

Buckstone Primary School Parent Council
Minutes
Tuesday 6th March 2018
6.30pm-8.00pm, Staff Room

Parents Council Members Attendees: Brian Chalmers (Chair), Fiona Damen (Vice Chair), Vera Norton, Nicole Johnston, Fiona Brien, Louise Logan, Emma Forson, Claire Probert, Morven Langley, Morag Place, Kirsten Carter, Caroline Sime, Veronica Ruiz, Helen Szoor-McElhinney

Co-opted Member Attendees: Mrs Imrie, Mrs Conlin, Miss Fotheringham, Mrs Campbell, Councillor Phil Doggart

Other Attendees: Councillor Scott Arthur, Louise McLeod, Fiona Thomas, Steven Amabile, Sharon Marshall, Miss Sunter

Apologies: Lisa Sykes

Minutes: Christine Stewart (Clerk)

1. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2018 were approved. Brian Chalmers thanked all the volunteers who helped clear snow from the playground at the weekend.

2. Councillor Update

Lighting: At the last meeting, it was noted that there had been complaints from residents about the new levels of lighting outside the new school hall during the hours of darkness. The lights are now hooded and on a timer, which has improved the situation and the residents are much happier, although a complaint that the planning application did not properly describe the new lighting remains in effect. Mrs Imrie noted that the lights need to be on for the cleaners when they arrive in the early morning.

Scott Arthur handed out a written report giving an update on local issues (see Appendix 1).

Snow: Scott Arthur praised the efforts to clear the snow from the playground.

Roads: Since the last meeting, the Council's Buckstone walkabout has taken place to look at potholes and other road issues has taken place. A few potholes have been immediately filed in, and Fairmilehead Community Council has requested a formal report on other issues i.e. more significant defects and road markings / double yellow lines. Scott will post the Council's response on his Facebook page when it is available. Phil Doggart noted that the recent bad weather has caused more damage to the roads, and available budgets are likely to be targeted on the city centre etc. Scott noted that the Council does keep a record of complaints about potholes and grit bins, and eventually these complaints do filter through to committee level. So reporting issues does help, especially as no infrastructure money has been budgeted on Buckstone roads. The link for reporting a pothole is:

<http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/roadproblem>

Abandoned house: The walkabout included the abandoned house in Buckstone Crescent – the Council has agreed to take action on this, in addition to action by the bank.

Buckstone Youth Project: The project has submitted a bid to the Council for £4.5k of funding. Residents who have a Young Scot card can vote on the bid under the 'Choose

Youth Work initiative' at <https://young.scot/edinburgh-pb/> Please consider voting if you are eligible to do so, or encourage others in your household to take part.

Localities Committee: Phil reported that the Localities Committee for South West has held its inaugural meeting and elected a convener. The next meeting is in April.

Phil and Scott left the meeting in order to attend an urgent meeting at another ward school.

3. Diversity and Inclusion

In terms of the actions of the Diversity and Inclusion subgroup following the last meeting: Helen Szoor-McElhinney has written out a draft set of core values, which draw on official Government guides and principles for parent groups. She has done this with a view to this material coming part of the Buckstone PS Parent Council constitution, to guide its values and practices. She read out the document and will circulate it to Parent Council for feedback and discussion.

Hilary Brown will work on the updated Parent Council Facebook page in due course.

It was agreed that a Parent Council notice board would be a good way to communicate with the parent body. Mrs Imrie offered Parent Council the use of the noticeboard on the external way next to Mrs Henry's office / P4 door. Christine Stewart will progress this. She also joined the Diversity and Inclusion subgroup.

There was discussion around the processes and 'job description' of the class reps. There is not a clear process of how reps are put forward and nominated, how long they hold the role for (though it can be difficult to get someone new to volunteer), what happens if two class reps end up in the same class as the year group moves up the school, etc. There is a lack of clarity about the role and what it entails, and a lack of consistency as to what individual reps are doing as part of their role. It was agreed to look at this whole issue in detail, in order to establish a clear set of processes and clear job description. Each class having a deputy / back up rep was felt to be a useful idea.

Currently some reps hold contact lists for their classes. This is something that many parents welcome especially as the school cannot give out any details to parents, and it is certainly useful for Parent Council to be able to contact parents directly (e.g. for the recent snow clearance). Gathering this data is challenging as the school cannot collect data on behalf of Parent Council or anyone else, though it is allowed to hand out or email out contact forms for parents to complete and return to Parent Council. Mrs Imrie highlighted the new General Data Protection Regulation; Christine Stewart will research Parent Council's responsibilities under GDPR.

4. Mrs Imrie Update

Many thanks to the huge number of parents who helped shovel snow on Sunday 4th March and helped the school to open on the Monday, and to Brian Chalmers and the class reps for getting everyone mobilized to help. And thank you to everyone for their support today about the unexpected closure of the school due to the lack of water supply. Mrs Imrie noted that the school is part of the Group Call system for sending text messages, and that some messages come directly from the school and some from a central part of the Council.

Quality Improvement Team: The team were with the school for two days at the end of February and enjoyed meeting staff and pupils. They fed back on: the ethos of the school; the sense of community; various Assessment for Learning tools embedded right across the

school; a real sense of the children having a voice and a say. They saw iPads and IT equipment in use, much of it funded by Parent Council, and visited the nursery where they observed the play-based approach and the various improvements to the set-up. The next steps are to take the learning outside and make greater use of the school grounds and the outdoors, and to increase links with the local community. P3 have written letters to local businesses.

Lunches: One of the cooks is now coming from kitchen with the food in order to help serve it. The meals are now coming from a different kitchen. Mrs Imrie and Brian Chalmers are going to meet with parents and the Catering Manager in order to discuss ongoing issues.

Cleaning: Following issues raised by parents particularly about the P2 cloakroom, there have been changes to how and when the school is cleaned and hopefully improvements are being seen.

Redesign of upper area: Mrs Imrie has just received an initial design proposal, which she has not yet had a chance to share with staff. A subgroup meeting date is to be arranged.

School Photos: Mrs Imrie had offered to hold a meeting to discuss changes / improvements to the way that photos are dealt with, but no one has come forward so far and so this meeting has not yet taken place. The school is very happy to progress this and any parents interested in being part should contact school reception.

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

The subgroup is progressing well. Each pupil will receive a commemorative medal. The batch of medals has already been received and samples were handed round at the meeting. They were agreed to be attractive and of good quality. The subgroup asked for feedback on whether the ribbons needed adapted with safety catches/poppers, but it was agreed that they are suitable as they are.

Hilary Brown is collecting memories and memorabilia relating to the school's opening. Any parents or relatives who can contribute are asked to get in touch with her.

In terms of the show, it was noted that the P2s are singing the same song in the P2 song and the 40th birthday show are the same, so P2 parents don't need to attend both shows. For the two birthday shows, there is one seat only allocated per family (for the P2 show each family has three tickets) but this will allow every family to be represented in the audience for the two performances. The nursery children are included in the birthday shows. The show will be repeated at the invited celebration on the morning of Friday 23rd March. Children are just to wear school uniform to the shows (P2 parents have been advised of 'costumes' for P2 Show).

6. World Book Day – Options for future years

Some parents have raised issues around pupils dressing up for World Book Day. Possible pros include: creativity, memories, fun, quality time with parents, children enjoy it, and possible cons include: competitive, financial waste, too commercial, should be about books not costumes, children may feel judged and parents may feel guilty. The World Book Day website suggests lots of alternative things to do e.g. wear own clothes, wear PJs, only do a dress-up WBD on alternate years. It was generally agreed that some pupils love dressing up and some don't. Staff noted that lots of activities take place in school on WBD, and dressing up is definitely not the main part of it – the reading is the focus.

Mrs Imrie would like to take this issue back to Pupil Parliament (with a discussion in each class before hand), putting the parent viewpoint back to the pupils and seeing what they

say. She also noted that various book / reading related activities take place in school for Book Week Scotland.

The school is aware that dress-up days are a real financial challenge for some families. It would be helpful if the school could build up a stock of fancy dress, Red Nose Day items, Children in Need items and Christmas jumpers. This is something that the parent body could definitely help with and Emma Forson suggested that the Fundraising Committee hold a drive to collect these sorts of items, including books as well as discussed at the last meeting. The school will confirm exactly what would be useful.

7. Fundraising Committee

The Spring disco will take place on 26th March and letters will be coming home this week. There is no Easter bonnet competition this week. Tying in with the 40th birthday theme, it has an optional 70s dress up theme.

8. Buckstone Ski Club

The school ski club is currently not running, but was popular and enjoyed when it was on. Is there a desire to reach out to Hillend ski centre to see if it can be restarted? Fiona Damen offered to help with this. She noted that the club originally ran on a Tuesday, but was moved to a Thursday by the centre and this clashed with dancing, rugby and other activities and the numbers then fell away. Fiona felt that it was best to approach the ski centre before reaching out to the parent body about this, and she will set up a meeting with the relevant contact. Vera Norton and Fiona Thomas offered to help if things progress.

9. Football Team

The strips have all been issued and the teams and sponsors are happy. The teams are only just back after the winter break, with some recent practice on astro-turf due to problems with the Water Board Field. Most matches are on Saturday mornings (various times), but if a pupil has other Saturday morning commitments, then they can still drop into training and make their availability known for when they can do matches.

10. Finances

Claire Probert noted that various items of spending have recently been agreed and proposed, but confirmed that the Parent Council finances remain in good health, because funds are regularly replenished by fundraising activities.

11. A.O.B

Nursery climbing frame: The repairs have been completed, and the school is just waiting for the final inspection.

Privacy when changing: A parent has raised an objection to children changing in the classroom for PE. Mrs Imrie said that younger children have generally tended to change in the classroom. For other year groups, the old hall has changing rooms, but the new hall does not, and the teachers using creative ways to separate boys and girls and find other spaces. She asked for the parent concerned to contact the school directly.

Daily Mile run: An update was requested. The school confirmed that instead of laps of the school, classes are looking at going outside for 15 minutes, two to three times per week, for e.g. shuttles, interval training. The main thing is to get everyone involved in an accessible way.