

Comely Park Parent Council AGM Minutes

8/6/21

Attended: Laura McLintock, Jaime Thompson, Karen Kerr, Colin Reekie, Neil Bradbrook and c.20 parents on Zoom (notes of parent attendance not captured)

Apologies: Janine McGregor.

Agenda

Chair's welcome & overview of the year - Karen
Treasurer's report / formal acceptance of the accounts - Colin
Election of Chair, Secretary & Treasurer - Karen
Woodlands Community Sports - summary of the year - Neil
Bikeability Scotland opportunity - Karen
Head Teacher's update and Q&A
AOB

Welcome

- Karen welcomed everyone and explained the Parent Council role. Our current focus is on enabling communication but we also offer volunteering opportunities for families to support the school. Lastly, the Parent Council also help to oversee the running of the school gym hall and pitch via Woodlands Community Sports Ltd.

Accounts

- Colin updated the group on the bank account. With no spending in the last year, the balance remains at £3560. The Parent Council usually fund end of term awards but this didn't happen last year.
ACTION: Ms McLintock to confirm if this is required this year.
- The Parent Council balance has been built by several years of low spending. We get a grant each year which we pass back to the school and also apply for other grants. Previous success with Tesco / Asda "bag for life" type grants. There's a volunteer opportunity to do more of this. Rachel Travers offered her support.
- **ACTION:** Colin and Rachel to connect to progress this.
- The current funding is being planned for the school to use towards the new fence. (Post meeting note: Ms McLintock hopes this will progress over the Summer. **ACTION:** Ms McLintock to let the Parent Council know when the money is required.)
- The bank account has moved from Clydesdale to Virgin Money but no other changes. We've had a letter saying the account has not been active but no issue with this and no risk to the Parent Council funds.
- On the basis of no objections, the final accounts for the year were accepted by the Parent Council.

Re-election of Roles

- Karen (Chair), Colin (Treasurer) and Janine (Secretary) all happy to continue for another year. Elected without challenge.
- All parents were asked to consider helping in future years and getting in touch to find out more.

Woodlands Community Sports Ltd.

- Neil gave an overview of Woodlands activities explaining that it was a great example of how a Parent Council can make a difference to the kids' school experience; noting that without the previous Parent Council, it was likely the school would have no onsite PE facilities.
- Given the pandemic, Neil explained that Falkirk Foundation were unable to generate revenue as expected so the Board agreed to pause their contribution. The contribution is largely used for upkeep and to ensure a viable fund was built to replace the 3G pitch at appropriate timings. Given low use of the pitch during COVID, the Board believe that this doesn't drive a risk for the facility or for the school's access.

- Neil explained that our role with the board would be to increase rigour and focus on making sure we were able to deliver on the ongoing access of the facility to the school as well as community engagement.

Volunteering Opportunities

- Karen explained that we hadn't progressed the repainting of the fence this year due to COVID challenges around social distancing but that we'd return to it in the new school year. **ACTION:** Karen to progress this in the new term (Karen will be looking for a volunteer to run this initiative - please get in touch if you're keen).
- Karen explained the approach from Bikeability Scotland. There is potential to run sessions to support cycling skills with P5s, P6 and P7 kids in an after school capacity at the start of next term if there is sufficient parent body involvement with volunteering. Kerry shared her experience as a previous volunteer, explaining that the training and organisation offered by Bikeability Scotland was very high quality and that it had been a great experience for her. **ACTION:** Karen will circulate info on Facebook and interested parties should get in touch. If there are not enough volunteers, we will not progress the free cycling training on offer.

Head Teacher's Update

- Ms McLintock addressed general update points as well as parents' questions. Here is a (very high level) summary of what was shared:
 - Lunchtimes are still staggered so some kids are eating lunch whilst the class next door is learning. To keep the lunching kids as calm as possible, c.10-12 mins of BBC iplayer content is generally played to the younger kids during lunchtime. They are still allowed to talk with their "neighbours" but are not allowed to move around (they wouldn't be allowed to move around the lunchhall either). There is an understanding it's not ideal and hope to be back in the lunchhall from the new school term (restrictions allowing).
 - The recent parent's evening online appointments were generally well received but some parents explained they found the countdown stressful with not enough time (especially for more complex issues to be discussed). "Normal" parents evenings allow the same amount of time (10 mins) but are usually easier to manage given the softer start & finish to sessions. It was acknowledged that these sessions were better than the alternative (written reports only) but not as good as in person; particularly for those discussing Additional Needs. Noted that 90% of appointments took place; 7% of parents didn't book an appointment and 3% parents didn't attend.
 - The playground remains an area the school would like to improve however mis-use by people outside school hours remains an issue. The school is seeking to increase the fence height at the "pencils" as previously shared. This will allow the school to put more equipment out (which currently the school is reticent to put out in case of vandalism). The decision on locking the gates vs. leaving them open is a tough one and the school is open to further feedback. Whilst the fence won't stop determined people, it is stopping more casual use that has previously resulted in unsafe items being left in the playground (e.g. increase dog poo and abandoned pints procured from the pub at closing time!)
 - The lack of school bell was initially in place due to staggered lunch and breaktimes. The school were keen to trial losing it completely on for 3 reasons:
 1. Enable a softer start to the day and avoid the kids being anxious
 2. Stop the kids squabbling in the lines
 3. Give the kids more responsibility to get there in time (especially those transitioning to Secondary School)

The school will review this and invite more comment from parents **ACTION** - Ms McLintock
- There have been ongoing complaints from residents close to the school about poor parking. Messages go out but the school is reluctant to "tell off" the parents. Residents are advised to speak directly with drivers or call the police.
- iPad provision is improving and the school will have 1 iPad for every 5 children with next year's P6s and P7s having 1 each. The school has also invested in Apple TV. This allows kids to share their screens on the Smartboard, opening up new learning opportunities.

- The school website has been developed with additional content added to support literacy, numeracy and videos have been added to support parents in understanding newer ways of learning. Other content includes Health & Wellbeing, info on Transition and info on Additional Special Needs.
- The nursery prepared for 1140 but this was delayed in Aug 2020 due to COVID. The refurbishments went ahead as did the increase in staff from 6 to 11 members of staff. The school is close to finalising a permanent team for next year and will have 10 permanent members of staff in the nursery. Nursery hours will move to 9-3pm with an option for a lunchtime collection. With only 40 places available in the new term (based on the intro of 1140), and 37 returners, there has been some concern from parents. Parents are assured that their child not attending the Comely Park nursery will have no bearing on their entry to P1. All those attending tonight's meeting are asked to cascade this news. The transition for nursery kids to P1 will be online again this year. This worked well last year (no crying kids in August - lots of crying parents!). It also drives equity: there are 48 new P1 joining in August and around 20 of the are not at Comely Park so it levels the playing field.
- The school management team are no longer managing a recovery curriculum and have re-engaged with the School Improvement plan. All schools will be asked for Attainment for P1, P4 & P7. The school's focus is on the positives rather than the negatives of the last year. There is no chat in school on "lost learning" and more a focus on moving on from here we are now.
- Across this school year, there has been very strong engagement recorded on the online learning elements of the year with 96-99% participation recorded. Thanks were made to all for engaging. There are no final figures in for achievement yet but the school expects that they will hit the targets given.
- Dalguise has been provisionally booked for the P7s NEXT YEAR. Deposits have been taken but the Local Authority haven't yet approved that the school confirms the booking or pays the deposit. The event is pencilled tentatively but the school is hopeful it will go ahead.
- Tokens of Thanks are not required or expected from families to teachers but if people want to send in small gifts, this is allowed. Some teachers may give the kids small gifts. This is down to personal choice. Anything sent home from the school will be quarantined before it is sent home.
- A parent question was received on how the school tackles bullying, racism and kindness. If any kids or families are experiencing issues in this area, they are requested to get in touch personally with Ms McLintock. The school has established processes and procedures for dealing with bullying and racism and all incidents are fully investigated. Activities in the school support the values including friendship and respect.
- New class teachers will not be announced until the last week of term. This is to avoid any confusion or upset with last minutes changes of plan.

Ms McLintock thanked the teachers, the parent body, and the kids for their efforts through the year. Karen thanked Ms McLintock on behalf of the Parent Council and Parent Body.

MEETING CLOSED.