the breaks and lunches every single day. This is simply not possible. Staff are often called to deal with issues which come up, there can be important meetings etc. Also if only one further staff member was off sick for example then there would simply not be enough staff to cover the breaks.
- The staff would all need to give up their own breaks and lunches every day. They were willing to do this but Lorraine felt she could not ask them to commit to doing that every single day.
- The children's routine would need to change again with different playgrounds being used, different break/lunch timing, not seeing some of their friends in other classes.
- SLAs/support staff covering all staggered breaks/lunches would mean they were not available to help children with additional needs at those times.

Lorraine asked for the PC's feedback about this proposed change. There was extended discussion and as a whole the PC felt that the current procedures should stay in place. Points made to support this included the need to balance the potential risks of having to isolate with the children's personal wellbeing; allowing composite classes the chance to mix with their peers; the fact that the children have very little opportunity to mix with other children outside of school at the moment; the desire not to ask the children and staff to deal with yet more changes unless absolutely necessary.

Lorraine thanked the PC for the feedback. In light of this the SMT will not change the current procedures.

It was suggested that the PC put a note on the facebook page for any families that need support with isolation, for example getting other children to school, to ask the PC for help. Anneli will action this.

Alison Bonner asked if there is any evidence of pupil-to-pupil infection. Lorraine advised it is hard to say for sure. Some children are in the same class but also mix out of school, for example at football, dancing, BBs etc, therefore it is hard to say for certain where someone has picked up the infection.

Several parents at the meeting noted that their children had been isolating this week and praised the school's efforts to continue teaching and the work coming home through google classroom, this seemed to be working well. Lorraine was pleased to hear this. The staff were still learning about using this too but it was improving all the time. Lorraine also confirmed that google classroom is also being used to provide work for children who are being kept at home due to other health issues or parental choice.

Jo Falconer queried if the school would be using the Scottish Government E-sgoil digital learning platform. Lorraine advised this is the Scottish Government blended learning option and is another tool that is available but is centrally issued/controlled and so is not personal or tailored to the children. For now DPS prefers to use google classroom so that the children are getting work from their own teachers and it is a more personalised approach.

Anneli advised that there had been some parent/carer feedback that it was disappointing that the usual HT update email had been missed last Friday. Many parents/carers were anxious about the number of classes that were off school that week and some reassuring communication from the school would have been helpful. Lorraine accepted this but advised that there had unfortunately simply not been time to get an email out due the sheer volume of work needed as a result of the track & trace procedures. The usual email update would be coming out again this week.

4. Treasurer Update:

The current account balance is £10,855.09. That includes £2000 from the DDT for the windfarm grant.

6. Fundraising Group Update:

The fundraisers have made £600 from magic numbers and Halloween activities which is brilliant and thanks to everyone for their support. The just giving page has been closed so the prize winners could get their winnings.

The fundraisers are looking into other options for donations. They are planning a raffle of, hopefully, a sleigh of Christmas goodies, wine, food etc. They have also arranged with Caledonian Christmas trees for our annual fundraising with them - £3.00 per tree ordered with DPS mentioned. They have offered a tree for school again.

Lorraine advised that unfortunately the school can't accept the tree this year. This is obviously very disappointing as the tree is always beautiful and the children love it, however there will be no one in the assembly hall this Christmas to see it and also decorating it would be hard with touching the baubles etc. Lorraine suggested that the tree for the school be donated somewhere else instead, for example to the care home.

It was suggested that perhaps we could put up outside lights at the school entrance and all thought this was a great idea. A request will be put out on facebook for donations of lights.

Lorraine confirmed that the classrooms would still be decorated by the teachers and there would also still be a Christmas jumper day this year. David suggested that PC funds could be offered to the teachers if they wanted to buy any new decorations for their classrooms this year. Ruth will ask the staff if there is anything they need.

6. Outdoor Equipment/Grant Funding

Shirley confirmed that the DDT has awarded the school £2000 as part of the wind farm grant. This is great news. This was awarded for an outdoor gym. The total cost of that would be £5800. Lorraine has also today received a quote and layout plan for a new trim trail on the playing field.

There was discussion about what would be best for the children (either the outdoor gym equipment or the trim trail) and what they would enjoy the most and it was felt in general that the trim trail would be the best investment, although due to time constraints this was not discussed in detail and will be added to the agenda for the January meeting.

Shirley also put forward a wishlist of resources for the P1/2 playground for a playhouse, water butt, artificial grass, hula hoops and a leaf canopy. These items have been asked for by the children. The total cost is £440.62. The PC agreed to fund the purchase of these items now.

7. Actions from Previous Minutes:

- a. **Polytunnel Fencing/Security**
- b. **Remembrance Garden**
- c. **Project Playground**
- d. **School entrance signage**
- e. **Fundraising/Counting Cash**

There is no update on any of these matters since the last meeting and all will be added to the agenda for January.

8. Dates of Future Meetings:

Thursday 28th January 2021

Tuesday 23rd March 2021

Thursday 27th May 2021