

Buckstone Primary School Parent Council
Minutes
Thursday 25th January 2018
6.30pm-8.00pm, Staff Room

Parents Council Members Attendees: Brian Chalmers (Chair), Fiona Damen (Vice Chair), Helen Szoor-McElhinney, Anna Hind, Lisa Sykes, Emma Forson, Carol Malkin, Louise Logan, Morag Place, Nicole Johnston

Co-opted Member Attendees: Mrs Imrie, Mrs Conlin, Mr Beardon, Ms Martin, Mrs Munro, Councillor Phil Doggart (present for items 8-10; report included under item 3),

Other Attendees: Councillor Scott Arthur, Siobhan Faughnan, Sharon Marshall, Stephen Amabile

Apologies: Dominique Meunier, Hilary Brown, Jamie Deas, Morven Langley, Suzanne Murray, Vera Nobre, Veronica Ruiz Abou-Nigm

Minutes: Christine Stewart (Clerk)

1. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2017 were approved. Following up on an agreed action from that meeting, Brian reported that the issue with the school logo on the Borders Embroideries website has been fixed.

2. Councillor Update

Councillor Scott Arthur's report:

Parking: Aware that parking/traffic is a recurring issue raised at Parent Council, Scott has followed up on this with Council officers. They suggested two approaches: 1) increasing parking restrictions around the school and 2) adopting the School Streets programme. However, Parent Council does not plan to take up either approach because 1) increased yellow lines would only partly solve the problem while inconveniencing residents round the school, and likely to meet objections and 2) the Parent Council has already, relatively recently and after detailed discussion, decided not to pursue School Streets. Brian noted the JRSOs presentation at the last meeting, and the suggestion of pupils or parents patrolling with hi-vis tabards.

New hall: The Council is currently assessing levels of lighting around the new hall following some complaints from residents.

Gritting: Scott noted that the grit bins in Buckstone were not refilled between Christmas and New Year. Grit bins are an important resource in Buckstone as not all streets on the estate are Priority 1 routes for gritting. Scott encourages residents to make use of the grit bins and to use the mechanisms on the Council website to report empty or damaged grit bins.

New Road Crossing: The Comiston Road crossing at the new estate is going out to tender at the end of January and should be in place by March/April.

20 mph implementation zones: Signs will start to appear soon, and the scheme goes live in the South Edinburgh zone on 5th March 2018.

Council Budget: Scott is asking for more funding to be made available for social care and homelessness. The possibility of cutting libraries is being looked at: Scott is arguing against this. The introduction of an annual £25 household charge for emptying garden bins is also being considered.

Councillor Phil Doggart's report:

Gritting: Reiterated concerns about gritting and grit in the Buckstone area.

Potholes and road surfacing: Phil is delighted to report that Gareth Barwell, the Council's Head of Place, has just agreed to carry out a walk-about of Buckstone in order to look at serious potholes and road surfacing issues, and see what can be addressed. This is good news as no streets in Buckstone appear on the Council's infrastructure plan for the next three years. Accordingly, please let Phil know about any major issues (phil.doggart@edinburgh.gov.uk). He noted that Buckstone Dell is known about, and will be addressed.

Localities committee: The four Locality Committees are the Council's new mechanism for overseeing services at a local level. Different wards have different demographics and receive different service deliveries. The first meeting of the South-West Locality Committee will take place next week. Minimal impact on Education is anticipated.

3. Diversity and Inclusion – Next steps

Helen Szoor-McElhinney reported that two actions have been agreed by the diversity and inclusion sub-group. One action is for her to create a summary of the information available on the Edinburgh City Council website about parent councils, principles and values. The other proposed action is to create a Parent Council Facebook page. It was felt that Facebook was a good avenue of communication for Parent Council, particularly for disseminating simple, focused information for topics like meeting agendas and details about the school fair. Overall, it was agreed to proceed with a Parent Council Facebook page.

However, it was noted that there are other existing Buckstone Facebook groups and pages, although it transpires that not all parents are aware of them. These include the Friends of Buckstone Primary group, which had links to Parent Council, the community-based Buckstone Telegraph group and the Our Buckstone-Fairmilehead page. It is important to be clear on how this new proposed page would tie in with these, to avoid further overlap. Helen will investigate these existing groups and pages further and come back with a proposal. Her aim is to create a resource that is more open to the community not just those who have children at the school. A balance needs to be struck between not over-moderating the page and avoiding offensive posts.

Siobhan Faughnan joined this sub-group. Morag Place has shared some relevant material, relating to a school in Glasgow, and Brian will circulate this.

4. Mrs Imrie Update

Hall: The school is delighted to now have access to the new hall, and almost all of the pupils have already had a turn of it this week. School is working its way through the logistical issues of running two halls, especially with only one set of changing rooms. There is no option to add a second set of changing rooms and a way will have to be found to make it work. The school is also trying to reinforce the distinction between the car park/road and the pedestrian walkway at the front of the school. Pupils must not walk across the disabled car parking spaces, and staff and parents are asked to lead by example on this.

Reception area: No update is available on the planned doors in the reception area.

Council parental survey: The link has been circulated via Homelink and the school really do appreciate parents completing it (but please continue to raise issues directly with the school as they arise).

Quality Improvement Education Team: The Team will be visiting the school on 21st and 22nd February 2018 and this is a chance for the school to share its' developments and what its pupils have been doing.

Learning and Teaching: Staff team have been looking at Personalisation and choice in learning and P4G pupils trialled personalisation and choice day. The school is still focusing on developing reading, including volunteers to develop the new library space.

School blogs: There was feedback that the high volume of school blog posts is a general frustration for parents. Mrs Imrie will speak to Mr Hyde to make sure clear instructions are in place as to how to target the feed in order to receive only relevant posts. Third-party apps seem to be the main way to do this. Including the name of the class (P1P etc.) is helpful.

Music: Following on from the discussion on music practice at the last meeting, Mrs Imrie reported that two Boroughmuir High School S6 pupils are interested in running a guitar club at Buckstone. This would require guitars and a supervising adult. Possibly guitars could be borrowed from parents or from the High School? The school will investigate further.

School Photos: Following on from the discussion on school photos at the last meeting, Mrs Imrie suggested hosting a focused discussion with a smaller group of parents, and this was agreed.

5. Buckstone Primary 40th Birthday/Hall Opening – Progress update

Brian gave an update on behalf of Hilary Brown and the celebration sub-group. It is proposed to give each pupil a commemorative medal as a memento of attending the school in its' 40th year. The quotes for this are not expensive and Parent Council would be able to fund this. The sub-group has asked if a cabinet can be placed at the front door to the school to display commemorative items, and Mrs Imrie agreed to this. Memories will be gathered via Facebook - there are many former pupils living locally and some are now themselves parents at the school. The school has only had four previous head teachers, and apart from one who will be on

holiday, all are willing and able to take part in the celebrations. The sub-group had considered inviting a VIP, but the thinking now is to focus on past and present pupils and staff.

The celebrations will take place in the third and fourth weeks of March. The following is an outline of the current proposals: Each year group will learn a different 70s song, creating a show to which all parents will be invited on Wednesday 21st March in the new hall. The official opening will take place on Thursday 22nd March for invited guests. The pupils will receive their medals on Friday 23rd March. The Spring disco, scheduled for 26th March, will be tied into the celebrations. It was noted the P2 show will proceed on 21st and 22nd March as advertised and will incorporate the P2 contribution to the 40th anniversary celebrations. Sportrelief will be held on Friday 16th March.

There had been an external request that former pupils could have the opportunity to look round the school. It is not possible to facilitate this during the normal school day and it was agreed to the school fairs provide an ideal opportunity for the public to visit the school.

6. Parent Council Funds – Use for identified school improvements

At the last meeting, Treasurer Claire Probert reported that there is £18k of unallocated funds in the Parent Council bank account, and it was agreed to look at a couple of larger projects to fund. Mrs Irmie and the staff have been considering options, and have come back with the following proposal, to redesign two areas of the school, as follows:

- a) Upper Area Redesign: To move the library into the upper area, and to also install storage space for bags and wellies. The library is now mainly a reference resource and is currently housed in a room off the link corridor. The room is really too small to take a class into and the library is currently under-utilised. By moving the library out, this room would become a valuable enclosed space for music activities and small groups, while the upper area and the library would be revitalised.

Q: Wouldn't the big upper area space be too noisy for a library? A: The upper area is currently used for quiet work so should be fine for a reference library. Dividers and high-backed chairs can create quiet learning areas.

- b) P2/3 Area Redesign: look at how to redesign it with learning areas, and what to do with packed lunches.

The next step is for the Council's school designers to create a detailed proposal and for Mrs Imrie to bring this back to Parent Council. It was agreed to proceed with this next step, giving the designers an indicative budget of £10,000, to cover dividers, furniture and storage. If the redesign proceeds, the school will also approach Facilities Management to see if budget is available to refresh the resource room once the library is moved out of it.

In addition to this large redesign project, it was agreed to provide Parent Council funding for the following items:

- i. Eight iPads, at the cost of £2,011.44 (this was approved in principal at the meeting held on 9th March 2017).
- ii. Music and music stands requested by the Choir, at a total cost of £75.

- iii. Block learning toys for the Nursery, at a total approximate cost of £800.
- iv. An AV screen to be installed in the Reception area for the display school and Parent Council information (this screen will replace the electronic photo frames).

Items i)-iii) will now be purchased, and Mrs Imrie will come back with a quote for item iv). No funding for sports equipment is requested as any items required can be purchased under the Sainsbury's voucher scheme. The proposal for sports/scholastic team kit, discussed at previous meetings, is still under consideration. The blinds for the new hall, mentioned by Mrs Imrie at the last meeting, cannot be progressed until AV equipment is installed in the hall.

Returning to the subject of the school library, Mrs Imrie noted that the fiction books have been redistributed into class libraries. It would be useful to expand these class fiction libraries and it was agreed that school families would be a great source of possible book donations. This will be progressed via teachers and class blogs. Emma Forson noted that there are a large number of second hand book donations to the school fairs. It was agreed that in future the school will be given the opportunity to check these donations for useful books. Additionally, Book Swap can take place during World Book Week in March.

7. Fundraising Committee

The Spring Disco on 26th March is the next big event, followed by the Summer Fair on Friday 25th May. A uniform sale might be held in the Spring. The team are currently trying to tidy their cupboards and storage areas. Although there is now a solid group of 9-10 volunteers, more help is always welcome. Brian Chalmers will return to progressing the 200 Club proposal.

[Councillor Phil Doggart joined the meeting at this point]

8. Run-a-mile

Pupils undertook a daily 'run-a-mile' for a period of time in 2016/17. It was then suspended, partly because pupils grew tired of it, and partly because of the hall build. There have been some parent enquiries about whether it will be reinstated – what are the thoughts on this? It was agreed that, living in a culture of childhood obesity and falling activity levels, that it should be re-instated, but to vary it with other fitness activities too. The school will now look at this. Appropriate footwear is an issue – wellies are not suitable – as is the risk of the slipping on the sand around the sand pit. The new hall opening means that all classes will return to getting their two weekly slots of PE. Run-a-mile (or whatever version of daily fitness is introduced) is in addition to this.

9. Finances

As mentioned in item 6 above, Parent Council finances are currently in very good health.

10. A.O.B

Nursery garden: The school is very much aware that the required repairs and adaptation to the nursery tree house and slide are delayed and this equipment remains out of use in the

meantime. The delay lies with the designated contractor. Scott Arthur offered to push this forward and will email Hannah George for the contact details.

Parent Council meetings: It was confirmed that meetings will continue to alternate between Tuesday and Thursday evenings to broaden the opportunity to attend.

Childcare vouchers: It was asked whether childcare vouchers can be used for extra-curricular activities at the school. The school will look into this.

Toilets: Following previous discussion about the toilets, it was asked whether there was any update on this. Brian Chalmers will look into this.