

Bruntsfield Primary School Parent Council Meeting 23 August 2023

Attendees:

Parent Council Members (Office Bearers and Co-opted): Dan Gerrard (DG)(Parent Council Chair), Jenni Fuchs Madine (JFM), Kirsty McIntosh, Alison Redpath, Stefan Santjer (SS), Ali McCallum (AM), Jay Feeney, Shanda Doherty (SD)

Ordinary Members: Anna Docherty, Anna Wojtczuk, Elma Charalampidou, Szymon Kowalczyk, Petros Wallden, Jerome Veyret

Parent forum members: Richard Szsabo, Corsino San Miguel, Nabeeha A Azmi, Sandy Paton, Jenny Elliot, Simon Wooton, Tom Lea, John Carty, Valentina Guerrieri, Doug Stewart, Ayalah Shapira-Shabo, Hamish Matheson, Katherine Hewitt, Peter Sidor, Gokay Coskuner, Nick Sheriden, Emily Polack (EP), Barbara Vrachnas, Vinaya Tekale, Jubaer Ahmed, David Urch (DU), Artur Bocian (AB), Apostolos, Ahmed, Borja, Andrew, JV, EG, Sarthok's parents, Clare, Rob, Shirley, Ana H, Priya, Afrooz,

Staff: Stephen Gilhooley (SG)

Apologies: Marilena Papadopoulou, Cindy Coleman, Catrina Arbuckle

1. Opening:

- The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Head Teacher's update (SG)

- SG welcomed everyone back and commented that the children are very happy to be back at School.
- This is the first year that all P1s have been in School for a full first day. There have been lots of tired faces as the children get used to their routines.
- School is almost full to capacity and there are a number of families currently on the waiting list for BPS.
- Four new Pupil Support Assistants have joined School this year along with three new Probationers in P3, P4 and P5.
- The new Resources Room is being set up and resources are being pulled together from across the School into one space. This will aid lesson planning and resourcing. An audit is being carried out as work progresses to identify any gaps.
- The first event of the year will be the P1 Teddy Bear Picnic and SG is looking forward to welcoming the new P1 families on Friday.
- Following that there will be a 'Meet the Teacher' event on 12 September.
- SG is looking to create a small consultation group to look at the School's vision and values which will steer and inform curriculum plans. The Pupil Council, once elected will be part of this. SG is keen to gather parents' views within a meeting, but emails will also be welcome from those unable to attend. More details will follow on Friday.
- SG is looking forward to working with all parents and the Parent Council moving forward.

Questions

- How can parents find out what their children are doing during the School day and what the learning process is?
 - o SG – The Meet the Teacher event is an opportunity for parents / carers and teachers to come together. At the event, teachers will explain what the children

are learning and the best ways to be involved and support them. MS Teams will also be used to keep parents and carers up-to-date with learning. Additionally, there will be opportunities for parents to drop in.

- SD added that the School website also has useful summaries of what each year group is learning each year.
- The 'Meet the teacher' event for P1s has previously been held on the day prior to the 'Meet the teacher' event for the rest of the School. Will this be the case this year?
 - SD advised that he thought this would be the case, but would confirm soon.
Addendum: The Head Teacher has subsequently confirmed that the P1 'Meet the Teacher' event will be held on 12 September at the earlier time of 3.30pm.

1. Events Treasurer update (SD):

- SD has been the Events Treasurer for 3 years and is now standing down. If anyone is interested in the role, please get in touch (bruntsfieldeventstreasurer@gmail.com), SD would be happy to chat informally about the role.
- Over the last year, fundraising has been very successful and there is approx. £10K in the events bank account for any activities or projects that the BPS community would like to take forward.
- The Clubs bank account has a higher balance with more ability to draw on funds.
- SD has been working on preparing the annual accounts which will be ready for the AGM in September and more details on the funding position will be provided at that point.
- Accounts are now online – thanks given to Cindy Coleman, which will make things easier for the new Treasurer going forward.

2. Clubs (SS)

- SS began by giving a vote of thanks on behalf of the PC to Shanda Docherty, for all her work, support and advice over the years.
- Club funds are very healthy - there will be a presentation of those as part of the AGM.
- £21K is currently available within the clubs account ring fenced for the use of School / anything that would benefit the children.
- A request was made to the Head Teacher to please give an idea of funding requirements on behalf of the School at the PC AGM in September.
- Clubs are running as they were in the previous School year. There is a proposed new model for the running of clubs, however this is taking longer to set-up than initially thought. More detail on this will be given at the AGM.
- SS has contacted everyone who has booked a place with Clubs. If a booking has been made and a confirmation email hasn't been received, please check junk mail folders.
- An overview of clubs was given. Clubs originated at BPS a number of years ago and were set-up to fill a need for children to experience new activities after school, locally. The clubs are run by BPS Parent Council and generally take place within the School or at Morningside United Church. There are now 50 different sessions running Monday – Friday covering sports, music and more. Clubs are run by teachers, parent volunteers and other professionals. SS noted that BPS is incredibly lucky to have such a wide offering.

Questions

- When looking at Clubs, should we use age or year group as a guide to what's available. For example a Club may say that it's open to P2-P4 and also for ages 5-9.
 - SS – Please use 'year group' as the guide when booking.

- On that basis, there seems to be a limited offering for P1 with just a few clubs available.
 - o SS is aware of this and looking into it. P1 children do need a little time to get comfortable with their new environment, however he recognises that every child is different. SS emphasised that BPS does have the biggest club offering of any school in Edinburgh, but he would welcome views from parents with suggestions or ideas for new clubs.
- If a parent has an idea for a club or would like to volunteer, who should they contact?
 - o bruntsfieldclubs@gmail.com
- Could the new proposal for clubs please be explained?
 - o A number of parent volunteers have run clubs in the past. However, the clubs offering has grown and it is becoming unmanageable for parent volunteers. There is a plan to separate clubs from the Parent Council. SS emphasised that this plan was not about making profits, it was about the future sustainability of clubs and ensuring equity and alignment with the School curriculum. There will be further discussion on this at the AGM in September.
- It was suggested by a member of the parent forum that a separate meeting to discuss the proposal would be beneficial as it is likely that many parents will be unaware of plans to make changes to the running of BPS clubs.
 - o The Chair agreed that this would be beneficial.

3. Events (JFM)

- The P1 Teddy Bear Picnic is taking place on Friday 25 August in the upper school hall. It was noted that parents should wait outside the playground to avoid congestion when entering the building.
- This year's Winter Fair is taking place on 25 November. It is moving from a Friday evening to a Saturday afternoon so that we can use the outdoors more. The PC are putting together a working group to start the planning for this, and pulling together ideas and suggestions for the new format. JFM asked that anyone who would like to get involved at this stage please get in touch (contact bruntsfieldcomms@gmail.com).

4. Parent Council Vacancies (DG)

- The following roles will soon become vacant. Anyone interested in finding out more about these roles, please contact Dan or Jenni (bruntsfieldchair@gmail.com or bruntsfieldcomms@gmail.com):
 - o Parent Council Chair
 - o Events Treasurer
 - o Class Rep Coordinator
 - o Events Coordinator (already vacant)
 - o Pupil Council Rep (new role)
 - o Website Manager (new role)
- SS added that volunteers are also needed for Bike Club and P1 and P3 football.

5. Active Travel Group (AB)

- An Active Travel group has been established by parent forum member Artur Bocian (also a member of the Sustainability Group).

- First action carried out by the group has been to develop a survey which has been sent to parents and pupils to find out how safe they feel about travelling to School. The survey has had a good response and will now be sent to new P1 parents.
- It's likely the group will focus on connecting with other School and community groups campaigning for safe routes.
- Further information will be shared regarding the group's goals and how to join. The group are keen for new members to come and share ideas.

6. Playground project (EP)

- The Playground Working Group is a group of parents and teachers committed to transforming the playground space at BPS into a better space for children to be, play and learn, and more – this includes landscape architects and people interested in supporting children to grow plants and encourage nature into the grounds. All welcome!

7. Bruntsfield St Oswalds (DU)

- Bruntsfield St Oswald is the Church adjacent to BPS. It is being refurbishing and there is a plan to open it as a centre for the benefit of the community.
- The centre could in future provide space for BPS Clubs and After School Clubs amongst other things.
- Phase 1 of the works is now complete and the building is weather proof and safe.
- Phase 2 will involve refurbishing the inside of the building.
- There will be an Open evening in the building on 11 September. Details will be follow.

8. Closing

- The meeting ended with thanks from the Chair for all those who attended.