

BONNYRIGG PRIMARY AND NURSERY PARENTS' GROUP

Tuesday 10th May 2016
Annual General Meeting

Present: Jennifer Allison, (HT), Caroline Findlay, (DHT) Sarah Stark, (Acting DHT), Louise Donaldson, (PT), Louise Murray, Susan Henderson, Cat McDermid, Sarah Napier, Fiona Gardner, Hayley Harlick, Fiona Copland, Angela Bowman, Elizabeth Sawyer, Hamish Simpson

Apologies: Colin Wilkinson, Fiona Copland

1. WELCOME

Louise Murray welcomed everyone to the meeting. As it was the Annual General Meeting she gave a brief overview of the work of the Bonnyrigg Primary and Nursery Parents' Group, (BPNPG) for the year.

2. REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Louise Murray remarked how the business side of the Parent Council had been decreased this year due in part to the ever increasing commitments of the Management team. Nevertheless the BPNPG had been involved in

- **Staffing** - Louise Murray and Susan Henderson had met with Councillors and the MSP regarding the shortage of teachers within Midlothian, and a solution had been reached however the goal posts were continuously changing.
- **Security** - again Louise Murray had met with officials from the Education Department in trying to ensure a solution was obtained to the recent incident, balancing the security of children against emergency procedures.
- **Parking** - continued to be a problem. Again Louise Murray had met with local Councillors and the school had asked that those parking on double yellow lines are ticketed in the future.
- **Planning consultation** – representatives had met to voice their concerns over the planned housing developments.

- **Recruitment** – parent representatives had sat on interview panels for promoted positions.
- **Fundraising** – the Fundraising Sub-Group had worked tirelessly and had been very successful, with income streams from the Halloween discos, Christmas Fair and Christmas gifts. This had been used to buy new i-pads, top up the purchase of picnic benches, new wet weather toys, reading books, transportation for various outings, 2 buddy benches and P1 book bags.

Jennifer Allison concurred with everything that Louise Murray had said. The management team had been involved with teaching commitments this year and Jennifer Allison apologised that the school calendar had not been communicated as well as it should have been. However the school had still progressed numerous issues viz:

- **Health week** - a very successful health week had just taken place.
- **Parents' session** - parents had attended a session on the school vision.
- **Playground** - the playground continued to be developed.
- **Review of behaviour** - a final behaviour policy was being drafted.
- **Review of homework** - the draft homework policy was being sent to staff.
- **GIRFREC** - new legislation was being implemented and the school was preparing for this.
- **P5/P6 Learning Councils** – both had been very successful.
- **Theatre trips** - trips had been organised to the Brunton Theatre
- **Visible learning** - Jennifer Allison thanked Sarah Stark and Caroline Findlay for their hard work on this.
- **2+1 language** - all children had an opportunity to learn French with a specialist from the High School coming in to teach children.
- **P6 and P7 Camps** –two successful camps had taken place although this would be the last year for P7 children.

The school had lots to complete with Sports Day in the not distant future. Parent members wanted to know why the school were holding sports day on different days for upper and lower school. Jennifer Allison responded that this was because last year the school had failed to complete all their races. The

feedback was that more people wanted competitive races and the school simply could not accommodate potted sports and competitive races in one day. Parent members asked that the date of Sports Day be reviewed if at all possible. A lot of parents were on holiday on the date of the English bank holiday, and as previous Sports Days had taken place on this date, many parents were able to see their children compete without using annual leave.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Chairperson: Colin Wilkinson proposed by Louise Murray and seconded by Susan Henderson

Louise Murray had noted her wish to step down as the Chairperson of the BPNPG after a long period in this position. Jennifer Allison thanked Louise for all her hard work over that period of time in particular noting how Louise had helped her. Susan Henderson had hoped to take over however she was no longer able to do so, and again Jennifer Allison thanked her for her work during the preceding year. Louise Murray intimated that Colin Wilkinson had stated an interest in this position, and provided there were no other proposals she proposed him as Chair.

Vice – Chair: This position remained unfilled for the time being.

Secretary: Lesley Burrell and Fiona Gardner proposed by Louise Murray and Angela Bowman

Elizabeth Sawyer had noted her wish to step down as Secretary and Jennifer Allison thanked her for her involvement.

Treasurer: Cat McDermid noted she was happy to continue in this role – however not in a fund raising capacity, and there being no further proposals for Treasurer, Cat was proposed for this role. Cat McDermid asked that she, (full name Catriona McDermid), Fiona Copland and Susan Rae be noted as signatories for purposes of treasury business.

4. STAFFING AND CLASSES FOR NEXT YEAR

Jennifer Allison reported that many classes throughout the school had been affected by absences thus impacting on the management team. There were no supply teachers available with Caroline Findlay and Jennifer Allison both covering the P7 class, and Mrs Croal the Support for Learning teacher covering in P4. There had been staff absences in P3 as a result of maternity leave, and in P1 as a result of staff promotion.

Jennifer Allison reported staffing was not finalised as yet for the 2016/17 year. School staff could still go for interview, go on maternity leave or return from career breaks. The number of P1s was known, but the appeals process was not complete as yet. She had an idea of who would be in each class but was not giving out that information as yet. As already communicated there would be 2 composite classes for next year. Parent members noted their objections to time involved in the appeals process. Many members remembered how this had affected the school when the new Hopefield estate had been built. However parents realised that this was beyond the scope of the BPNPG.

Jennifer Allison reported she had invited all those with children within the current P1 and P2 to a separate meeting to discuss the make - up of classes next year, as those were the classes affected by the changes. She had deliberately taken the decision not to invite nursery children as although some might be within the composite structure they would not be affected by the changes to classes. These parents would be given the same information as the parents of the current P1 and P2 children just at a different time. She was hoping to give this out at the P1 welcome day.

Jennifer Allison reiterated that she and her management team had the best interests of all children within Bonnyrigg Primary at heart and would never willingly disrupt the children's education.

All teachers were well placed to manage teaching composite classes and this was normal practice at many smaller schools. Midlothian policy was to arrange classes by age and Jennifer Allison was following that policy provided there were no other issues of note. Children within each class are 'set' and within each set, children are given ability appropriate work. Classes were not based on ability as children's abilities changed over time.

Parent members worried that staff changes like the ones seen at Bonnyrigg recently would affect a composite class more adversely than a non-composite. Again Jennifer Allison confirmed that all teachers would be well able to manage children of different ages and ability. Parent members stated that in principle they understood the need for composite classes, though they felt that social relationships suffered as a result of moving classes. Jennifer Allison reported it was unlikely that she could change the set up, but parents asked that she consider mechanisms for integrating classes where children would be moved. Jennifer Allison responded that she had made arrangements for this to happen previously and was sorry this had not been made more obvious.

Parent members again asked when this issue was likely to settle, and Jennifer Allison responded that the issue could not move beyond P4 at the moment. She had no plans to have more than one teacher within a class at the moment, and the building structure in Bonnyrigg did not allow for this.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was a morning meeting and was scheduled to be held on the 10th June 2016.