

West Linton Primary School Parent Council Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday 10th March 2015

Present:

Parent Council: Tristan Compton (Chair), Louise Fraser (Secretary), Sandie Lloyd, Gail Jackson, Morag Everest, Neil Robson, Emma Wood, Victoria Harburn, Ruth Doherty (Treasurer), Neil Clunie (PTA Chair), Emma Downie (Deputy Chair), Maggie Shearer, Marie Botelho, Connor Rose.

Staff: Martin Elliott, Grace Frew, Alison Saxon, Lily Stenhouse

Others: Sheila Anderson (Area Catering Manager, SBC), Gillian Fleming (Food and Nutrition Coordinator, SBC), Donna Manson (Director of Children & Young People's Services, SBC), Liz Wharton (Senior Education Officer, SBC), Glenda Barton, Gillian Bronsvort, Caroline Dunmur, Hilary O'Dwyer, Nikki Eatwell, Kirsty Hubert, Chris Knight (part)

Apologies: Frances Little, Rachel Hall, Tamsyn Weston, Debbie Moroney

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies noted. T Compton advised the meeting E Weipers wishes to step down from the Parent Council. The Parent Council thanked her for all her hard work in the past.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th January 2015 were approved as accurate. Updates on actions arising were as follows:

- **Action Points 3-6: the library project**
A group has been formed to take this forward. Consultations with staff, pupils and parents are ongoing at the moment.
- **Action Point 7-9: the Young Engineers Club**
Mrs Smith and Mr Elliott have offered to be the staff helpers. A Meeting is due to be held on Friday to take this forward.
- **Action Point 11-12: library improvements in advance of World Book Day**
The group had decided to formulate clear plans and carry out consultations, rather than rush to get things done for world book day. T Compton thanked the staff for re-introducing the dressing up on world book day and noted that the children seemed to have enjoyed it.
- **Action Point 13: Lighting outside the Community Entrance**
T Compton still needs to follow this up with the community council
- **Action Point 14: Road Safety Group, issue of missing pavement on Deanfoot Road**
T Compton reported that at the final meeting of the school travel group, this issue had been debated at length and the high number of parents raising this problem in the survey was noted. SBC had measured the road and stated that there was insufficient space to construct

a proper footway, and a narrow footway would be worse than nothing as it gave a false sense of security. Consequently, SBC propose to take no further action to solve this problem. The general consensus of Parent Council was that this is not good enough and a solution should be found. T Compton will share the minutes of the School Travel Group along with Councillor contact details and encouraged concerned parents to contact their local councillors directly as it was felt that Parent Council and the school have taken this issue as far as they can at present.

- **Action Point 15: Refuse Department collections at school drop off time**

G Frew is to give T Compton the contact details of someone in the Council he can get in touch with about this.

All other action points have been completed or were dealt with later in the meeting.

ACTIONS

- 1. T Compton to circulate minutes of the most recent School Travel Group along with Councillor contact details**
- 2. T Compton to follow up email to Community Council about the poor lighting outside the school Community Entrance**
- 3. G Frew to give T Compton contact details of someone in the Council to contact about refuse collection times**

3. Treasurers Report

R Doherty provided the meeting with an update on the Parent Council bank balances, which now stand at £562.56. This is after payments for a leaving present and card for D Whyte and for reimbursement of T Compton's expenses.

4. School Food, Nutrition & Menu Planning

A brief presentation was given by Gillian Fleming (Food and Nutrition Coordinator at SBC). Her role is a new one within the Council and she has been in post since shortly after Christmas 2014. Her presentation included information on how menus are planned, how she consults with children, parents and kitchen staff and how the menus are analysed for their nutritional value using Scottish Government software to ensure the menus meet Scottish Government nutritional guidelines. Menus are "balanced" across the week and across all options, and the need to provide children with choices they like is balanced with choices that are better for them. Inevitably some options are healthier than others, but there should be overall balance and compliance with Scottish Government guidelines.

S Anderson indicated that across SBC, 72% of P1-3 children were having the free school meals options.

Her department are keen to hear from parents if they have any suggestions for improvements and they are working on a strategy to remove any less healthy options from the menus. They can be contacted directly on Gillian.Fleming@scotborders.gov.uk and SAnderson@scotborders.gov.uk

A parent asked about the option of having a salad bar. S Anderson advised that this option is currently being looked into.

It was agreed that any parent wishing to see the lunchtime arrangements could, by appointment, come and observe, and if there were any child-specific queries as a result of this, they should be

raised directly with the school. It was suggested that a wider invitation for parents to come into the dinner hall at lunch time to see what goes on could perhaps be built into a future open morning/afternoon.

S Anderson and G Fleming also advised that they would be happy to attend a parents evening to talk to parents, gather feedback and perhaps offer some tastings. T Compton will follow up arrangements for this.

ACTIONS

- 1. T Compton to arrange for S Anderson and G Fleming (or representatives) to attend a parents evening**

5. SBC Director of Children & Young People's services – Donna Manson

D Manson, the new Director of Children & Young People's services gave a presentation to Parent Council discussing how she sees a partnership with the school and with parents developing as we work together to overcome the problems identified in the Inspection Report. Building parents' confidence in the school is a key priority.

The parents meeting planned for 31st March was discussed. This meeting is designed to fulfil the commitment made in August immediately following the inspection, to report back on progress and answer further questions. D Manson outlined the format currently planned for that meeting but was keen to receive feedback from parent council on this.

A letter will go out to parents asking for any questions which they would like to have answered on the evening. There will also be an opportunity for parents to raise any questions at the meeting. Any questions for which there is no time will be responded to in writing.

The plan is to also have a section of the meeting where parents split into groups/workshops to be shown how the school is teaching numeracy, literacy and growth mindsets, and how the curriculum has improved.

The final part of the meeting will involve everyone returning to the main hall to answer some more questions and hear from Mrs Doyle, our new Head Teacher.

It was emphasised that West Linton Primary School is a priority for the Council. They are keen to work closely with us and will continue to do so until an effective partnership is established.

Parent Council were happy with the proposed format but also keen that the meeting also include information from the Council as to what has changed internally to ensure a similar situation can never happen again.

6. Building project – late completion: funds from penalty payments

T Compton explained that when the school building project was delayed, it had been understood that the contractors would pay a penalty for late completion, and Parent Council had sought to ensure that any funds raised in this way, could be used for the benefit of the school, children, and community, who had been without the building for longer than expected. Following a Freedom of Information request it was eventually disclosed that penalties were not paid for late completion, but some £25,000 was received due to air-tightness problems.

G Frew advised that the project manager is Steven Renwick, and he holds this budget. The school is in a settling-in phase and therefore, the project is not complete at this time. The building will not be signed off as complete until all defects are completed by the contractor.

Some of the £25k that the Council received for the failure to achieve the Air Tightness value has been spent on fixing the fan in the kitchen and moving switch points. Parent Council felt that the £25k should not be spent on repairs that could/should be done under warranty, but should be used to enhance the original specification.

G Frew reported that while the project remains open, the school and/or Parent Council may bring forward suggestions that involve further enhancements to the building to improve the pupils education or welfare but we need to bear in mind the full £25k is not available.

G Frew agreed to find out the actual amount available and to request it is ring-fenced.

G Frew agreed to find out if there are limits on whether the proposal should be for capital or revenue spending.

T Compton proposed that once the sum available and any constraints were known, all parents and staff could be surveyed for ideas, following which the School and Parent Council would work together to agree how it was spent.

ACTIONS

- 1. G Frew to find out the actual amount of extra funds available and request it is ring-fenced**
- 2. G Frew to find out if there are limits on whether the money must be spent on capital or revenue items**

7. Head Teacher's report

Early Learning:

20 children are enrolled for next year (2015/16). Staffing will therefore only be for 1 session per day. Consultation with parents will take place as to whether that session will be morning or afternoon. A meeting is scheduled with the Village Nursery and West Linton Early Learners (previously Playgroup) to ascertain the needs of pre- and ante-pre school age children's parents and how the providers can work together to provide a flexible service that meets parents needs.

Heating/classroom temperature:

G Frew explained that in response to various reports of the school being too hot, staff had been encouraged to open windows to cool the building. A problem this week with the heating going off unexpectedly, means that the trip valve is to be changed soon. During the Easter holidays a team will come in to assess the underfloor heating system to make sure it is all working properly.

Survey of parents:

This will be issued early in the summer term. The survey will have two sections - one about performance which asks questions similar to an inspection survey, and another to gather views on more operational subjects (eg. Uniform, Sports, School Meals, and School Photographs) Parents should email T Compton (westlintonparents@gmail.com) or N Robson with any questions they think should be included. M Elliott to meet with T Compton and N Robson to finalise the questions before Easter.

Parents meetings:

These will be held in the hall like last time. Staff are busy preparing.

ACTIONS

- 1. M Elliott, T Compton, and N Robson to meet to finalise the survey questions before Easter**

8. Updates from sub-groups

Due to shortage of time, only urgent sub-group items were discussed. More complete sub-group reports will be included in the next Parent Council agenda.

Sports committee:

M Elliott is taking this forward. The proposal is to create a sports committee who will aim to achieve a School Sports Award from Sports Scotland. We are aiming for a gold award. No school in Scottish Borders so far, has achieved this award.

Paul Murray, SBC Active Schools Coordinator is keen to be involved as are several P7 pupils. The committee would be led and chaired by pupils and would aim to promote participation and inclusion in sport within the school.

Given the high level of sports activity that already exists, WLPS is well on the way to qualifying for an award, and including the existing sports clubs in this committee will give it a great start. G Jackson and N Clunie agreed to join the sports committee.

M Elliott will include information in the next school newsletter and will present an update at the next parent council meeting.

PTA:

The Spring Fair will be held on the 25th April 2015. More details to follow.

ACTIONS

- 1. M Elliott to include information on the Sports Committee within the next school newsletter**
- 2. M Elliott to provide update on Sports Committee to next parent council meeting**

9. Other meetings attended/planned

Parent Representatives on the Education Executive:

2 people had volunteered for this from West Linton PS. They were T Compton and N Eatwell. Since each school may only submit one candidate, a vote was held by the parent forum at the meeting and T Compton was chosen as the candidate from WLPS. Parent Councils will elect a representative from all those put forward by SBC's primary schools, early next term.

School Travel Plan/Road Safety:

This was discussed earlier under Item 2.

School Uniform Suppliers:

2 potential suppliers will come in and pitch to a panel of 2 staff and 2 parents.

SPTC Training – Actions Arising:

Parent council are to have a presence at parents evening. We plan to have a stand in the library area alongside the teas & coffees on the nights. E Downie and S Lloyd are to organise this.

Year Group reps were suggested. T Compton is to check the AGM minutes to find out if any were elected and take this forward.

Staff representatives on parent council. SPTC trainers had suggested it was unusual to have staff on a parent council. It was felt by the meeting however that staff play a valuable role at meetings and if they feel they would still like to be on the parent council they are most welcome.

School eco committee – Whitmuir farm project:

The school have succeeded in gaining funding for a composting project in conjunction with Whitmuir Farm. The project is due to start in April. Children on the eco-committee will set up the school as a food waste composting facility. Food waste will be taken from the school to Whitmuir to be composted. Whitmuir are to provide 2000 sq. metres for the children to farm using this compost. This is a very exciting project which we look forward to seeing. T Compton will add this to the next agenda as an item.

ACTIONS

- 1. E Downie and S Lloyd to organise parent council stand for parents evening**
- 2. T Compton to check AGM minutes to see whether year group representatives have been elected**
- 3. T Compton to add the Whitmuir Farm Project as an item on the next agenda**

The next meeting will be held on Monday 27th April at 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

- 1. T Compton to circulate minutes of the most recent Road Safety Group along with Councillor contact details**
- 2. T Compton to follow up email to Community Council about the poor lighting outside the school Community Entrance**
- 3. G Frew to give T Compton contact details of someone in the Council to contact about refuse collection times**
- 4. T Compton to arrange for S Anderson and G Fleming (or representatives) to attend a parents evening**
- 5. G Frew to find out the actual amount available from the penalty payment and ask for it to be ring-fenced**
- 6. G Frew to find out if there are limits on whether the money must be spent on capital or revenue items**
- 7. M Elliott, T Compton, and N Robson to meet to finalise the survey questions before Easter**
- 8. M Elliott to include information on the Sports Committee within the next school newsletter**
- 9. M Elliott to provide update on Sports Committee to next parent council meeting**
- 10. E Downie and S Lloyd to organise parent council stand for parents evening**
- 11. T Compton to check AGM minutes to see whether year group representatives have been elected**
- 12. T Compton to add the Whitmuir Farm Project as an item on the next agenda**