

BONNYRIGG PRIMARY AND NURSERY PARENTS' GROUP

Thursday 12th October 2017

Present: Jennifer Allison (HT), Caroline Findlay (DHT), Colin Wilkinson (minutes), Susan Henderson, Justine Jones (Chair), Cat McDermid, John Aitchison (Poltonhall Gala Day committee), Wendy Crawford, Kelly Anderson, Arlene Sievwright, Lynne Lawrie, Chiraz Sellami, Sarah Wright, Angela Bowman,

Apologies: Lesley Burrell, Fiona Gardner, Carole Sneddon, Sarah Beck, Sarah Stark (DHT)

- **Welcome**

Justine opened the meeting and introduced our guest; John Aitchison from the Poltonhall Gala Day committee. There were no outstanding actions from the last meeting.

- **Poltonhall Gala Day**

John gave some background on the Gala Day – it is currently run by around 6 volunteers on a budget of £15k. The committee are looking for assistance and are wondering if the school would be willing to be able to put together a float for the parade (in 2018) or even to join the parade. Funding is also required - £11k was raised through sponsorship last year, which leaves a shortfall. At the current rate surplus money from the account will run out in around 3 years' time. We discussed the apparent lack of interest from parents due to cost and time involved.

Action Point for John to speak to the rest of the committee to put together a survey and we will issue to gauge interest.

- **Fundraising Update**

Colin provided an update and confirmed tickets for the Halloween disco are selling well but there are still some left – the disco is on 1st November. Planning for the Christmas Fair is underway and the survey for volunteers will be issued shortly. Sarah Beck will be meeting Jennifer Allison on Monday 23rd October to put further plans in place.

- **Treasurer's Report**

The only real movement recently has been the initial payment towards the “secret rooms” at the Christmas Fair. The current balance is £9,618.74. An invoice has been received from the school tonight for £3,348 – this pays for playground markings, jolly phonics, p7 dictionaries, p1 red bags and playground games. A further invoice will be sent for the recent upgrade in the playground – for a further £3-4k.

- **Fun Day**

We discussed the fun-day that was organised last year – positive feedback was received from both parents and teaching staff. The total spend was £992 (which includes the donation from kids of £1 for raffle tickets). Based on the feedback Justine had emailed Jennifer to discuss how to put plans in place to make this an annual event.

Jennifer's feedback was that the kids enjoyed it but perhaps the kids to be more involved in the “doing” (e.g. pizza making). Some suggestions for activities were discussed - if we are to go ahead and do this annually it is likely we will look at different activities. We would be looking to get a group together to organise – last year was done with a small group and it'd make it easier with a larger group.

Jennifer thanked Justine on behalf of the school and will make plans to meet soon after October holiday to start making arrangements for 2018.

- **School Photographer**

Colin re-capped from the last meeting where Dawn Porteous pitched her photography business. Dawn came across well, however Colin asked if this was a decision for the parent council and also asked what the school/council process is for recruiting 3rd party suppliers. It was confirmed there isn't one.

Based on parental feedback on this year's photographs (Coldwells were the photographer) we agreed we should look to change this. The group agreed to give Dawn the opportunity to take the next set of photos and will re-assess after that.

Action Point – school to contact Dawn Porteous to invite her to do the next set of photographs.

- **Maternity Cover**

A question was raised by a parent regarding the plans in place to cover the two teachers who are going on maternity leave later this year. These positions have been advertised and interviews held. When an appointment(s) has been made the school will confirm this to parents.

Jennifer was disappointed that it was felt necessary to ask this question as she has the interests of the children needs as her priority and hoped all parents knew this. There is a teacher shortage in Scotland and the school will do the best they can to provide quality education.

- **Active Schools**

At the last meeting we discussed various competitions that run during the year. Bonnyrigg PS take part in some of these events but not all, due to staffing cover we are not able to take part in all.

The Council have confirmed if PVG checked and first aid trained then parents can accompany children to these events. A suggestion was made around arranging first aid training for parents and older pupils.

Action Point – school to put a communication out that asks parents who'd be interested in assisting with Active Schools and/or receive first aid training;

The Active Schools Team create a training calendar that teachers and parents can use to identify sports that they can be trained in to prepare them for the courses.

The next events booked are football – both girls and boys events (in November). The School recently came 2nd in the cross-country event.

- **Headteacher Update**

Caroline Findlay spoke about the new **Scottish Government legislation affecting nurseries** by 2020. This will entitle children to 1140 nursery hours per year (this is currently around 600 hours per year) so a huge increase. Rather than children going to nursery attached to the school they will go to parents will select this by looking at the provision on offer in each setting – all based on parental choice. There are pilots in some schools (e.g. Rosewell, Penicuik, Mount Esk). The whole face of nursery is going to change.

Jennifer spoke about the proposed **budget cuts**. Midlothian council next year (2018/19) have a £13.5m shortfall, in 2021/22 they have an estimated £45m shortfall. There were some

considerations discussed at the recent Council meeting which included reducing learning assistants by 10%, charging for musical tuition, making one Janitor cover multiple schools and increasing lets for After School Clubs among other things. More to come on this when Midlothian Council make decisions.

A question was asked what do parents want from the **Curriculum Evenings**; after the low-turnout at the recent event. Justine asked if changing times would help, perhaps after drop-off in the morning. It was commented that it was useful to find out the specific topics your child was working on, however could this info be added to website and pick up any concerns at October parents' night? There were also a few events within a short period of time – parents' night, meet the teacher etc. which may have impacted on the numbers attending.

Action Point – Parent Council to pose the question on facebook to parents around what we want from the curriculum evening.

Jennifer asked if parents were happy with the **Parent's Evening booking system** – it was agreed that this works well.

The school would like to run **Lifelong Learning** classes in the school. "Incredible Years" and "Raising children with confidence" were mentioned – Chiraz Sellami can run these courses. We discussed running one per term. The aim is to get Incredible Years course (this lasts 12 weeks) started after Christmas – this is aimed for pre-school age (but does cover ages 2-8) and covers communication and the importance of play.

Action Point – school to book the Incredible Years course and invite parents

- **School "wish list"**

Colin, Susan and Justine recently attended an SPTC training course. It was reassuring to find out that we are doing a lot of what is expected of a Parent Council.

One idea we got from this session was to ask the teachers directly what they'd like for their class and create a "wish list". This will give an opportunity for everyone who has contributed to the funds to benefit. It was agreed we can go to the teachers and ask.

Action Point – for the parent council to approach teachers to start the list

- **Close**

Justine closed the meeting. The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 28th November at 6.45pm**. The agenda will be published on the school website and on Facebook in advance of the meeting.

Actions agreed

1. John Aitchison to speak to the rest of the Poltonhall Gala Day committee to put together a survey and we will issue this to gauge interest.
2. School to contact Dawn Porteous to invite her to do the school photography.
3. School to issue a communication that asks parents who'd be interested in assisting with Active Schools and/or receive first aid training;
4. Parent Council to pose question on Facebook page around what parents want from the curriculum evenings.
5. School to book the LLE "Incredible Years" course and invite parents
6. Parent council to approach teachers to create a wish list