**Bruntsfield Parent Council Clubs Meeting – 2 November 2023**

**Attendees:**

**Parent Council Members (Office Bearers and Co-opts):** Jay Feeney(JF) Parent Council Chair, Stefan Santjer (SS), Clubs Coordinator, Jenni Fuchs Madine, Kirsty McIntosh, Alison Redpath, Ali McCallum, Catriona Penny

**Ordinary Members:** Richard Szabo, Ana Miret, Cassandra Harrison (CH), Anna Docherty, Hamish Matheson, Elma Charalampidou (EC)

**Parent Forum Members:** Simon Hope, Tara Luckhart, Ady Powers, Lina Marin, Tom Lea, Polly Golding (PG) former Clubs Coordinator, Rocio Banyuls (RB), Simon Wotton

**External:** Karen Galloway (KG), former BPS Parent Council Chair

**Apologies:** Marilena Papadopoulou, Moria McQueen

1. **Opening (JF)**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted that the meeting was being held to find ways to ensure the continuation of the clubs offering at BPS and its sustainability for the future.

Agenda for the evening:

* How Clubs was run in the past
* How it runs now
* Discussion of three viable options for the future

The Chair commented that he hoped a consensus would be found and also acknowledged that the plans being presented marked a change from the previous meeting.

1. **Summary (JF)**

* Stefan Santjer who currently runs clubs took over after the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, there were 30 volunteers supporting the delivery of clubs.
* Post pandemic, the parent council started small as they found their feet. The volunteer model changed from a team of 30 to 1.
* JF remarked that SS had devoted lots of time and energy to clubs, creating a slick operation and commented how grateful we all are to Stefan for his work, however SS no longer has the time available to carry on with clubs in the same model.
* The challenge now is slicing the Clubs Coordinator role into a few more bodies, but also learning from the past and not having too many volunteers.

1. **Viable options for the future (JF)**

The Chair then set out three viable options for the future of Clubs.

**Option 1** – Continuing Clubs as is, but splitting duties across an expanded team of six volunteers. Under this model, SS would stay on at Clubs ensuring continuity.

**Option 2** – Changing format, so that individual clubs deal directly with parents. This would be easier for the PC to manage, but would mean that we would no longer have a centralised clubs booking system. This would require approx. 3 volunteers.

*NB. The number of volunteers was later clarified to be 4-5 by RB who championed this option. See section 8.*

**Option 3** – In the event that no volunteers step forward, Clubs could continue to be run as is, but with a paid manager role. However, there are risks attached to this model. Currently Clubs makes a surplus, but that could change in the future. The principle of Clubs is to make a small surplus and focus on keeping it affordable and accessible. However, the paid manager role, may mean that prices would need to increase at some point.

1. **Background (SS)**

* SS advised that he stepped in to reinvigorate Clubs post pandemic. SS started small, but then expanded Clubs to 500 places across 20 different clubs, plus a football offering.
* SS noted that pre-pandemic there were 600 places across 26 clubs and that there were 30 volunteers versus just one now. This was facilitated by the move to Class4kids (centralised booking system) and tutors taking on door keeping responsibilities.
* Whilst SS has found a passion at Clubs, he now has a paid role elsewhere.
* SS is considering setting up a Social Enterprise (not for profit) and clubbing together with other Schools, however has decided now is not the right time to progress this at BPS. He commented that he had experienced some animosity from a minority of parents.

1. **Stakeholders (SS)**

SS then outlined the key stakeholders involved in the running of Clubs, who are:

* **The School** – SS commented that Stephen Gilhooly is happy with how Clubs are run and in particular that they are self-sufficient and require little involvement from School. It is also viewed positively that some School staff are actively involved as tutors.
* **Kidzcare** – responsible for transferring children from one venue to another. Kidzcare are currently doing this for free.
* **Morningside United Church** – Clubs can access the space at a huge discount.

1. **Facts and figures (SS)**

* Clubs generated a turnover of £85K last year.
* Most of the money was spent paying tutors, with some spent on space that Clubs rent or equipment such as guitars etc.
* Clubs gives away complimentary places to the value of approx. £8K, amounting to 140 free or heavily discounted places each year.
* Last year Clubs had a £6K surplus, however a sudden drop in income would affect finances.

1. **Volunteers required under each model (SS)**

Option 1

* Treasurer needed. This entails paying tutors, venues, and expenses, keeping records of everything that’s been paid and preparing a set of accounts at year end. Work could be shared across more than one volunteer.
* Disclosure officer. Football volunteers will be discloser checked by School moving forward, however a number will remain on the PC disclosure scheme.
* A small number of clubs would need parents to look after them. There are 5 or 6 run by school staff and a parent liaison would be helpful.

**Pre-pandemic context (KG)**

Karen Galloway, suggested it might be helpful if she outline the pre-pandemic context before moving onto option 2. KG was a previous BPS PC Chair with oversight of Clubs pre-pandemic.

* When KG started, clubs was paper based. BPS was considered best in class in Edinburgh and Scotland.
* Clubs evolved quickly, the PC took on new clubs and new venues.
* However, clubs lurched from one crisis to another and there was constant firefighting.
* Pre-pandemic, clubs were trying to implement Class4Kids and were looking to create something more sustainable that took pressure off volunteers.
* The PC considered a paid model and those conversations were happening as the pandemic hit.
* Stefan has put back what was there, but better.

Option 2

* In this model, tutors would manage payments and deal directly with parents meaning that there would no longer be a central booking system. The PC would still agree which clubs were offered, manage spaces and disclosures. But would need a smaller team of volunteers.
* PG (previous Clubs Coordinator) highlighted that in the past, Council Lets would have caused an issue as the council lets policy is to charge commercial businesses for access to the school building.
* KG suggested this would need to be checked with the council as it could cause an issue. Previously the council had proposed charging £100 per hour for space.
* SS also highlighted that Kidzcare would not transport children to clubs under this model and that School would prefer to have just one point of contact (rather than 20 club tutors).

Option 3

* JF suggested it may be possible to pay a coordinator if we don’t invest in as much kit and potentially don’t give away as many free places. JF would much prefer to avoid this option if possible and considered it a last resort.
* JF outlined this option would require the PC to spec out how they could employ someone, how to advertise and what the renumeration would be.
* KG noted that a freelance role had been utilised by the PC before and that may be an option.

1. **Discussion**

There was then a wider discussion of the three potential options.

* JF stated his preference was to proceed with option 1 as only six volunteers would be required.
* CH who is a parent and tutor with Clubs stated that she appreciated the model that we have now and how seamless it is. The funded places are great and clubs provides a good opportunity to offer music and art for example which are lacking at School.
* EC stated that she could see draw backs in all three options. Option 3 is easy to implement, but obvious draw backs of paying someone. With option 1, we may struggle with volunteers moving forward. However, with option 2, EC expressed concern about social sustainability and how inclusive clubs will be if we move to a model with a variety of tutors.
* JF stated that he felt under option 2 the PC could insist that tutors give away an agreed number of spaces free or half price and make this a requirement. However, the balancing of spaces, which takes place currently (whereby SS reviews waiting lists to ensure that as many children as possible have at least one place on a club) would be sacrificed.
* RB advised that she had been a clubs provider for music at many schools around Edinburgh and had never found a system like BPS Clubs. Generally, she deals directly with Schools. She previously helped with Guitar Club at BPS and her experience led her to believe that the parent volunteers were an unnecessary layer of communication. She feels that BPS have created a system for clubs that is unnecessarily complex. RB is in favour of a simplified model and believes that tutors can take on admin work themselves. RB suggested that the PC consider why they are offering clubs and what the purpose of them is, as it currently feels as though BPS Clubs are competing with commercial offerings.
* As RB championed option 2 and had previous experience of working within the context of this option 2 at other Schools, JF queried how many volunteers she felt would be required under this model – RB clarified that she felt that 4-5 volunteers would be needed.
* SS suggested that the Clubs offering enables BPS PC to keep prices down and that option 2 may mean prices go up.
* PG highlighted that the pandemic had wiped out competitive sports at BPS. She was concerned that moving to option 2 would make it even harder to bring these back.
* It was commented by another parent that Option 2 would be difficult to get up and running by January and for some tutors, being asked to invoice 30 parents will be problematic.
* It was proposed that a combination of Option 1 and Option 2 might work well in the long term, but that in the short term (for the purposes of keeping Clubs running in Jan), Option 1 was the most viable option.

1. **Poll and closing remarks**

* The Chair asked for a show of hands as an indication of preference. A majority indicated option 1 as preference with a smaller number interested to pursue option 2. No one indicated that option 3 was preferred.
* The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.