

Parent Council, Fossoway Primary School

Minutes of meeting held on 18 November 2020

Present: Jim Pritchard (treasurer), Christina Smith (chair), Adelaide Carlow (co-secretary), Sadie Watson (vice chair), Lorna Hayes, Barbara Cassels, Fiona Allan, Tim Haines

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies - Katherine Wallace, Natalie Harrower, Zoe Walthall

2. Minutes of previous meeting - a true record.

KW sent a note to Christina to say that the previous meeting's minutes, have been sent round the PC, but still need to be sent out to all the parents formally.

Minutes proposed by AC seconded by CS

3. Matters arising CS

- *Community Council Link* - there was a comment on their minutes of 2 November, to say that changes on A977 might not be completed this financial year because of restraints due to COVID
- *School exclusion zone* - no further news apart from the email that CS had previously forwarded to the PC, which came from Darrel at the Traffic and Networks Team at PKC on 23 September: *"The signs will be activated closer to the end of the year so restrictions will not occur until everyone has been informed and the appropriate people have applied for their permits. An application form will be sent prior to the temporary traffic regulation order being implemented this will include guidance notes on how to apply. We will work with the schools and communities to identify and promote locations away from schools where parents can park; this will disperse the cars over a wider area than at present. Deliveries and emergency vehicles would be permitted."*
- *PC members* - Isla Kerr has requested to step down from council for time being. Zoe Walthall's continued membership was undetermined at the time of meeting [since then AC has spoken to Zoe and she would like to remain on the council on the understanding that with a new baby she is unlikely to be able to make the next two meetings. AC sent Zoe and her new baby Merlin lots of warm wishes from the PC!]

4. Financial update and online banking update

JP - we have been paid allocated amount from PKC. JP sent the following report via email:

"I have recently taken over from Susan Darby as treasurer, so need to change the registered address with the bank. The most recent statement reads £2,432.36. PKC confirmed in a letter to Christina dated 27 October that they have paid £437.00 into the account but [without access to statements] I've not been able to check this. Unless there have been other transactions on the account (e.g. interest), the current balance will be £2,869.36."

Possible spending ideas

FA suggested annual School App fee, which is c. £450-500. All in agreement re this expense. Further ideas: payment in the future for SEESAW app, more on this below. SW put forward a suggestion for money to be considered for digital learning - has the school looked into it, or identified specific digital tools that it need funds for? SW - attached a link from KHS raising awareness of use of digital tools in wider world, and it might be worth looking at if we want to be ahead of the game moving forward. Thanks to COVID we need a digital strategy even more than we did last year when it was raised as an idea. It would be a good exercise to think about how we might use this and what the risks of doing so are. FA noted that lots of digital software is free for schools just now.

5. Seesaw update:

This app has been used lower down the school for learning profiles and communications. It has been temporarily suspended for reasons to do with data protection. The paid version means that data will be stored in UK. PKC has come up with a strategy to join smaller schools together to enable shared costs. PTA are going to pay for Fossoway's share this year. But the PC might consider helping us with this in future years. SEESAW has proved to be a successful way of communicating and we anticipate rolling it up the school as children go into the upper classes.

6. Headteachers input

FA - It is nice to see everyone, we are doing well. No open events and visitors, masks in school - difficult times, both in school and in staff meetings having to be so careful and so distanced whilst at the same time discussing teamwork... But we are keeping spirits up, and feeling proud. We are keeping everyone safe and kids are taking to it well for the most part.

See attached HT report.

Parent contact sessions

KW sent a note via the Chair to say that having been sceptical about the format of the parent's night, she felt really positive about the contact sessions by phone and was impressed with good communication from school to home generally.

FA noted there had been some positive feedback about the contact sessions too, and CS agreed.

Staff news

There has had to be a reshuffle of some teaching posts due to Mrs Cummings announcing her pregnancy and having to be safe in a COVID world. CS noted our wholehearted congratulations to Mrs Cummings - we all wish her a safe and happy pregnancy.

Christmas

There will be restrictions but the school will try and do as much as they can. Can't do shows or church service, but each class will be doing something on sway to send out. SW suggested a outdoor church based art project from the school? Artistic contribution to church scenery, for families to visit independently creating a link between school, church community and families. FA the school will think about this, and is also planning on supporting Janet Harper and the Light up Fossoway Christmas project.

FA mentioned The PlayPen Cafe, a local social enterprise supporting the elderly, which will involve Fossoway children getting involved in writing and giving cards to the elderly and isolated.

CS suggested looking at Light up christmas, which looks like a nice project. CS offered to forward information about this to the school from the Scripture Union.

Breakfast club

BC spoke on behalf of the committee of Safe Start/Breakfast Club. "We need promotion of it - it is all going quite well, we are hoping for feedback from parents. Emma and Isla are doing a brilliant job. Numbers are okay but more would be welcome." FA offered to include it in next newsletter and BC and FA put out a general call to parents and children who use this service to offer feedback for this.

School improvement plan

SW asked what it would prioritise this year.

FA the school improvement plan has changed after COVID changed so many priorities. We have a short term improvement plan re health and wellbeing. Also on feedback and learner conversations (where children look at their work, and reflect on their achievements, and discuss pieces of previous work with their teachers) up until Christmas although this will carry on beyond that.

Then there will be a new development plan from January til June. In the pipeline is a focus on two working groups: one on writing and the other on learning through play.

Dyslexia support

SW asked if the proposed focus on supporting dyslexia that had been a priority was still going to be followed through. FA responded that inclusion was an ongoing focus, but not a listed priority on the school improvement plan. It is not up there as a key priority but it doesn't mean they are not developing it. SW emphasised that many parents' wish for this to remain the highest priority for the school. FA mentioned that PKC is offering new guidance and tools on dyslexia at the moment so pathways are changing.

7. Challenge questions - Curriculum rationale

FA mentioned that as well as a nation-wide understanding of the CfE, there is the idea that we need to have a local rationale to make sure we understand what our school is, does, and could do. We ought to have a rationale behind our curriculum that is unique to and local to Fossoway Primary School. The challenge questions were offered, and then discussed.

- What do we want to do and achieve?
- What makes us unique or could make us unique?
- What are our key drivers that should be shaping our way forward?

What makes FPS unique?

SCHOOL SIZE

CS suggested that our size, compared to larger schools, means that Fossoway feels like a family environment, which allows for parents to get to know each other. Although right now parents connecting with each other is largely missing. But the fact that we are all missing it shows what we normally have on offer - a place where everybody knows everybody, with a positive and friendly atmosphere.

JP agreed.

GREAT STAFF

BC staff are friendly and approachable, across the board. Even when they are not your child's teacher.

SW a good gender balance in the teaching dept which is so fortunate. Teachers all quite different and have something different to offer. What they all bring in to the mix is a big asset.

OUTWARD INFRASTRUCTURE

SW the infrastructure is unique - some parts scruffy (but scruffy has some good implications e.g. relaxed, kids are more likely to be given permission to be artistic and creative (SW shared her visions of a glorious papier maché project) and the playing field is a massive asset.

IDYLIC SETTING

AC outdoor paths and setting, so beautiful and rural and idyllic thanks to Jane Wallace's gardening skills, and the horses and wee bridge alongside the road coming from County Fabrics. Whichever direction there is so much to enjoy if you travel on foot or by bike to reach Fossoway PS.

INVOLVED PARENTS

CS speaking to friends in Kinross, we have a PC and a PTA that are very well supported, with numbers comparable to equivalent groups in Kinross where the school is four times \ the size. So an enthusiastic and involved parent community.

SW we all have Specific skill sets that are being utilised, including music, art and teaching. CS highlighted the good link with all parents.

HEART OF COMMUNITY

FA at school they have recognised the benefit and responsibility they have with being geographically located at the heart of the community - it is harder to fulfil the responsibility this lays on them at the moment - they are asking how can we be better linked to the community, due to our location .

SET UP OF EARLY YEARS AREA

FA They have agreed in school that the way that the early years entrance and schooling takes place within the same sharing space from Nursery up to P3 is a lovely aspect of the early years - connecting families from both these areas of the school.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Learning through play has been a success (AC)

FA agreed: next steps are to review experiential learning throughout the school.

Key drivers going forward

DIVERSITY

SW - not enough diversity. So helping children to see the world outside, ongoing cultural experience that inner city children automatically get. How can we compensate for that. What is the global community that their generation is part of? To avoid being too parochial. AC seconded what SW just said - inspired!
FA agreed and talked about their current mission of sustainability and sustainable goals, which covers so many things including people and planet.

BOUNDARIES

SW To be really unique, lets deviate from the rationale by creating better boundaries and stricter timetables and structures. Although you have to be dynamic and flexible to have a curriculum to suit all learners, what about being more timetabled, clearer with expectations, and more ambitious re subject matters, behaviour, quality of work with the intention of raising the bar. FA suggested that this ties in with feedback and learner conversations - so children are really showing ambition and understanding their next steps. FA and TH timetabling shouldn't affect the quality of work. It goes against CfE which focuses on needs of class in front of you.
SW wondered if older classes and especially P7 might cope well with higher expectations and raise their standards?
FA There are four separate contexts for learning: interdisciplinary learning, personal achievement, discrete curriculum areas and life and ethos of school. Planning for these areas is flexible. SW we could have those four areas and have them within a more clear structure.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

AC Expressive arts could be a key driver going forwards since it is so sorely lacking during funding cuts and with COVID restricting things even further. FA Expressive arts is being recognised as something that needs to be given focus in the near future, though it is very difficult just now. FA on a positive note there has been a surge in uptake to learn woodwind in P5-7

8. AOCB

Strategy re COVID

SW asked re likelihood of closures due to COVID and any related plans. FA there is a real possibility we might end up having a 2 week isolation for one class or whole school. Suggestion that in this case the school would probably use similar strategies to the previous lockdown re communicating and remote-teaching but that it is an ever-changing situation.

Next meetings: Wednesday 17 February, 6.30pm
 Wednesday 12 May 6.30pm

Please note:

PC agendas and minutes are circulated to parents by email from the school office and a copy is available on the wall in the school reception area. All parents are welcome to raise an issue, attend PC meetings as observers and/or to join the Parent Council. Either contact a member of the PC in person, or email fossowayparentcouncil@gmail.com - we'd be glad to hear from you.