



Comely Park Primary School Parent Council Minutes

Date: Tuesday 1 February 2022

Attended: Laura McLintock, Jaime Thompson, Karen Kerr, Janine McGregor, Colin Reekie, Judith Hughes and c.20 parents/carers on Zoom (notes of parent attendance not captured)

Agenda

Chair's welcome - **Karen**
Review actions from last meeting (minutes attached) - **Janine**
Treasurer's report – **Colin**
Woodlands Community Sports Ltd - **Karen**
Bikeability update – **Judith**
School Communication Strategy – **Jaime/Laura**
Head Teacher's update - **Laura**
AOB/Next meeting/Close - **Karen**

Welcome

- Karen welcomed everyone and reiterated the Parent Council role. Current focus is on enabling communication, but also to offer volunteering/fundraising opportunities for families to support the school. The Parent Council also help to oversee the running of the school gym hall and pitch via Woodlands Community Sports Ltd.

Actions from the last meetings to be carried forward

- **Fundraising Opportunities**

ACTION: Colin and Rachel to connect to progress this. Rachel meeting with former Chair of PC to get some ideas for future fundraising, will then link with Colin.

- **School Crossing**

ACTION: Karen updated members on conversation with Falkirk Council who stated there was insufficient pedestrian footfall to warrant a crossing between School main entrance and Formula One car garage and noted that a crossing does not guarantee no accidents and having one on that stretch may actually increase incidents. It was noted that the crossing patrol is there at start and home times. Karen gauged thoughts from the parental body regarding an appetite for a petition and it was agreed to ask the question on the FB page.

Bikeability and School communication plan actions discussed further down agenda.

Treasurer's report

- Colin updated members stating that there had been no expenditure since June 2021 this session and the current balance was £560 (previous balance of £3,560 with the majority of monies being passed to school management to contribute to purchase of additional boundary fence).
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Woodlands Community Sports Ltd.

- In the absence of Neil, Karen updated to say the strategy session was still to take place and everyone was keen to progress this.

Bikeability Scotland

- Judith updated the group. The initial pilot would be for P5 aged pupils. The volunteers from the parental body all need to commit to 4 x 3-4-hour training sessions and co-ordinating dates was on-going. The more volunteers we have the easier it would be to run the sessions. There was then a discussion about borrowing bikes from Bantaskin who were happy to help though would want any session to be on their premises. Conversations were on-going.

ACTION Anyone wishing to help out – please contact Judith via Parent Council (mindful to capture parents/carers not on social media)

School Communication Strategy

- Ms McLintock acknowledged that a communication strategy was in the midst of being discussed and developed pre-pandemic but lockdown and the on-going changes in school accessibility had changed the way the school communicated as the needs to communicate to the parental body came from different sources (NHS, Falkirk Council). Prior to COVID the school app was very popular compared to the school website but this changed during the pandemic with the website traffic increasing and the app decreasing. Ms McLintock shared a very helpful matrix showing the different ways the school communicates and what each method costs (Group call, text, email, school app, Twitter, telephone and website) listing what was used for each scenario (pupil becoming ill being communicated via phone call, update from NHS via email for example).

The group discussed how helpful the matrix was in sharing the numerous ways the school communicates to ensure the message is received in the quickest and most efficient way possible. A question was asked regarding the attaching of letters to emails rather than them being imbedded. There are formatting issues with them and external agencies (NHS F Council) are specific in how their correspondence is shared.

A survey in November 2021 showed that 56% of respondents chose email as their preferred way of being communicated with, 30% the app and 11% via Twitter.

The senior leadership team will continue discussions on how best to communicate effectively and cost efficiently and hope to be able to issue the communication matrix to parents/carers in the near future.

ACTION Ms McLintock to continue discussions with SLT re: comms strategy, update at next meeting

Head Teacher's Update

- Ms McLintock thanked Karen for arranging the meeting and for everyone who took time to attend.
- COVID update: changes regularly, school gives daily report on numbers to Falkirk Council and NHS.
- Changes in staffing:
 - Mrs McDavid currently acting Principal Teacher at Victoria Primary School with Mrs O'Hare covering
 - Mrs Johnstone (PS) now on maternity leave with Miss Hood covering
 - Mrs Burden due to start mat leave before the summer.
 - Shortage of supply teachers through school managing to maintain teaching commitment (seven staff absences last week of January but no class needed to be sent home due to this)
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- Upcoming in-service day (15/2/22): focusing on curriculum rationale, learning for sustainability, STEM, enterprise and discussions around refreshing the school's reading resources. Staff still can't meet in the one room and online meetings have been challenging technology wise but meeting on 15th taking place in gym hall which was welcomed by staff.
- Ms McLintock then shared some questions submitted by parents/carers ahead of the meeting:
 - **Ventilation in school, windows open, concern about pupils wellbeing, reports of being cold and wearing hats.** Ms McLintock shared that ventilating the school was required by the local authority with Mr James taking samples of air quality on a daily basis. The heating in schools has been turned up and pupils advised they can keep extra jumpers or hats on but this is being done more for fashion than due to them feeling cold.
 - **Lack of fruit and veg at lunch.** The menus may not always explicitly list fruit and veg with the meal options but there is always fruit and veg on offer. Soup is often made with veg, there is a salad bar and fruit finger food. A further question was asked regarding the monitoring of what the pupils are eating. It was noted that there are 2 teachers for 200 pupils though they do try, and senior pupils stand near the recycling stations to try to encourage pupils to go back and finish their lunch. It was also noted that many pupils are keen to finish quickly to maximise time outside with sometimes all it takes is one pupil to finish then all the others claim to be finished too. This will be monitored to encourage pupils to take their time and finish their lunch.
 - **Cancellation of Dalguise.** This was previously discussed and minuted from the November meeting but Ms McLintock shared again that the school was having to cover the insurance underwrite for any cancellation if changes in COVID rules meant Dalguise would be cancelled. There was also concern regarding staff feeling confident to undertake residential trips at the current time so the decision was made to cancel. Ms McLintock reassured P7 parents/carers that there would be a programme of fun events to recognise the end of their primary years, with information coming out in due course.
 - **Transition visits to Falkirk High School.** Ms McLintock signposted parents/carers to FHS transition page on their website. The decision to visit the school is made by FHS and the cluster primaries (Bantaskin, Bainsford, Comely Park, Langlees, Carmuir, Easter Carmuir and Slamannan) and it is hoped that there will be a visit to the school from FHS representatives followed by a visit to the High School by the P7s.

- Ms McLintock shared that there were on-going complaints about parents/carers parking in residential spaces particularly the flats directly across from the main entrance. Residents have been advised to take a note of number plates and report to police.
- The dress down day to fund Christmas gifts and dinner for some of the community's vulnerable families worked really well and this is something the school is keen to do again. Trinity Church supported the provision of the Christmas meals.
- The school was also partnering with the Scottish football Association, further information to follow.
- Ms McLintock revisited the discussions regarding additional fencing. This had been discussed the past few years with @£10K being supplied by the PC/PTA to fund this. Though quotes had been received with a more affordable one coming from outwith Falkirk Council whose quote had increased. Ms McLintock was mindful that those who want to access the pitch climb the fence so it was likely that a higher fence from the pencils to the cobble lane would not deter this. The school gates were now locked over the weekend and this had reduced litter in the playground. A parent who lived across from the school noted that they had not seen anyone use the school as a thoroughfare at the weekends. The upshot was that the money could be spent on equipment for the school, for example increased facilities for the seniors in the playground. A parent noted that in the years they had been at the school, their concerns had been more the accessibility of the public accessing the school during school hours due to the accessibility at the cobble end directly onto the playground coupled with the central location and that other schools in the local authority were not as accessible nor were they in such an urban central setting. Ms McLintock noted that some schools have no fences. Members were supportive of the money being redirected to buying play equipment and improving the playtime experience.

Date of Next meeting

Tuesday 24 May 2022, 7pm via Zoom.

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

MEETING CLOSED.