

Kirknewton Primary School Parent Council meeting, 22.03.23

Present: Pip Shiels, Fiona Wright, Kirsten Patience, Kara Payne, Angela Herkes, Turid Engstrom, Isla Veal, Barbara Dunlop, Pamela Berry, Laura Stewart, Julie Thynne, Adele Murphy, Emma Marshall, Sarah McNee, Angela Hogg

Apologies: Amanda Blainey, Victoria Guthrie

1. Welcome and Apologies (PS)

2. Approval of previous minutes: minutes from 30.01.23 approved

3. Head teacher update (KP):

a. Staffing update

Angela Ritchie has decided not to return to the nursery at the moment; she's looking forward to the future and hoping to volunteer with us soon. She passes her thanks to the community over the 20 years of her service to West Lothian Council.

Susan Erskine has secured a post working with Women's Aid, she will end with us at the Easter holidays.

There's a full time and part time post currently advertised, and there's cover staff in the nursery at the moment.

Irene Cockburn has worked with school for many years and has decided to retire at the end of June.

Sonke Bhebhe has also chosen to retire, at the end of April.

Zaira Lovey will come back and help with delivery of STEM within the school until the end of term, hopefully into next session.

Sarah Lewis will be going to work in Bangkok for two years, to develop understanding of early years, and is due to come back to KPS. In the interim we are looking for somebody for two years to cover that post, that's likely to be filled by a probationer.

Adele Murphy is welcomed back after maternity leave; she will be sharing the role of Principal Teacher with Barbara Dunlop.

b. Outdoor spaces

Tree stump – there have been some trees with infection in the school grounds so these had to be brought down. The tree stump has developed a type of fungus but it's been checked and is nothing to worry about. Children have been told to leave it alone.

c. School roof

Roof issues - some time ago lead flashings were stolen from the roof. It took some time to get the roof repaired, around Christmas time. The problem has continued with a leak at the

staff room door. Investigations have been going on, but- the leak has continued in the last heavy rain. This is affecting the boys toilets, main corridor, staff room, maths cupboard. We have been reassured that roofers are coming this week to fix the problem. It has caused damage and we're keen to get areas fixed and repaired to a good state. KP will keep community updated about that.

d. Budget

Similar to last report: majority of the school fund is already allocated for things happening in the school. E.g. flower fund, charities, school excursions, Windfarm money, Afterschool clubs.

e. Skip to be fit

Skip to Be Fit is a PSA fundraising initiative. The school and PSA will work together on that. It is a way for children to develop stamina, in addition to the Daily Mile. Children are to develop skipping skills and learn some new skipping games. This will culminate in competition week after Health Week, with children to skip as many times as they can. Children will be asking for Sponsorship, through a GoFundMe page, thought to be easier than paper sheets.

f. School uniform provider

KP got a quote from Borders Embroidery for P7 hoodies and the cost was higher than previous years. Uniform costs were also higher. So we looked for alternatives. A local provider in Uphall has been chosen and is now on Pecos system so we can order uniform through them, which is cheaper than Borders. Decided to trial this provider for a year. Also means that parents and carers can order and pick up from them directly throughout the year. Order can be made online or on the phone, or through the school.

4. Responses to questions raised by parents (PS/KP)

There was one question submitted about the after school activities offered. KP reports that there has recently been a coding club and bikeability running; but we understand parents and carers would like more after school activities. The problem is that hall is currently used by Simply Play, so we are struggling to utilise the sports opportunities from local authority as the majority are indoor activities over winter. We don't have the space for it. Our staff also have a working time agreement, and this is an addition to that - some staff are able to do after school activities but some are not. Simply Play is also an asset to have in terms of childcare, so we want to continue working with them. We are also working on how we can provide choice for children within the school curriculum, within the course of the school day.

5. Update from Focus Groups (KP)

Languages – KP has met with some parents who have started to come in to school and help deliver learning of some languages. That will continue.

Website group – this has stalled a little as Mrs Turnbull has been off; she is back now and we will continue the work updating the website.

Outdoor learning – we recently discussed the next Big Dig and information about this will be sent out before Easter Holidays. The date is Saturday 13th May - 9am-1pm. Plans are to finish off the tyre pyramid, digging, and painting - finishing jobs started last time.

Health and Wellbeing group – the group is organising Health Week, Mrs Dunlop has been running that. Mrs Murphy will take over sports day element of that.

Curriculum group - the consultation is finished and has fed back work done. Plans for work going forward are in development. It's flexible according to different children's needs.

Plans for groups for next year are in consideration - some groups may end at the end of this session, and there may be other groups coming up.

6. Wee updates (KP/PS):

a. Parents support group

Parents Support Group - for parents of care experienced and additional support needs. Two meetings have been held, where there was good discussion about additional support needs and sharing experience and knowledge. The plan is to meet roughly once a month over the rest of the school year, with a conversation topic for each meeting.

Date for next meetings: Thursday 20th April, Thursday 25th May, Thursday 22nd June - Green Room, 7.30pm

b. Date for next social

The next Parent Council social will be on Friday 19th May, 7.15-10, Green Room. This is an opportunity for all parents/carers to come along and meet and have fun with other community members, all are welcome.

c. PC/PSA and Parents Evening

PC/PSA: in order to share information for parents about what is involved and what goes on and to encourage broad representation of parents on PC/PSA, we will perhaps have reps of PC/PSA coming along to Parents Evening and talking with parents about it. Volunteers to help with that would be appreciated.

The PSA is planning to sell second hand uniform at Parents Evening.

Parents Evening will be on next Wednesday and Thursday, 29th and 30th March - 4-7.30pm.

7. PSA update (Angela Herkes)

PSA currently has £3500 in bank. £200 is for school trips, £300 for P7 leavers activities, £400 for leavers hoodies for current P6s. That leaves c. £2500 - want to keep buffer in account £500-1000. We are now fundraising for a Promethean board. Aiming to raise £400 next term towards that. Skip to be Fit coming up in Sports Week - 12th June. There will be a Disco Royal Ball on 4th May. There will be uniform sales at P1 induction night and at parents evenings.

8. PSA/Parent Council Merger (PS)

A PSA/PC merger has been discussed for some time as PSA member numbers have been low. There has been no fixed chair/secretary on the PSA for last couple of years. the PSA met last week and felt it most sensible to become subgroup of PC. So that Chair and Secretary of PC will oversee that, and treasurer of PSA will remain, as PC treasurer. We have sought advice a couple of years ago from Connect Group - they are a group that exists to support Parent Councils/PSAs, and we pay a membership fee every year to them and that covers public liability insurance. They sent us a leaflet about subcommittees that addresses this question. We need to disband the PSA before anything else, and then form a subgroup within PC that will be the fundraising subcommittee. We need to seek more precise guidance about the bank account – there is currently no PC bank account, just a PSA bank account. All PSA members should invited to a meeting with two weeks' notice and given information ahead of that meeting about disbanding the PSA. So we will hold a meeting like that after seeking advice about the bank account. PS would appreciate a small working group to work with her about this process. Need to establish names that will sit on the Fundraising subgroup.

9. AOB

PS: People may have been aware that there was an idea to stop having school crossing patrols. That is not happening at this time. But there is no guarantee that West Lothian Council will be able to keep that in the future. It is especially important to have a patrol on a fast, busy road. We will need to be ready to campaign for that.

10. Date for next meeting:

Thursday 1st June at 8pm on Zoom, details to follow