

Bruntsfield Parent Council Special Meeting 7 February 2023

Attendees:

Parent Council Members (Office Bearers and Coops): Dan Gerrard (DG) Parent Council Chair, Jenni Fuchs Madine (JFM), Cindy Coleman, Kirsty McIntosh (KM), Marilena Papadopoulou (MP), Alison Redpath, Stefan Santjer (SS), Ali McCallum, Lina Marin (LM)

Ordinary Members: Anna Docherty, Anna Wojtczuk, Victoria Lopez-Craig (VLC), Majid Safari, Szymon Kowalczyk, Ariel Cao, Petros Walden, Jerome Veyret, Sorour Malaekheh

Parent Forum Members: Catrina Arbuckle, Corsino San Miguel (CSM), Ramy Habeeb (RH),

Staff: Stephen Gilhooley (SG), Lesley Lamond (LL), Ingrid Ramsey (IR)

Apologies: Kristin Pedroja, Jay Feeney, Shanda Doherty (SD), Louise Gourmelon, Elma Charalampidou, Jasper Stocker

1. Introduction (DG):

- The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.
- The Chair noted that some members of the PC met the previous week with SG and the school's Senior Management Team (SMT) and positively discussed on how to work together and address the short term, medium term, and longer-term school needs.
- SG added that it was a fruitful meeting and agreed that once a month a representative from the PC will attend the SMT meeting to share updates, discuss progress and news from the school.

2. Head teacher update including parents' questions

- SG noted that the first face-to-face parents-teachers consultations were held last week, and it was a success. SG confirmed that in terms of the schedule it worked well with flexibility and the available offered slots. The parents' feedback was positive, and SG also confirmed that the team will be looking to organise more frequent progress dialogues with parents to share the students' learning and forge a partnership.
- SG confirmed that the funding for the music equipment was approved which were three trolleys for each floor to get the children involved and include this in the timetable.
- SG highlighted the need for parents to volunteer if they have the capacity to deal with the maintenance and the overhaul of the audio equipment of the main school hall and several other needs.
- SG confirmed that the school aspires to get the reporting to parents after the February break in order for them to understand how they can support their children.

- SG noted that all P6 and P7 pupils now have iPads, however a plan is required to address any accidental damages on the screens or the requirement for new iPads that will be issued to newly enrolled pupils.
- SG confirmed that he will provide an updated list of the school needs for funding.
- A parent raised the cover of the Merchiston Avenue crossing and whether there are plans in place for this role to be covered. SG agreed to chase it up with CEC as it is a H&S concern and added that he is aware that CEC is short of roles like cleaners and crossing covers.

3. Clubs Update

- SS noted that the Clubs are very busy and that he has explored whether other facilities can be used during the strikes. SS added that Kidzcare will be operating during the strikes.
- SS confirmed that for the next term 550 club places will be available with two clubs (Judo and Guitar lessons) currently have waiting lists with 50 pupils awaiting to be accepted.
- SS also confirmed that the advertising for the next term clubs will start at the end of February and P1 pupils will be included in some of the clubs.
- SS added that that he is hopeful that more clubs will be introduced and that he is working on keeping the costs low and making it accessible for more pupils. SS also added that the clubs will continue to fund the equipment required so that parents will not bear the costs.
- SS highlighted that clubs are no longer making money due to the pandemic and due to the fact that the fees were reduced so that it would be more inclusive for the Bruntsfield Primary community. SS added that discounts on the club fees are offered to families that require support.
- SS confirmed that some of the clubs will do shows at the end of the term.
- IR added that the pupils are discussing the possibility of organising a talent show in the school and LL noted that the teachers are willing to give up their classrooms to help with organising this.
- SS closed his update by confirming that there are funds available in the PC bank account because of Covid and decisions will need to be made on where these will be spent.
- DG thanked SS for his effort and the amount of time that he is dedicating for the clubs.

4. Events Update

- JFM and LM provided the following update:
- Events & Fundraising Team
Kristin Pedroja is stepping down from her role as Events Co-ordinator. This was a shared role, and LM is staying on as our remaining Events Co-ordinator. We are seeking a replacement for Kristin. Ideally we are looking for someone with fundraising experience to take forward fundraising not necessarily linked directly

to events. As this is a co-opted role, a change can be made at any PC meeting, and we hope to confirm a replacement at our next meeting on 29 March.

- Dates for Your Diary:
 - o Ceilidh: Saturday 29 April at school. Final details to be confirmed after the half term break, when tickets will also go on sale. Many thanks to Catriona Penny for organising.
 - o Summer Fair: Saturday 10 June, 1pm-4pm. Parents, teachers and children to be involved in the planning of what this event will look like.
 - o Teddy Bear's Picnic (P1 Welcome Event): Friday 25 August, time tbc. New parents to be notified at induction day in June. Will need P2 volunteers to help, but set format makes it easy to run.
 - o Winter Fair: Saturday 25 November, afternoon (time tbc). Moving this from a Friday evening to a Saturday afternoon to make it more accessible to younger year groups, and daytime means we can also use the playground to spread things out more as it gets very crowded inside. Again, will involve parents, teachers and children in the planning.
- Other Event Ideas:
 - o Would like to bring back the Art Auction (did not run last year) as it has always been a good fundraiser. Have pencilled this in for May, but really depends on volunteers stepping up to take this forward. Could also take place later in the year.
 - o Possibility of a family event in Maths Week Scotland (end of Sept) through their Small Grants Fund, if successful in applying.
 - o A 'Festival of Light' in October, to celebrate the different cultures we have at school. Sounds grand but could be low key. Can discuss further nearer the time if there is interest.
 - o A 'kids only' school disco, as requested by the children. Could be staggered across year groups. Will discuss this separately with the Headteacher.
- Moving forward, we want to involve the children more in our planning, listen to what they want, and let them help shape our events. We are also committed to making our events more sustainable.
- RH confirmed that he will continue the book project this year as well and the theme will be Bruntsfield Pirates and he is looking to organise a treasure hunt around the neighbourhood so that pupils can pick up clues to get to the treasure. RH will liaise with the Events team to coordinate the planning with them.
- SG noted that the Pupils' Council proposed the idea of a Disco and perhaps next year a Halloween disco. SG is working with the pupils to identify a date and to stagger the classes to avoid being a chaotic event. SG added that in his previous school a Halloween party was organised, with a one pound as a ticket fee and SG played music.
- VLC proposed a fundraising that parent might want to contribute to, like a skipathon and IR confirmed that this is an event that has been organised in the

past and worked very well. SG suggested that this could be organised during the Health and Wellbeing week.

5. Treasurer's Update

- DG confirmed that the Events Treasurer update prepared by SD has been posted on the website. The Events funds were spent on the P1 smartboard replacement, the music trolleys and the P6 Opera visit. The Events account balance is now almost used up.
- There are 25k funds still available in the Clubs account, this is the money from the Covid legacy that had built up.
- DG highlighted that SD term comes to an end and suggested if any parent is interested in stepping up to this role and shadow her before they replace them.
- SG confirmed that lots of parents contribute to the school and offer their support and they have passed the basic PVG to allow them to work in the school.
- LL confirmed that one of the school needs is the creation of the Upper School Library, top floor for P4-P7 and lower library P1-P3. If parents can come to the school to help to sort the books into fiction and non-fiction.

6. Funding Applications update

- SG confirmed that the contractors that provided an indicative cost for the playground laying do not want to submit an official quote for the works as it is a complicated task.
- A parent suggested that the school can reach out to the parent community to see if there is any parent that can help.
- LL noted that this is longstanding as a task but wants to see other things in the playground funding application list to be done and children want to see the environment change.
- CSM requested clarification on the procedure that the Parent Council will follow to decide on the approval or not of the submitted applications.
- DG confirmed that the Parent Council will vote on the submitted applications based on the criteria that is already set for the applications. SS sought guidance from Connect and confirmed that this process is according to the general rules of Parent Councils. SS noted that Connect is the body that governs how Parent Councils should operate. There are 25 voting members on the PC that have heard the arguments and will make a decision.
- CSM noted that the process has four criteria to assess any funding applications decisions and confirmed that he has submitted a document to improve the funding application process and make it more fair.
- SS explained he queried Connect on the St Oswald application and the fact that it is not part of the school. Connect confirmed that the PC application process in place is robust and if the PC members follow the process and justify why they made the decision that they made then they will be voting on the St Oswald application as it is what the PC constitution states. SS added that two special meetings were held for the St Oswald's and the Playground funding applications

and all the views were heard. SS also invited CSM to participate in the PC and work with the rest of the members to improve processes and procedures when required.

- CSM explained his view on how the available funds should only be used for the schools needs and for nothing else, CSM raised concerns over the information contained in the St Oswald's funding application and the fact that the school was no longer supporting this initiative. CSM explained that he feels that the PC is not taking into consideration the views of the parent community.
- SS added that the previous Headteacher wrote a letter of support for St Oswald's to express her support.
- MP highlighted that the PC members are volunteers that are dedicating their time to support the school and the overall community. Any parent is welcome to participate in order to make sure that more voices will be heard. MP rejected comments that were made over the motives of the PC members when voting for any funding application and explained that everyone will review the applications and will vote based on their interpretation of the funding applications criteria.
- SS noted that during his discussion with the Connect, it became apparent that some councils (East Lothian) do not allow PCs to fund school playground applications that might create inequalities. Connect suggested that the council needs to be approached to request funding.
- RH explained that everyone in the PC is working hard and there is an endless effort to try to deal with a problem that was inherited as the available funding is not a typical amount that would be in the accounts. RH noted that it is unacceptable to be rude and aggressive and suggested that parents can join the PC to change it from the inside if needed.
- SS confirmed that the PC will vote on the St Oswald's application and announce the outcome so we can then focus on the school.
- LL added that if the intention is to divide the available funding between the school and St Oswald's then she would prefer the funding to be spent in the school and the children.
- SG confirmed that he will sit down with LL and prioritise the activities for the playground.
- KM confirmed that so far three school applications have been approved and queried whether the applications received from school are prioritised.
- SG confirmed that the applications submitted are based on the immediate school needs.

7. AOB

- No AOB was raised.

8. Close

- The Chair thanked everyone for their time and closed the meeting.