

West Linton Primary School Parent Council Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday 4th November 2014

Present:

Parent Council: Tristan Compton (Chair), Louise Fraser (Secretary), Neil Clunie, Victoria Harburn, Sheena Robson, Maggie Shearer, Connor Rose, Debbie Moroney, Fran Little, Gail Jackson, Tamsyn Weston, Emma Wood, Ruth Doherty (Treasurer), Connor Rose

Staff: Martin Elliott, Grace Frew, Lily Stenhouse

Others: Jen Grant

Apologies: Emma Downie (Deputy Chair), Morag Everest, Rachel Hall, Sandie Lloyd, Alison Saxon, Estelle Weipers, Carol Clapperton, Marie Botelho

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies noted.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22nd September 2014 were approved as accurate. Updates on actions arising were as follows:

- **Action Points 1&2: Friendship bench**

G Frew advised that designs for the bench will be completed by 07/11/14. G Smith is the Clerk of Works for Tweeddale area and he has advised that the parent council are not bound by the framework agreement for this level of work therefore a local contractor can be appointed and used. The parent council must keep him involved in the process and he will need to see the proposed design prior to final agreement to ensure there are no issues with it.

The bench will be located outside the community entrance to the school.

It was agreed that T Compton, N Clunie, M Shearer and R Doherty would draw up a short list from the P7 designs, and seek input from likely contractors. The school children will then vote to choose the final design.

The installation of the bench may need to be carried out by SBC operatives – G Frew to confirm.

- **Action Point 3:** This action is ongoing with support from M Shearer and S Robson
- **Action Point 4:** This action is ongoing
- **Action Point 5: Parent Council involvement in recruitment interviews**

SBC have advised that their policy is that Parents can only be involved in Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher interviews. T Compton has asked SPTC (Scottish Parent Teacher Council) for information as to what happens in other Scottish Local Authorities.

- **Action Point 8: HMIE member to be invited to a PC meeting**
HMIE have advised that they don't attend PC meetings as a matter of course. T Compton is to continue to attempt to seek their attendance. E Wood suggested that they may provide a letter to PC instead if attendance was impossible. T Compton will take this issue forward.
- **Action Point 9: showing parental appreciation of teachers**
A postbox has been created which will be sited at reception for parents to post messages to teachers. An email will be going out shortly to let parents know about this.
- **Action Point 13: T Compton to propose date for follow up SPTC training night**
This action is outstanding
- **Action Point 16: E Wood to ensure all winter resilience volunteers sign the risk register**
E Wood is to leave the risk register at reception and advise all volunteers to come to the school to sign it

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

ACTIONS

1. **T Compton to ask SPTC for guidance as to the policies adopted across other Scottish Local Authorities in relation to Parent Council involvement in staff interviews**
2. **T Compton to continue to try to arrange for a member of HMIE to attend a PC meeting**
3. **T Compton to send more info on follow up SPTC training night and propose a date for this**
4. **E Wood to leave risk register at reception for winter resilience volunteers to sign**
5. **G Frew to confirm whether installation of the friendship bench must be carried out by SBC operatives or not**

3. Treasurers Report

R Doherty provided the meeting with an update on the Parent Council bank balances, which now stand at £707.33. T Compton also advised that the previously agreed budget for a photographer was now not required due to the school having decided to take their own photos in-house.

4. Resources for parents to support children's Maths & Numeracy learning

T Compton gave a brief description of the history of the topic and explained why it was a recurring agenda item last year.

G Frew gave an overview of what resources are currently available including a list of website links that will soon be on the school website. These included;

- Education City
- Sumdog
- Manga High
- Heineman Active Maths

The parent council have asked Chris Knight to look at other school websites to see what links they use and he is in the process of refining this list, so that the best links can be published on the school website. In future, these linked websites may be “reviewed” by staff and/or pupils.

A discussion was then had about whether the school could provide parents with more information on learning intentions and strategies that are used in class. It was suggested that perhaps Learning Logs could include this. Some examples were given by parents of information they had received from some teachers which they had thought was particularly useful. It would be helpful if this best practice could be shared across the school. Parents are keen for there to be more consistency across the school in this regard.

G Frew advised that parent workshops are planned for term 3 (Jan-Apr) and term 4 (Apr-June) in numeracy and literacy respectively. These will provide parents with the information they need to support their child’s learning at home.

A brief discussion was had about maths homework. Parents are often unsure as to whether their child should be getting more/less maths homework. For example, the early years classes will not be expected to get as much maths homework as the older classes. It would be helpful to parents if the school were setting that expectation and communicating it with parents. A homework schedule was requested for each class.

G Frew agreed to ask teachers to provide an A4 sheet each year stating what their homework schedule is and what homework will be set on what days each term.

A brief discussion also took place about other resources available (not online). GF agreed to try to make Curriculum for Excellence leaflets, with specific actions highlighted for individual children, available for parents to take away at the parents evenings.

L Stenhouse indicated that there were significant pressures being placed on teachers this year and was concerned about the stress this could potentially cause them. PC members felt strongly that if teachers were under undue stress then SBC should be working to ensure additional resources were given to the school to help them through this transitional phase (as was promised by SBC at the meeting held to discuss the inspection report)

G Frew advised that the school have been given additional resources already. An additional Depute Head (0.6FTE) is in place until December and an additional 0.4 FTE teacher has been allocated to the school also. Teachers are being given adequate time to spend on planning.

ACTIONS

- 1. G Frew to try to make C for E leaflets available for parents evenings**
- 2. G Frew to take forward work on providing parents with homework schedules**

5. Head Teacher’s report

(a) Staffing

There has been a lot of changes in staffing to deal with in recent months. An explanation was given by G Frew of why changes were made the way they were. The Chair of the Parent Council was consulted and included in discussions about how to deal with the changes which is a welcome new form of collaborative working. Senior Management Team are supporting staff to ensure the change goes as smoothly as possible for the children.

Some parents felt that it would have been better had parents known in advance of the children so they could prepare their children. There was inconsistency throughout the school as to how the communication was dealt with. Some teachers told their classes and others didn't.

(b) Progress on points contained within the Action Plan

There has been progress in class planning and developing clear learning intentions.

Observations of lessons show that learning activities are matched to pupil needs in many lessons but not all. Teachers are more specific on how they give feedback to move learning forward and are planning big questions to challenge the children's thinking.

Monitoring of jotters show that children are moving forward and the pace is appropriate.

A timetable for quality assurance and assessment has been created and agreed with staff.

Work has begun on ensuring that the curriculum offers opportunities for personal achievement. Progressive programmes for literacy and numeracy have been agreed. Once clear approaches to planning have been established, working parties will be developed and refreshed on a regular basis.

Senior Management Team are working together to develop a consistent and manageable approach to evaluation of the progress of the school. A monitoring timetable has been agreed and professional dialogue between teachers and Senior Management Team is taking place.

Progress in Involving Parents, Improving communication has been made with the following examples of this:

- Calendar of school events produced
- Curriculum overviews to parents
- Open afternoon was a great success
- Parents have seen some of their children's learning in advance of Parents evening
- Parents are welcome for informal discussions with the class teacher
- Improved entrance and exit systems
- Monthly newsletter
- School website under development

6. Reports from sub-groups

PTA

The Christmas Cards generated a profit of £530. PTA would like to thank all the staff for the enormous effort they put in to ensure the success of this initiative.

The Follies have promised a contribution to the PTA from their profits this year.

The Halloween disco was a great success. It was held jointly with the Whipman committee and it is expected to have generated £150 for PTA funds.

The Northbrook Christmas wrapping orders have been slow so far although there is traditionally a big rush on these towards the deadline date. Reminders are to be sent out to parents.

The Christmas Bazaar will be held on 6 December this year. Due to license issues, it will not be held jointly with the West Linton Market, but this would be considered for next year.

Clubs & Activities

3 potential clubs have been proposed;

1. Art
2. Football
3. Young engineers

Art – E Wood is to take this forward and expects to run it in the spring term as in previous years.

Football – E Wood is to design a flyer and signup sheet for pupils to gauge interest. It could be possible to run 2 sections on the playing field with maybe having a separate girls club.

Young Engineers – G Jackson is to arrange for a member of the Young Engineers group to come in and do a presentation for the sub-group. Unsure as to whether a member of staff has to lead the group. G Jackson, N Clunie and E Wood are to take this forward.

Early Learning and Childcare (Nursery)

2 meetings of this sub group have been held so far. The aims of the group are to promote parental engagement, communication and feedback.

T Compton read out an update provided by M Everest. It was noted that the participation of G Frew in the meetings was greatly appreciated. Previously the preschool had felt separated from the rest of the school so this is a welcome change.

Parent Council asked T Compton to ask M Everest to feedback to the group parental concerns about what will replace Letterland. G Frew explained that phonics is explored in a non-direct, informal way in the nursery for example drawing children's attention to their name and what sound that begins with. The Jolly Phonics actions for sounds would be used at times. Parents asked that information about Jolly Phonics be made available to them.

Community Use Group

T Compton and G Frew have agreed to set up a sub group to deal with community use of the school, which will cover all uses of the building on evenings, weekends, and outside of term time.

Community Council members, SBC Community Learning and Development representatives, N Clunie and T Compton are to meet to set up the Community Management Group.

ACTIONS

- 1. E Wood to take forward organisation of the Art Club**
- 2. E Wood to design flyer and signup sheet for football club**
- 3. E Wood, G Jackson, N Clunie to take forward organisation of Young Engineers Club**
- 4. T Compton to ask M Everest to feedback parental concerns to Nursery on the stopping of Letterland and ask for information on what they plan to replace it with**
- 5. G Frew to arrange initial meeting to set up Community Management Group**

7. Methods of communication between school and parents

T Compton and G Frew have discussed the various methods of communication available between parents and school and how best to ensure efficiency and consistency. It was proposed that email becomes the school's primary method of communicating with parents unless a parent needs to opt out in which case they will receive paper copies. This approach is most resource efficient, and it was agreed to be a suitable approach on the basis that the vast majority of parents will have email access. 2 issues were raised:

1. Return slips. It is not always more convenient to receive an email that contains a return slip as the parent then has to remember to print this out and fill it in. G Frew agreed to investigate a solution to this with the office staff, such as allowing replies to be submitted by email.
2. Parents will need to be advised of the changes and encouraged not to opt out of email communication if possible, as the paper option is resource intensive.

Groupcall is only to be used in emergencies.

ACTIONS

- 1. G Frew to investigate a solution to the return slip issue with office staff**
- 2. G Frew to advise parents of the new approach and ensure any necessary opt-outs are accommodated**

8. Road Safety

T Compton gave a brief update on a meeting held between Amey representatives, SBC representatives, the school and Parent Council. T Compton is to follow up the issue of the flashing speed signs on the A702 which have yet to be fixed.

More communication is to be provided to parents on the school bus drop off/pick up move.

A further meeting of this group will be held at the end of this month.

ACTIONS

- 1. T Compton to follow up with Amey on the issue of the broken flashing speed signs on the A702**
- 2. G Frew to provide communication to parents on the move of the school bus pick up/drop off point.**

9. Any Other Business

A date will be arranged for a Christmas Night Out for all Parent Council members

The next meeting of the Parent Council will be held on Monday 19th January at 6.30pm

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

- 1. T Compton to ask SPTC for guidance as to the policies adopted across other Scottish Local Authorities in relation to Parent Council involvement in staff interviews**
- 2. T Compton to continue to try to arrange for a member of HMIE to attend a PC meeting**
- 3. T Compton to send more info to PC members on follow up SPTC training night and propose a date for this**
- 4. E Wood to leave risk register at reception for winter resilience volunteers to sign**
- 5. G Frew to confirm whether installation of the friendship bench must be carried out by SBC operatives or not**
- 6. G Frew to try to make C for E leaflets available for parents evenings**
- 7. G Frew to take forward work on providing parents with homework schedules**
- 8. E Wood to take forward organisation of the Art Club**
- 9. E Wood to design flyer and signup sheet for football club**
- 10. E Wood, G Jackson, N Clunie to take forward organisation of Young Engineers Club**
- 11. T Compton to ask M Everest to feedback parental concerns to preschool (Early Learners) on the stopping of Letterland and ask for information on what they plan to replace it with**
- 12. G Frew to arrange initial meeting to set up Community Management Group**
- 13. G Frew to investigate a solution to the return slip issue with office staff**
- 14. G Frew to advise parents of the new approach to email communication and ensure any necessary opt-outs are accommodated**
- 15. T Compton to follow up with Amey on the issue of the broken flashing speed signs on the A702**
- 16. G Frew to provide communication to parents on the move of the school bus pick up/drop off point**
- 17. T Compton to arrange date for Christmas night out**