**Bruntsfield Parent Council Meeting 16 May 2023**

**Attendees:**

**Parent Council Members (Office Bearers and Co-ops):** Alison Redpath (AR), Jenni Fuchs Madine, Cindy Coleman (CC), Kirsty McIntosh, Ali McCallum, Jay Feeney (JF), Shanda Doherty (SD), Lina Marin (LM)

**Ordinary Members:** Louise Gourmelen (LG), Elma Charalampidou (EC), Victoria Lopez-Craig, Dasha Narog, Anna Docherty, Sorour Malaekeh, Jerome Veyret

**Parent forum members:** Duncan Lamont, Jon Rowe (JR), Kathryn Hewitt, Tamara Van Strijthem

**Staff:** Stephen Gilhooley (SG), Lesley Lamond (LL)

**External speakers:** Gus Egan (Earth Calling)

**Apologies:** Dan Gerrard, Stefan Santjer, Marilena Papadopoulou, Lucy Henderson

* **Opening (AR)**

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that Dan Gerrard was unable to attend.

* **Playground Project**
* Jon Rowe, a BPS parent and Landscape Architect began this section of the meeting by sharing a short presentation on the BPS playground. The presentation reviewed the various areas of the playground, highlighting the opportunities and challenges in terms of re-development.
* JR highlighted that his review was building on the earlier work of LG, LL and the playground group.
* Gus Egan from Earth Calling then followed with a short presentation highlighting his work with Schools. Gus has been working with BPS on a consultancy basis (focusing on environmental teaching) for the last 15 years. He highlighted that he also has many years’ experience of working with Schools developing their school grounds.
* Earth Calling’s focus is on working with wood and wicker and he highlighted that wood can be placed on top of tarmac without any need to dig it up (which is expensive).
* It was highlighted that the playground project is a many years project with various stages to it. Priorities need to be established and a plan needs to be put in place with realistic goals to enable money to be raised in stages.
* The intention of the playground group and LL is to form a working group which will report back on plans and progress. A communication will be sent to the parent forum to ask for volunteers
* **Chair’s update (AR on behalf of DG)**
* Thanks given to everyone for their hard work over the last few weeks / months and in particular, thanks to all those involved in organising the recent ceilidh and art auction.
* A Fundraising Officer has been appointed – Lucy Henderson will work with PC members to determine a fundraising strategy.
* There was a call for volunteers – the Parent Council has a number of vacancies including Chair that need to be filled. More details will follow.
* **Headteacher’s update (SG)**
* PRDs (professional review and development) are taking place with staff at the moment.
* SG is currently looking at the School improvement plan for next year and would be keen to have parents on the improvement committee.
* Thanks given for all the recent support from parents and volunteers with fundraising.
* The IT suite is now being turned into a ‘resources room’ for teachers.
* School are looking forward to starting to purchase the equipment needed for the new nurture space / family room (money raised from the art auction will support this).
* A range of new spaces are being created in School – more details to follow after summer.
* SG has just received data from the last Parental involvement and engagement census (which included 47 respondents). Three key themes emerging:
	+ - **Contact time with staff:** Parents didn’t feel they got enough.
		- **Views on learning:** Parents would like to be contacted for feedback related to their views about learning (polls and surveys could be used in future); Parents didn’t feel they knew enough about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (a session with parents could be offered). School is making me aware of family learning opportunities - Parent / carer feedback was very negative in relation to this. (The new PSO will work with families more. School may also have weekly meetings on themes open to parents / carers to join.)
		- **Involvement with School:** most people would like to be more involved with School.
	+ P7 camp is approaching on 29th May and 5th June at Lagganlia.
	+ Sports Day will be on 24th May.
	+ Pupil reports – staff are working on those now and they will be available on Friday 16th June in a slightly different format.
	+ School crossing patrol was raised by the PC Health and Safety Officer. SG stated that parent power is needed to lobby the council. Paul Murrel is the best contact.
	+ There was also a query around updates from School. A number of parents would like more holistic feedback. SG highlighted that class feedback should come through Teams. Assembly updates will now be included in the Head Teacher’s update.
	+ There was a query around why homework is on Teams rather than hard copy. It can cause issues when there are multiple children at home sharing devices and parents are trying to limit screen time. SG stated that there were many considerations such as sustainability, but that he was also conscious of equity. He highlighted that engagement with homework is very low which is dispiriting for teachers who dedicate a lot of time to planning it. SG suggested a poll with parents around homework may be needed to help find the best solution.
* **Clubs Treasury update (CC)**
* There has been no change to Clubs Account finances since last update. £21K is available for school needs leaving a £5K reserve.
* Year-end accounts are coming up at the end July to be audited.
* **Events Treasury update (SD)**
* The events account still has £500 from the P7 graduation fund which was raised at the last summer fair.
* It was noted that the PC haven’t yet made a donation to the Primrose Fund (discretionary fund). Previously, the payment has been set at £1,500 per year. SD has been waiting for confirmation from School as she had proposed increasing the amount.
* SG confirmed that Mrs Ramsey manages the fund and keeps all records. The funds are used to pay for 50% / 100% of camp fees for families otherwise unable to fund camp, providing they don’t fall into the PEF funding category.
* SD proposed the Primrose Fund payment should be set at £2,000 for this School year. This was voted on by PC members and approved.
* There are two current funding applications on the PC website.
	+ SD is working with the Equalities Group to procure a set of books that have been out of stock. The funding application has been approved by the PC.
	+ An application has been submitted by Cassandra Harrison to continue risograph workshops within School.
* SD highlighted that she is stepping down as Events Treasurer. If anyone like to step into Shanda’s role, please get in touch.
* **Events (LM)**

**Art Auction**

* The Art Auction live exhibition took place in School last Friday. It was great to have the P7s involved. Bagpipers and drummers were also present.
* The Art Auction is online and has raised in the region of £1700 so far.

**Summer fair**

* The Summer Fair will include ‘Bruntsfield Street Food’ which will be organised by Pupil Council. LM explained that the Pupil Council will ask their parents to bake or cook for the event so that there are donations from cultures around the world. Money raised will go directly to School. Volunteers are needed to support them.
* It was highlighted that there needs to be a communication with parents / families, to ensure that they provide permission for any volunteering that their child is committing to, in particular it’s important that they are aware and can support.
* The Bruntsfield Pirates book will be available for pre-order at the Fair, with P7s to be involved in sales and advertising. P6s are working on an audio book. There will also be a Treasure Hunt at the fair which JF is supporting.
* LM highlighted that events will become more sustainably focused.
* The Sustainability Group will be present at the event with a stall to engage families. The group are also planning to create a page on the PC website with resources.
* Lucy Henderson (Fundraising Officer), will also be working with the events team on the Summer Fair.
* EC raised concerns on behalf of the Sustainability regarding the proposed £5 per family entrance fee at the fair. Given the cost of living crisis and pressures facing families, the group would prefer the entrance fee to be by donation. In particular, social pressure may have a negative effect on families who are struggling. EC noted that the entrance fee does not facilitate inclusion and highlighted that it is important that parents have trust in what the PC are fundraising for – as yet this hasn’t been articulated. EC agreed to go with a majority decision, but had reservations regarding the entrance fee.
* AR highlighted that the Summer Fair was primarily a Fundraising event and that it had already been agreed that an entrance fee should be charged. Some events have been designated as ‘fundraising events’ and others ‘community events’. Community events will not have entrance fees. AR felt that as the decision was made some time ago, it was now too close to the event to find an alternative avenue to raise the funds.
* SG suggested that as the decision had been taken already, and as it seemed that there was no scope for change, the PC go ahead with the entrance fee this year, but re-consider next year.
1. **Close**
* AR closed the meeting, with thanks given to all for their attendance.