



MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING 13 December 2013

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Claire Slocombe gave a brief update. Parents have been helping out with Primary 5 on a vertical garden, a litter campaign is being carried out by pupils and a community clear up is planned for March. Applications for grants ranging from £30 – 40,000 are in the process of being made for major improvements to the outdoor space. A grant application has been submitted to the Council. The outdoor group is also looking for parents to volunteer expertise in building, woodworking and grant application making.

One parent expressed concern about the children using the woodland in the school grounds when the fencing was so low. The school is aware of the potential issues relating to this and Land Services have been called to clear the area to make it safe for the children to use.

INTERNATIONAL EVENING / SOCIAL EVENTS

This event proved extremely popular and raised around £675 mainly through the raffle as well as donations. The only problem was that the school hall is too small to accommodate everyone who might have wanted to come.

It was agreed that the next school newsletter would be numbered and a draw done on that basis to allocate the unclaimed raffle prizes from the event.

Three possible solutions to the space issue were discussed briefly:

- Staggering events by having, for example, an infants' event followed by an event for primaries 4 to 7.
- Selling tickets to events
- Using alternative premises.

Options for other socials (perhaps lower key and less labour intensive) were discussed and the idea for a Fish and Chips Quiz night was brought up again – Ruth to approach Miranda and see if she might still be willing to take on the organisation of such an event. It was also agreed to promote the Fair Trade café (which happens once a term) more widely as a place where parents can meet and chat.

PARENT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Some discussion was had about the frequency and timing of meetings. It would be difficult to organise more frequent meetings and we have to alternate between evening meetings and meetings during the day so that those who work during the day can get to at least some of the PC meetings.

There is the possibility of specific interest groups being formed. Fauzia Khan and Isolde Doig agreed to look at options for getting P1 parents together.

GIBSON STREET GALA

Astrid suggested a bake sale as a means of fund raising as part of the school's involvement in the Gala. To date, fund raising has been excluded from our participation in the Gala but it was agreed that this would be raised at the next meeting with the Gala committee. A bake sale/Fayre would allow us to fundraise but still offer children's activities for free and it would have little or no impact on local business on the day.

FACEBOOK

We need further discussion on how we manage a Facebook page. It could potentially be a good forum for communication but it would need to be administered carefully due to issues such as privacy.

STORAGE

Suzie identified cupboard space that could be suitable for storing PC property. Francis said to contact Susan Thomson.

ROAD SAFETY

The Parent Council have sent several letters/emails to Maureen McKenna (Head of Education in the Council) and Jamie Rodden (Roads Department) on this matter and Martha Wardrop continues to work for a solution but there has been little change with regards to parents dropping their children off on Otago Street. Moreover obstruction is caused by double parking.

Zigzag markings are being considered and the Council is currently undertaking a consultation on parking in the area (including removing residents' parking bays). Improved signage and 20 mph signs could also make a difference.

SPACE IN SCHOOL

There is an ongoing problem with infrastructure capacity and space at the school.

By August 2014 the school roll school will have increased by over 130 since the school opened in 2011. This puts severe pressure on the facilities at the school. Part of the media suite will need to be converted into a classroom with the Council proposing that the remainder become a small art room. The two GP rooms, originally used for art and music, are now classrooms and, with the increased roll, it may become impossible to timetable the legally required minimum of physical education. The number of toilets for the children was also an issue. Parents at the meeting supported the idea of continuing to develop options for outdoor education but clearly this is not the whole solution to the issue of PE.

There have been a series of communications with Maureen McKenna and three meetings with her depute Jim Wilson and David McEwan who is responsible for buildings and maintenance for the Education Department at the Council. The option of buying the house in the middle of the school is currently being rejected by the Council. The Council are likely to look at the school's catchment area but the Parent Council are pressing for more direct solutions and various options are being explored.

Councillors Martha Wardrop and Pauline McKeever have been supportive.

One of the parents pointed out that their children had noticed the loss of space in the school, something which should be emphasised to the Council.

More detail on this issue will be sent to parents in the new year.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- The triathlon raised £3,000 and over £1,000 was raised for the Philippines typhoon appeal.
- Music lessons are being piloted for Primary 4 from April with the option of extending these where possible. The use of the hall by the after school care prevents the possibility of the school providing more clubs.
- Fionnuala Featherstone mentioned the forum she and Andrew Robson organised for parents and children whose lives are affected by Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Fionnuala offered to be the point person for parents with questions or needs in this area – her contact details are fionnualafeatherstone@yahoo.co.uk.