

MELDRUM PARENTS IN PARTNERSHIP (MPiP)

Monday 25th October, 7pm, GP room.

Attendance: Carolyn Cooke, Gillian Low, Joanne Provan, Jill Good, Lana Duncan, Carol Harper, Jane Brown, Libby Davidson, Rebecca McLennan, Lesley Buchan, Donna Sim, Sonia Galbraith, Jane Turnbull, Chrysa Edridge, Nadia Blaney, Helena McKerron

1. Apologies: Julia Farquhar, Sara Campbell, Joanne Lord, Ewan Alexander, Hazel Fraser, Katrina McCartney, Ruth Scott

2. Minutes of last meeting and updates

To be approved at next meeting

3. Matters arising

- **New Committee** in place, details are on the school website. Helena McKerron (Chair) gave a brief introduction to herself and her vision for the committee: "I've lived in the village for 8 years. I have 2 sons Levi who is in P5 and Nicholas who is in P1. I've been coming along to MPiP for 3 years and been the treasurer for last 2 years. My mission as the chair is to get as many bums on the seats as possible. I want every parent/guardian to feel they can come along, join in the discussions or just sit and listen. I want to banish this myth that it's cliquey. I have personally never felt this. MPiP is here to help the kids in the school get that little bit more than is provided by Aberdeenshire Council funding. We do it because we believe that parental involvement is one of the most important factors in improving positive outcomes for our kids". Lesley Buchan (Vice Chair) also introduced herself: "I moved to Meldrum almost 5 years ago. I have three children, Ruairi in P3, Eilidh in pre-school and Gregor who will start anti-preschool after the Christmas holidays, Like Helena I have also attended MPiP meeting for the past 3 years and have supported her as vice treasurer for the last 2 years. When she approached me to say that she was interested in becoming MPiP chair, I was very happy to back her up in the role, knowing that we work well together, but more importantly that she has some great ideas about moving the group forward and to try and encourage more people to be involved. After all MPiP is all about helping the kids have better learning experiences."
- **Raising funds** during the coming year. The committee has previously held a very healthy bank balance but this has diminished due to the 'extras' that MPiP have funded over the last couple of years. We need to raise funds to meet commitments that we've already promised based on previous years. Helena suggested that we should also raise contingency funds in case we don't get the money that we've applied for through ScotRail Culture and Arts Fund through Foundation Scotland for the Volleyball/Basketball courts and equipment. This contingency would need to be about £2000.
- **Football:** Craig Buchan and Willie Beattie, Football Team Coaches, are asking for more parent volunteers to help with the football teams. This would allow P3's to have a football team on a Saturday. Aberdeen Football Community Trust are looking into starting a girl's league and to get more girls involved. If any partners or friends are interested in helping then please email Carol Harper.
- **Meldrum Community Cafe:** Helena is exploring the possibility of whether MPiP can run the Meldrum community cafe during the Christmas Lights switch on (Dec.4th). Helena has been in touch with the Café, to see if it's possible and the idea is being taken to the committee for a decision.
- **Kilt-walk:** Suggestion that this would be an excellent fund raiser involving the kids as

well as adults raising money. It would be about May time in Aberdeen with 3 different walk lengths for kids and adults. It was agreed this would be a good event to take part in. More details to follow about how to get involved.

- **Scottish Parent Teacher Council website (SPTC):** This website is now open to any parent/ guardian with a child in education, with its wider purpose to make parental involvement in children's education as good as it possibly can be. Please feel free to log on and register. They want parents/ guardians to be accessing it whenever they feel they need information or support. For example, at the moment SPTC are working with the anti-bullying charity RespectMe, running free online safety training sessions. There is also a link on the SPTC's website to help support parent/ guardians with the First Ministers reading challenge to encourage P4-P7's to develop a love for reading. It was noted that you can sign up to an e-newsletter to keep you up to date of the tools and support that they are offering. <http://www.sptc.info/your-school/>

4. Head teachers update

Jane Brown delivered the AGM Head teachers report:

In order to complete Standards and Quality Report for last session we completed various self-evaluation activities with pupils, parents and staff and their contributions are reflected in Standards and Quality Report 2015/16 and Improvement Planning 2016/17.

As per our Improvement Plan for last session, we worked on 4 areas for improvement and have completed the following;

Curricular Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Programme of Study implemented • Aberdeenshire Curriculum Frameworks shared with teaching staff • Reporting process evaluated and developed. Learning Journey Booklets introduced.
Restorative Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training opportunities for pupils, staff and Parent Council Representatives • School Expectations developed and in use and weekly Relationship Building sessions in place • Meldrum School Behaviour and Relationship Policy written
A 1+2 Approach to Modern Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current capacity across the school audited • Timescales planned and adhered to • Upskilling and resourcing ongoing • Information shared with Parent Council
Implementation of New Nursery Staffing Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of Staff Capacity Building, Planning, Profiling and Assessment has begun and will continue during session 2016/17

This session we are using How Good Is Our School Ed.4 for the first time for self-evaluation and improvement and have focussed around the three keys questions:

- How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?
- How good is the quality of the care and education we offer?
- How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?

Within each, we are required to grade ourselves using the How Good Is Our School Ed.4 6-point scale, identify key strengths and set our Improvement Planning for this session. The Standards and Quality Report and Improvement Plan is currently in draft form and will be published this term after it has been approved by our Quality Improvement Officer.

Carol Harper provided the head teachers update for this meeting:

- **Staffing and School Roll**

Alastair Beaton remains absent from work.

Leigh Tough starts with us tomorrow (Tuesday 25th October) in her role as Pupil Support Assistant. This is a temporary post and Leigh will be with us until the summer holidays. After 12 years at Meldrum School, Carol Holmes has resigned her position as PSA. The post currently being advertised and is being covered temporarily until an appointment is made. We also have one other temporary vacancy which will be advertised shortly and also covered temporarily.

Lois Thomson started her maternity leave today and Ellen Leslie, PE Specialist, left us before the holidays to take up a new secondary school teaching post. We welcome Sally Eames to Meldrum School next week. Sally will be providing non class contact time for teachers across the school.

We also said goodbye to two members of our nursery team at the end of term, Kirsty Wilson and Angie Mackay. As a result, we now have one vacant nursery post which has been advertised and we hope to interview soon.

Our school roll is 441.

It was asked whether the specialist teachers who have left the school will be replaced by other specialist teachers. Carol Harper explained that in line with Aberdeenshire Council policy Visiting Specialist posts are now often filled by class teachers and not specialist subject teachers. Jane Brown emphasised that all teachers are trained to teach across the full curriculum range, and that they were currently looking at how they can utilise staff expertise and preferences, and provide additional professional development (in relation to PE). It was mentioned that Active Schools had provided some specialist input in Rugby and that this may happen again in the future, while the Instrumental Music Service provides access to instrumental music tuition. The music tuition is available from P4 onwards. Information about the music service is distributed through the school and is available on the Aberdeenshire council website. <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/ims/music-tuition/>

- **Quality Improvement Officer**

We have a new Quality Improvement Officer as Sheila Marr has moved on to a new role with Aberdeenshire Council. Our new Acting QIO is Susan Smith, formerly Head Teacher at Bervie School. A permanent QIO will be appointed in due course.

- **Electronic Communication**

In order to improve communication processes and do our bit for the environment, this term we will be introducing new email communication for most home/school communications. There will be exceptions to this, for example when a return slip is required so please continue to check school bags.

The first newsletter of this term will be paper based and will share the new arrangements with parents. Should people wish to continue receiving paper copies, they can let us know by completing and returning a slip.

Office staff spent time last term compiling email distribution lists. There are a few parents for whom we do not have email addresses listed. Office staff will be contacting these parents to request email addresses if possible. It is important that parents keep us informed of any changes to their email address.

- **Bus Update**

Further to previous discussions about Winter Bus Routes, Sean Jamieson, Principal Officer for Transportation, is currently trying to arrange a meeting for early November with Burns Coaches, a representative from school and himself to discuss School Transport over the winter.

- **Christmas**

As this is the last meeting before Christmas, just a quick update on our Christmas plans. P5-7 will be performing 'Primary School Christmas Musical'. Once again, P1 will host a Christmas Singalong for their parents and P2-4 will invite parents in for Christmas Craft afternoon. All dates remain as per the school calendar.

- **Donations**

We received a very kind parental donation for our school football team. The money has gone to MPiP and will be spent on football equipment in the future.

A big thanks also to Meldrum Musical Society for their generous donation which we received before the October holiday. Unfortunately, the society is disbanding and were keen to distribute funds to the community. The money will be used over the coming years to support musical performances in school.

5. TREASURER'S UPDATE

Jill Good updated the group:

- Lynette Mitchell kindly donated £100 for allocation to the Football teams via MPiP. Sincere thanks from all at MPiP for such a kind gesture!

- Cauliflower Cards looks to have made £663.50, ever so slightly down on last year (£694) but not by much and still a fantastic sum of money generated by the kids' artwork.
- Bank paperwork will be finalised this week for the new committee.
- Jill reminded everyone to think about using the **Easy fundraising site** when doing online shopping in the run up to Christmas. Libby Davidson is taking responsibility for MPIPs use of this site and is getting some promotional materials to help introduce and remind parents to use the site. It was agreed that use of the site needs to be pushed through the Facebook page in the run up to Xmas, and also throughout the year as the amounts raised per transaction, although a small percentage, add up to large sums. It was noted that currently there are 65 people signed up for Meldrum Primary and therefore there is a huge scope to increase funds coming from this source if we can get more parents to use the site. It was suggested, and agreed that there could be a link put to the site on each email that is sent out. www.easyfundraising.org.uk

6. FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Donna Sim updated the group:

- Monies raised includes: Cauliflower cards £663.50 and Spree books £429
- **Rag bank.** There will be a big collection in December. Bags will be sent home at the end of November.
- **Halloween disco** – 285 children have bought a ticket. There will be goodie bags at the end. Some urgent communications need to go out a. Asking for more volunteers to help, particularly at the early disco (this will be via Facebook tomorrow) and one further reminder about arrangements (e.g. no coats, timings etc). Donna, Lana and Carolyn to coordinate. It was mentioned that having got the organising team and procedures in place that it might be possible to organise another disco around Valentines or Easter.
- **Xmas fair:** Stalls are all full. A call for Raffle prizes and other donations will come out soon. Santa: the previous Santa cannot do the fair. Libby to check whether her Dad would do it. There was a reminder that we need to get hold of more Xmas tattoos than last year.

It was felt by Donna that it would be worth re-evaluating some aspects of the Xmas fair in January in order to make some changes for next year. This would include possibly moving it to the first weekend of December every year, and organising a new way of organising / decorating the Santa's grotto as the current lady who does this will not be able to do it after this Xmas. Lana Duncan mentioned a possible clash between the Xmas fair and Xmas lights being on the same weekend if we move the fair to 1st weekend in December.

7. MPIP GROUP REPS UPDATE

A meeting is due to take place within the next few weeks.

8. AOB

- **Emails:** there continue to be comments by parents saying they aren't getting minutes, agendas etc. There was a brief discussion as to who holds the email

account, that there appear to be significant problems with the email account and set up which is causing problems for sending out information, and that there were likely to be a lot of expired or emails for parents of children no longer at the school. It was suggested that we re-gather email addresses to create a new system, including keeping emails in year groups in order to keep refreshing the lists as year groups move on and new year groups start. It was agreed that a slip with an explanation would go out with the next school newsletter (Lana to write and send to Carol Harper). It was also proposed that all emails from the MPiP account have links to: the Facebook site, easy fundraising and the SPTC website.

- **Football.** Craig Buchan has asked for extra funds. As the football team have a stall at the Xmas fair Helena suggested that they wait until they know how much money was raised. This was agreed by the group.
- **Fundraising:** Libby asked if there was scope for another fundraiser for the summer. A variety of suggestions were put forward including a quiz night, race night, beetle drive, bingo). Dress down Fridays: It was asked whether this might provide a fundraising opportunity. Currently these are done through the school for specific charities (e.g. sports relief) rather than through MPiP. Carol Harper suggested there might be scope for an MPiP one during the summer term. It was agreed that having a summer fundraiser was a good idea but also important to organise something for the children (summer picnic).
- **Education City:** Discussions about the relative value of Education City has been ongoing for a long period of time. MPiP pay £1700 for a package which allows the school to use it in class and for homework. These two elements don't have to be linked, there is a possibility to have a class only package. Carol Harper expressed that while it is clearly used in class, particularly in the early stages there has been a continuing theme emerging from parents about the inconsistent experience between different classes / children using it for homework. It was mentioned in the discussion that there are free access websites which could be used for specific tasks or homework if teachers wanted to keep using electronic formats. It was agreed that MPiP would continue funding the in-class package but would look at stopping the homework package for next academic year.
- **Active Schools:** It was asked what this was and where to get more information. It is run by Aberdeenshire Council with a coordinator, Abigail Sutherland, based at Meldrum Academy. The activities mainly take place at the academy. Carol Harper mentioned that any new Active Schools information is put on the blog roll of our school website, as well as occasional leaflets handed to children about specific opportunities. <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-culture/active-schools/>
- **Next meeting:** Concern was expressed that there was no planned meeting before the Christmas fair, and possibly the community cafe event if we get the go ahead. It was suggested another meeting was convened, possibly in Jocks board room as a combined social event and meeting prior to the Christmas events.

NEXT MEETING: 7pm NOVEMBER 18TH 2016, Morris Hotel!