

## **Kirknewton Primary School Parent Council Meeting, 01.06.23**

**Present:** Pip Shiels, Fiona Wright, Kirsten Patience, Barbara Dunlop, Claire Muir, Kara Payne, David Massey, Julie Thynne, Pamela Berry, Sarah McNee, Emma Marshall, Adele Murphy, Angela Hogg, Lyndsey Robertson, Vic Guthrie, Isla Veal, Sara Shaw

**Apologies:** Amanda Blainey, Fiona Cain, Laura Stewart, Carl John

- 1. Welcome and Apologies (PS)**
- 2. Approval of previous minutes: approved**
- 3. Head teacher update (KP):**

a. Staffing update

Staffing is not finalised for next session yet, but will be soon. Ms Payne will be going on adoption leave in the near future, and will return after adoption leave. After Mrs Bhebhe's retirement, we've recruited Deborah O'Mara, coming from Our Lady's RC Primary School; Ms Baird will be staying with us next session (she was a probationer this year) – she will be one of the P1 teachers; there is one current vacancy for the next session as there will be two P1 classes.

Class allocations: we hope to be able to share that information very soon, pending the vacancy being filled.

b. Reading shed

West Lothian Council received pupil equity funding from the Scottish Government; we received between £7000 and £8000 from that – the children get a say on how to spend part of that money, through the Pupil Council. The Pupil Council considered what it wanted to do, consulting with the classes – focus on closing the equity gap in attainment. There is an idea of sharing books across the community – a reading shed. It will be locked with a combination lock but the code will be shared with the wider school community as well. Children and adults will be able to borrow a book and then swap for another. It will be launched in August. Book donations would be welcome, from nursery up to adult age reading.

c. Health Week

Health week and sports day is next week, and is shaping up to be a great event. Mrs Murphy and Mrs Dunlop have been working on these. Events include: pilates, cricket, gymnastics, first aid, basketball, tennis, judo, smoothie bike, rugby. And two sports days – these will have gender specific and mixed gender races.

d. Fundraising

Aware of confusion over date of sponsored read, and conscious that asked quite a lot in terms of fundraising. So we're reconsidering that idea, and are thinking about not overloading parents/carers in terms of costs. We will try to share with parents/carers any events early on, and also confirm that there's never an expectation in terms of amounts people are asked to contribute.

We are trying to use iPay for these things – to do this we need to put a limit on the amount – the limit is not the expectation (sometimes it may appear to parents/carers that the limit amount set is the expectation).

e. Budget

No formal budget update for the meeting tonight; but in summary, we have got c. £2500 in the school fund. Have ordered potting shed in order to grow plants in school next session. The payments for the school camp have been received from parents/carers and the payment for the camp has been made.

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

Q. Might also be useful to know what supervision is on for breaks. My child tells me they watch the little ones but nobody up at the muga or anything.

A. There are always four adults out in the playground at break at lunch. This is double what we have been allocated by West Lothian Council. The PSWs are spread across the space, one on the field, one on the tarmac and one on the MUGA. There is also a floating member to deal with accidents etc. I will remind all staff members to remain in their allocated spaces.

Q. Book hut sponsored read... Does anyone know how much they need because they could ask the community lottery for a donation rather than putting the burden on the parents?

A. This was an initiative ran by the literacy ambassadors to add additional books to their reading shed. It was meant to happen after Christmas but was delayed. Unfortunately, the leadership team were not aware that it was going out later. I can understand parent/carer concerns around this, and we will endeavour to think more carefully about this in the future.

Q. Would it be possible to have a list of dates parents are invited into school (class assembly, sports day, other bigger events, parents night) at start of term to allow plenty of notice for working parents?

A. All information regarding upcoming events is detailed within the Sway as early as possible. That said, we are planning to give parents and carers the information regarding key events, assemblies, showcases of learning etc in August this year. However, it is worth saying that dates will be subject to change as schools have to remain very flexible.

Q. This question has been asked by the P7s over the past few years!! Can the portion sizes for school dinners please be increased for upper end of school? Apparently there is often a lot of food waste from the wee ones so even if the portions were slightly smaller for the younger ones and the excess given to older pupils?

A. This is an ongoing issue and one which has been directed to West Lothian Council. The cost is the same for all children and therefore the portion sizes should be the same too. This is not a school decision; it is a council wide one. We always encourage older children to bring a larger afternoon snack which they will be able to eat. It is part of the reason we introduced the afternoon snack time this session.

Q. The P7 leavers assembly is usually on the evening before the last day of term. This year it is on Monday evening which seems strange to do a big farewell then the P7 pupils have 4 more days of school. Some parents have flagged this up for future years, realise it's too late for this year!

A. This is about staff availability, as they are giving up their own time to make sure the P7s get a lovely send off. Due to family commitments and personal commitments of staff, this was the only day that it could be done this session. The children also lead this assembly so it means that it will be done early on in the week, allowing them to enjoy their last few days in P7 without having rehearsals for it.

Q.. Another point as consideration for next year's P7 class. A number of pupils in this year's P7 have been disappointed in the special leavers events as very few of the activities were things which they had suggested. Apparently the cost of bus travel was a factor. Something to consider for future years is that most pupils now have a free bus pass so perhaps public transport could be used to keep costs down.

A. They were unable to do the sleepover due to insurance. This was substituted with Potter Around, their 2<sup>nd</sup> choice. The cinema unfortunately wasn't possible due to the timings of the films and availability of children's films. This was discussed with the children at the time but was out with the control of the school. Mrs Hunter is facilitating a film, popcorn and treats for the children as a treat from her. The only other issue was the swimming and because the flumes were closed, the children decided they would do bowling instead.

Question about technology provision for school children:

A. West Lothian Council have not followed Edinburgh and given all children technology due to a parliamentary pause within the Scottish Government while research is conducted around the impact of this manifesto. We have ample amounts of technology in school which the children can access. We also operate the, 'Any Time, Any Where' policy in P6 and P7 where children can bring in their own devices.

## **5. Update from Focus Groups (KP)**

Focus groups have been really successful. Everyone who's been involved has enjoyed working together and spread the workload. Will be looking at how to take those forward next year. Ideas include: Equity and Inclusion group, Centenary planning group. Further ideas are welcome.

## **6. Wee updates (KP/PS):**

### **a. Pupil Council**

Pupil Council – next year might change name of it somewhat, and incorporate it into Our Rights learning. The children will get the opportunity to sign up to that early in August, likely for two years. Children will be asked to share why they should take part and teachers will look at how that will work depending on the age and stage of the class.

### **b. Passion Project/Social Enterprise/My Academy**

We're focusing on authentic leadership voices – about children making decisions and leading on things. Children have done 'passion projects' this year, working hard to make change on things they care about. This year, we've had climate defenders, recycling, music. Next year the passion projects will run again, but be limited to 8 weeks. Then there will be Enterprise projects with Enterprise Scotland for another 8 weeks. Then 'My Academy', which is about children being able to make choices about what they are learning. The idea is that children will learn a new skill or consolidate something they've learned already. This is still in the development stage.

c. BSL

BSL will be incorporated into languages learning at KPS (after French and Spanish), following very successful sessions with P4. P1 teachers have been doing Signalong training. This will be trialled to monitor whether it will have an impact on learning phonics and speech and language.

d. P7 trip

For current P6s going on their P7 trip, planning starts well ahead of time. We have agreed that the trip is to take place early on in the session for costs planning. We have applied for funding to support parents/carers struggling with the cost of that.

e. Big Dig

Another great Big Dig event was held in May. Parents, carers, children and members of the community worked to build more in the school grounds and do improvement work. Work on the pyramid was continued. Looking to continue to run the Big Dig once per year in the future.

f. Centenary

Next year is the centenary year at KPS. We are looking at how to celebrate that, within the school and with the wider community. We will be inviting parents/carers to be involved with that.

g. Parents support group/Parents Social

We ran three socials this year, 1 was well attended, 2 were less well attended. Therefore we may not run as many next year. There is a monthly support group for parents/carers of care experienced children or children with additional support needs. This may also be opened to other cluster primary schools, with the aim of having a knock on effect for the high school as well.

## **7. PSA update**

PSA representative is unable to attend this evening, an update was sent by Fiona Cain. PSA thank parents/carers for supporting the royal discos, which were very successful. £200 was raised. The PSA have given funds raised throughout the year to the school to purchase a Promethean board. They've also provided funds towards P7 leavers' event and P7 hoodies (for current P6s).

We ask that Class Reps spread the word that the PSA needs more members to help continue fundraising work over the next year.

## **8. PSA/PC Merger**

We discussed merging PSA into PC at the last PC meeting. Volunteers were requested to manage this process, which is complex, but there are no volunteers yet. A decision has been taken to pause this for now. Dan Veal (PSA treasurer) will look into the process of managing the bank account as a first step towards this.

Vic Guthrie suggested: Triodos is a good bank for small community interest groups.

**9. PC roles for next year**

Current class reps have confirmed if they are able to remain reps for the next school year. Volunteers to be class reps are always welcome.

Nursery – Turid Engstrom

P1 – Victoria Guthrie

P2 – Samantha Winwick

P3 – Amanda Blainey

P4 – Sara Shaw

P5 – Sarah McNee

P6 – Laura Stewart

P7 – Julie Thynne

**10. AOB: none**

**11. Date for next meeting (AGM):**

Wed 30<sup>th</sup> August at 8pm, on Zoom