

Chairperson's Report – AGM 2020-2021

I welcome you to Robert Owen Primary School Parent Council AGM and I am delighted to present my report for the school session 2020-2021.

I started my last report by saying that the 2019-2020 school session was a year like no other and 2020-2021 has followed on from this, bringing about more challenges for all in the school community and indeed for us as a Parent Council. Nevertheless, we have tried to move forward in as part of our "new normal." 5 zoom meetings were held over the course of the year with this meeting being our 6th. Meetings have taken place on Tuesday or Thursday. Attendance has varied from 9-13 parents with the school being represented by the senior leadership team and class teachers. Unfortunately, we have not welcomed any new parent members to date this year, although parents have been invited to all meetings and we have shared all information through the school Twitter page and website. We have continued our meetings in the same format as previously, alternating school business and parent council business and including an active agenda where parents are invited to put items forward to the agenda.

Parental engagement has been a focus for us the past couple of years and is something we have continued to be mindful of this session although we have not been able to involve parents in the way we usually do. We have an up-to-date visible section on the school website. We have provided termly newsletters and we introduced Parent Council Challenges. The response to the challenges has been somewhat disappointing however it was lovely to see the work of the children who did take part in the challenges and it was particularly lovely to join forces with the House Captains for our challenge in March.

As the school has focused on recovery, we have not had the opportunities we would usually have to work with Mrs Thomson on school improvement this year. Mrs Thomson, however has kept us updated with the work of the school and we heard from Mrs McCallum in November about how ROMPS are using the Emotion Works programme to support the health and wellbeing of its pupils. In March, we also heard from guest speaker Iain Mulholland about the work CNS are doing to improve outcomes for youngsters in Lanark. In addition to this, I have attended regular Parent Council Chair meetings held by Tony McDaid and Des Dickson which have been beneficial in keeping us informed with progress and next steps at council level.

This is the section of the report where I would normally outline the events we have held this year and the subsequent contributions we have made. Unfortunately, we have been unable to hold any events this year due to restrictions. I am sure you will all agree that we have missed the buzz of movie nights, the atmosphere of the Christmas gift sale and more generally the opportunity to be part of the school and see the children of ROMPS. We very much look forward to the time we are able to organise and run events in some form again.

We were, however, able to take part in Borders Biscuits sales in December in association with Lanark Rotary. Due to demand from various organisations within Lanark, sales were limited but it was still nice to be involved in this partnership. We had our first experience of bank transfer payments when selling the biscuits and all went smoothly with this which allows us to consider this for future events. Thanks again to those who helped with the organisation and deliveries of biscuit sales.

Although we unable to run our final fundraiser of the previous session, session 2019-2020, we still had a successful financial year that year which thankfully allowed us to meet a number of our usual commitments this year. We have:

- Purchased a virtual Pantomime which was watched by all pupils in December.
- Contributed £150 towards the cost of Yearbooks for the P7 pupils.
- Purchased ties for our P7 leavers.
- Purchased gym bags for our P1 entrants.

Unfortunately, as we were unable to fundraise, we were unable to make a Christmas donation to each class this year.

Bronwen, Vicky D and I formed a sub-group to look at external funding sources. We met twice this year and will continue to meet (all welcome to join us) to hopefully begin to apply for external funding as sources start to open up more. Thank you to Bronwen and Vicky for giving up additional time to spend on this.

As per SLC requirements, we have produced a Parent Council Privacy Statement this year which is available on the school website and will be shared any time we collect information. Thanks to Susan and Joan for their work on this.

Looking forward, I have no doubt that 2021-2022 will be a challenging year for the Parent Council particularly in terms of finances. We will begin to look forward later in this meeting at how we may move forward to provide those “extras” for the pupils of ROMPS that we work so hard for.

As we move closer towards “normality” we can discuss and review how we proceed with meetings. Fingers crossed we will see some new faces join us in 2021-2022.

As I draw to a close, I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to my fellow Parent Council members who have given their time and support during the last year. I must express particular thanks to Gareth for the impeccable work he does with the finances and to Bronwen for the time and attention she gives to the minutes. I am very grateful for the work Gareth and Bronwen do as part of their roles but also for the support they give to me as part of mine. A further thanks must be expressed to Miss McAllister for the time she spends sharing our information, it is very much appreciated on top of your workload. Thanks must also be passed on to Mrs Thomson and the staff of ROMPS who have supported, guided, nurtured and educated our children throughout another very difficult year.

As you know Susan G is stepping down from the role of Vice Chair this year. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Susan for the contributions she has made in the roles of fundraising officer and vice chair over the last 3 years and most recently for drafting our privacy statement. Susan received flowers from the committee as a token of our thanks.

Laura M is also stepping down this year as her youngest son moves on to High School. Laura will be greatly missed in the committee and by the committee. On top of organising the lets for all our meetings and events, Laura does so much work for all events we hold and the support she has given to the school and Parent Council will be a huge loss as Laura moves on. Laura received a gift of flowers as a token of our gratitude for her commitment to ROMPS Parent Council.

As a Parent Council, we look forward to working with and supporting ROMPS in the year ahead.