

MINUTES

Glenurquhart Primary School

Parent Council

Tuesday, 24 January 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Lynn Milton (Chairperson)
Fiona Knotts (Vice Chairperson)
Nichola Christie (Treasurer)
Janet Murchison (Secretary)
Mrs K Laird (Head Teacher)
Lisa Cetiner; Audrey Graesser; Julie MacLeod; Corrine McCallum; Sally McCloskey; Felix McGonigle;
Michael Thorp; Lorraine Young;

Apologies: Hugh Montague; Miss K Mullin (Principal Teacher)

1. Apologies

Noted.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2016 were approved and seconded.

3. Fundraising

- (i) **Ceilidh** - The family ceilidh would take place on Saturday, 4 March in the Blairbeg Hall. Ticket price £5 for adults/£2.50 for children. Hot food would be available with catering preparation taking place the night before at Audrey's home. A licence had been purchased to allow the sale of raffle tickets and Sally had received a number of good quality prizes from local businesses. Janet would ask Hamish Drennan if he would be available to play his bagpipes as people arrived and the highland dancers would also give a display. The Inver Ross band would provide music and had very kindly discounted their fee. Posters would be displayed around the locality with posts also been sent to local business Facebook pages.
- (ii) **Outdoor learning area** - work on the trim trail was well underway and was being installed by Morgan Sindall, the company building the school kitchen extension. Mrs Laird had ordered benches for use in an outdoor classroom. Volunteers were being sought to help with a 'Groundforce Day' which would involve painting, preserving, tidying up during the last weekend of March.

4. Treasurer's Report

The current balance was £3496.72.

5. Head Teacher's Report (see Appendix)

- (i) **school handbook** - this was now on the school's website and Mrs Laird would appreciate feedback from parents
- (ii) **school's performance data** - performance data had been gathered for P1, P4 and P7 pupils and the results gave cause for concern. Further staff training was taking place.
- (iii) **Composite classes** - most likely all classes will be composite in Session 2017/18. Mrs Laird would be writing to all parents to advise how the classes would be made up based on age, gender, ability.
- (iv) **Parent workshop** - there had been a disappointing response to the uptake of the parent

workshop. It was suggested that at Parents' Evenings a questionnaire could be distributed to parents to gain their feedback and help them engage with the school.

- (v) **P7 residential trip** - a review was taking place as to the format and location of residential trips and parent would shortly be consulted about this. There was also the possibility of joining with other P7 classes from the ASG (Associated Schools Group).
- (vi) **change to school hours** - it was highly likely that Highland Council's desire to see all schools in the region work a 4.5 day week would take effect from next Session. Transport arrangements had yet to be finalised with regard to schools in the Glenurquhart catchment area.

6. Matters Arising

- (i) **School Facebook page** - there were mixed feelings as to whether this would be a useful tool for parents. Lynn **agreed** to investigate further.
- (ii) **Parent Council as a registered charity** - Janet had looked into this and received the following advice from the Scottish Parent Teacher Council: *"While it is attractive to see how charities can apply for more funding etc, charity status also places a burden on the organisation in terms of reporting and accounting which can be onerous. Our advice is always to think very carefully about applying for charity status as, while you are keen and capable, you have no idea who will follow you into your role in a few years. There is no guarantee that the enthusiasm and ability will be sustained. Many groups in your situation set up a separate charity, which also means you can tap into a wider talent pool for your trustees, whose purpose is to support a particular project or the school generally."*
After discussion it was **agreed** not to pursue this at present.
- (iii) **governance review** - now closed.
- (iv) **electronic communication with parents** - need to keep reminding parents to use the school's website for information. The Parent Council wished to record its thanks to all the staff for their endeavours in updating blogs etc and for the attractive way in which information was presented. Staff training was ongoing to help those who were less familiar with the technology.
- (v) **janitorial services** - this would now come under Highland Council's Development and Infrastructure Department.

7. Any Other Business

Lynn had received a letter re Energy Savings at Schools. Mrs Laird was already aware of this campaign and working on it eg no paper newsletters.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday, 23 March 2017 at 6.30 pm

A P P E N D I X

HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

Parent Council 24.1.17

School Handbook – now online – has to be published by the start of December each year. Feedback sought to me – how to involve parents in it?

School Performance Data – Achievement of CfE Level Information published by government in December. This was the first year this data had been gathered. Data shows only 20-30% of children in P1, P4 and P7 combined were achieving levels – which is not a good reflection of the school and causes serious questions. Obviously, I wasn't here at the time however, in speaking with staff, they felt they were reluctant to say a level had been achieved and be able to evidence/justify this to the government. Further training is taking place this session to support this – completing an Authority programme on assessment and evidence. Also, working within ASG on pathways and progressions to set standards. Benchmarks are also in draft form from the government to support teacher decisions.

Composite Class Policy – With our school role forecasts, it is likely that we will be looking at composite classes for majority, if not all, classes next year. With this in mind, it is important that I consult with parents on our policy for forming composite classes. I would appreciate your thoughts on the best way to do this? Composites formed on age alone (my understanding is Highland Council policy – to consult with them for this) can cause difficulty with gender, ability – making children an individual, additional support needs. I would like to consider:- educational development, attainment levels, additional support needs, personal and social development, chronological age and gender. Taking age as a starting place – require consultation and policy development.

Engaging with parents in the best way – At our planned parent workshop last term, only 1 parent and then half way through another turned up. I am keen to work with parents to get their opinions and so they can feed in to school evaluation and improvement. As part of 'How Good is Our School 4' a very good school engages with all parents. Obviously, this has to involve a variety of ways. Thoughts on the best way to do this – workshops, questionnaires, parents night idea, question at end of parent council, question at end of each newsletter?, online survey – other ideas/feedback. How to review school aims? Working group?

Other points:

P7 residential – discussed at last meeting the possibility of residential every second year (P6 and 7) and going with ASG schools. Difficulties staffing this? Costs? Also, whether we go for city break or back to Loch Insh – to gauge opinion.

4 ½ Day Week - letters were issued from the High School this week regarding the possibility of 4 ½ day week next year. This will affect us and I will be updating all parents in the newsletter at the end of this month of this possibility. There are still a lot of unanswered questions that need clarification before this can go ahead and I am awaiting reply from heads of service on these.