

MPiP Minutes Tuesday 11th November 7pm, School Staff Room

ATTENDANCE

Attendees: Ruth Scott, Sam Alexander, Helena McKerron, Estelle Winward, Lesley Buchan, Libby Davidson, Kerry Marr, Kelly McWilliam, Ashley Thomas, Emma Davidson, Saran Stephen, Hazel Fraser, Carol Harper, Jane Brown, Elaine Yeats, Kathryn Michie, Leah McKinnon, Kirsten Laing

1. APOLOGIES

Donna Sim, Joanne Evans, Gary Donald, Jenny McGillivray, Michelle McClintock, Joanne Lord, Jill and Bruce Thomson, Elizabeth Buchan, Philip Michie, Rebecca McLennan, Alastair Beaton

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND UPDATES

Minutes of last meeting approved with no updates

3. MATTERS ARISING

a. Report from community council regarding road safety concerns

LM, AB and FE attended a meeting with community council, police and Philip Leiper from Aberdeenshire Council Roads Department. From parent feedback the concerns could be split into two clear areas, onsite and offsite. The offsite concerns raised were as follows.

* New speed cushions on Commercial Road do not appear to be effective – speed cushion specifications have changed recently so they are now 3 inches smaller. A speed survey after completion found that the average speed had reduced from 28.99 mph to 24.8 mph on completion of work. Aberdeenshire Council feel that the cushions serve two fold giving a reminder that it is a 20's zone and by providing an uneven bump for the unaware driver. LM noted that the speed limit on this section of road is 20mph. LM asked about speed tables but these are unsuitable as the road is a bus route.

* Traffic calming measures on Provost Florence Drive – Aberdeenshire Council have agreed to conduct speed monitoring with a view to taking action if a problem is found.

* The hedge on Commercial Road protruding onto the pavement – An ownership issue has now been resolved and Aberdeenshire Council will have responsibility of maintaining the hedge.

* Inappropriate parking on the pavement and corners of Westbank Park – Philip Leiper stated that he does not believe that the pavement is wide enough there to meet the requirements for installing pedestrian barriers. However, Aberdeenshire Council have agreed to pedestrian barriers outside the school gate. LM intends to carry out a site visit at a comparable school to compare measurements where pedestrian barriers are already in place.

We will continue to liaise with Philip Leiper, and also liaise with Joanna Stewart, the safer routes to school officer. The police have agreed to target Westbank Park again, focusing initially on education rather than enforcement. LM suggested that this be done on foot rather than in a car so that they are more effective in rush hour traffic.

It was agreed that we could do a lot to improve the problem within the school community by educating parents. Kerry Marr volunteered to help with this.

It was felt that it was worth reminding parents to please slow down on the approach to the school car park, be mindful that, for good reason, the speed limit within the car park is only 10 mph and ask that people only park within designated spaces. Drivers should not mount or park on pavements either within school grounds or on Westbank Park. This will make the route safer for pedestrians and help alleviate the frustration caused to local residents.

JB reported on Alastair Beaton's meeting regarding the school car park. There is currently no scope to increase the number of parking bays. Alastair Beaton also met with Joanna Stewart, the safer routes to schools officer, and has a long list of ideas to work on in the coming weeks. AB to provide further update in January.

b. Lunchtime activities

JB discussed plans to improve the playground experience for pupils. The process started with the '2 stars and a wish' forms during the previous session and JB is now working with the 4 P7 House Captains. The House Captains have consulted their houses and will be meeting with JB on 12/11 to form a plan.

PSA timetables have been altered and P2 have been moved to the quiet playground at lunchtime to create more space for P1 and P2. This move will be reassessed in a few weeks.

P6 Young Leaders program – PSA's will be trained to train the children so P6 can lead games for P1 and P2.

During the upcoming in-service days the PSA's will be looking at playground equipment to determine whether any repairs or replacements are required.

JB reports that a good plan should be in place by the end of the year.

House Captains were keen to continue lunchtime clubs but the teachers responsible for these were having no time to prepare for afternoon teaching so the clubs cannot run. Kerry Marr asked if parents could run lunchtime clubs. JB advised the school would be willing to explore this. The parent would need to be PVG checked.

4. HEAD TEACHER'S UPDATE – JB in Alastair Beaton's absence

School Roll

Despite a bit of pupil movement over the last month or so, our roll remains constant at 370 children in the Primary.

As mentioned at our last meeting, the Nursery is full, all 96 spaces having been allocated. However, it is quite likely that the Authority will be looking to increase our Nursery capacity, at least for the remainder of this school year. Nothing concrete as yet and I'll update on this at our January meeting.

So far this term no children have been allocated spaces in our Extended Nursery Provision, so we have continued our Nursery – Primary transition/support, with Nursery Nurses timetabled to work in P1 and P2 classes on average three days per week.

Staffing

Although all of our class teacher posts are currently fine, we do still have some posts waiting to be filled:

* Interviews for our Support for Learning teacher (Mrs Main's post) go ahead next Thursday, 20th November, so I'm hopeful of having a new teacher in post from January. We have been without our full Support for Learning hours (three and a half days per week) since December 2013.

* We currently have a PSA vacancy for 20 hours per week (fixed term until the end of December) for additional support in our Enhanced Provision. This is currently being covered by a supply PSA. The advert closed on Sunday night and interviews will be held next Friday, 21st November. I'm currently in discussions with our Quality Improvement Officer, Sheila Marr, and the Additional Support Needs Manager to have this additionality extended to the summer holidays.

* Since the start of this term we have been without permanent Management Relief for Miss Fraser, our Principal Teacher, in Nursery. In the short term we are able to cover this internally with other Nursery staff but it's not a long term, sustainable solution. The advert for this post closes on 23rd November and I'm hoping to have an appointment in place for January.

* As the year progresses we will have two teachers going on maternity leave. With the continued shortage of teachers applying for posts it's very likely that both Jane Brown and Carol Harper will become class committed over the course of the year.

Rising Roll Issues

We continue to be proactive in this area.

* Last term we met with the School Meal Service, Robertsons and Aberdeenshire Facilities Officer, Ed McGann, to look at serving options to help ensure we get all 370 children served in good time over the lunch hour. As mentioned in a note home to parents just before the October break, we have tweaked the lunch hour slightly – our two P3 classes are now with the P4-7s outside at 12.30 pm and joining the lunch time rota of classes coming in to the dining hall at regular intervals from 12.38 – 1.10 pm. This new system has been in place since we returned from the October break and is working well.

* Before the October hols I met with Ed McGann and Robertsons to discuss parking congestion in the school grounds. I was advised that there was no scope to increase the number of parking bays in our car park. I'm now liaising with Safer Routes to School Officer, Joanna Stewart on ways to take things forward. I'll update Parent Council in January.

* We're currently exploring a number of options in the infant playground. As mentioned in the first newsletter of this term, we will be painting lines on the infant playground to give the children more space when lining up and for teachers to safely hand over children at the end of the school day. We're just waiting for our playground paint order to arrive before putting this in place. We're also looking at making use of the quiet playground area behind the school for P2 children at lunchtime. Last week's bad weather meant that we didn't get to trial this as much as we had hoped. We shall be trialling this again this week before making a final decision. If we do make changes, we'll notify parents in the next newsletter.

* As mentioned previously, this summer sees our Computer Suite being converted to create a 16th classroom. I'm meeting with the Council's ICT Officer, Graeme Slapp, next Friday 21st November to look at replacing the 30+ computers in our suite with laptops, and ensuring that the school has the wi-fi bandwidth to cope with the increased usage by classes across the school.

* I have a meeting scheduled with Robertsons, Ed McGann, our QIO Sheila Marr, and Graeme Slapp from ICT for Thursday 15th January 2015 to begin planning the summer works for the new 16th classroom.

Configuration of the School Day

I have written to our new Head of Service, Andy Griffiths, to request permission to consult with parents and staff on the reconfiguration of the school day. If authorised to proceed, we shall begin a consultation

process early in 2015 with a view to any agreed changes to the start/finish of the school day and any changes to the school lunch hour coming in to effect from August 2015.

Climbing Wall

Finally, I return to the issue of the Climbing Wall – installed with lottery funding through the Active Schools programme. The wall has now been out of use for three school years and I have been pushing at regular intervals since 2011 for works to be carried out to refurbish the wall for the children's use at break times and during the school day as part of the 2 hours of physical activity expected by the Scottish Government. In February I was promised that remedial work would be carried out as a matter of priority to get the wall back in daily use. I've subsequently been told that any works will be carried out when funding becomes available. I would like to ask MPiP to write to the Authority, adding their weight to my requests for the wall to be repaired as soon as possible.

KL asked if there were any plans to resurface the playground. A survey has been requested and will be carried out in due course.

There has been no progress regarding the vandalism within the school grounds.

5. TREASURER'S UPDATE

Alex Rose raised £450 for MPiP by competing in the Lairig Ghru Race. He intends to compete again next year.

Current bank balance £9642.

Cauliflower Cards has raised £709, an increase on last year.

This year's Christmas Fayre has already raised funds with 18 stalls signed up.

3 Rag Bag collection so far this year have brought in £304.80.

Spree books £555, up £230 from last year.

House t-shirts £124.80 with more sales possible throughout the year.

JB requested funds to purchase sweets and drink for school Christmas parties. This was approved and will be approximately £50.

6. FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Cauliflower Cards has raised £709. Big thanks to Lynn Paterson and Wendy Probert who coordinated this.

Christmas Fayre – this year we are trying to source raffle prizes from parents' employers rather than local businesses. There has been a slow response to this but a few parents mentioned that they would have a prize to hand in. If you will be able to provide a raffle prize please contact Donna Sim (thesims25@btinternet.com) so she can prepare the stall. Bottles and chocolates are slowly coming in but more donations would be welcomed. All donations can be handed in to the School Office. 30-35 volunteers are required for smooth running of the event. Currently there are only 19 or 20 volunteers so more are required. If you are able to help, please contact Elaine Yeats (elaineyeats@tiscali.co.uk). MPiP has requested the use of the Rainbow Room for Santa's Grotto. The school recorder group may play – JB to look into this. The school violin group is double booked so cannot attend. MPiP requested the teachers donate a voucher for a raffle prize as they did last year.

Easy Fundraising – a website which allows you to raise money for MPiP through your normal online shopping. Since signing up at the start of October, we have 24 supporters and have raised £32.91. An information leaflet will be distributed soon. A label company provides a similar service – LM to look into this.

7. MPiP GROUP REPS REPORT

The role has been streamlined and renamed MPiP Group Reps with slightly fewer representatives from Early, Middle and Upper stages rather than each individual year.

The group reps have sent out emails about Christmas raffle prizes. Limited response so far so the group reps will continue to promote this. An email regarding Easyfundraising was also sent out and the service has 12 new users since then.

The group have been discussing how to improve the role and welcome all suggestions.

8. AOB

2 parents noted a feeling of poor communication between MPiP and parents, particularly with respect to the Halloween Party not being held this year. LM explained the MPiP email distribution list process and mentioned that Meldrum School Facebook Page and the School website are also good sources of information for anyone who wishes to be informed. It was felt that there had not been enough notice given to plan the Halloween Party so preparations for the 2015 Halloween Party will be discussed before the summer break.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 14th January 2015, 7pm, School Staff Room