

## Balhousie Parent Council,

1pm, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020,

### Minutes

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies:

- In attendance (virtual meeting via Zoom): Fiona Whittet (FW) Head Teacher; Lianne Gibb (LiG), Staff representative; Heather Tough (HT), Chair; Lynn Gibson (LyG), Treasurer; Danielle Shepherd; Lisa Buist (LB), Eilidh Stirling (ES)
- Apologies were received from Neschka Martin (NM), Secretary.

#### 2. Previous minutes

- The previous minutes were approved by LB and ES

#### 3. Chairman Report and matters arising:

- HT welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Recruitment for the new Head Teacher for North Muirton Primary School was successfully concluded in March and Annabelle Burns was appointed. LyG represented Balhousie Primary School Parent Council on the interview panel. Parent Council thanks to LyG was noted.
- Signatories were successfully added to the RBS account at the end of March and RBS credited the account with £200 to recognise the bank error in the delay with processing the new signatories.
- It has not been possible to monitor the amount of traffic approaching the school at the start and end of the school day due to the COVID-19 Lockdown measures, but the Council are intending to close the section of Balhousie Street between Balhousie Avenue and Muirton Place so HT submitted, in her comments on the Council's planned road changes in Perth, a suggestion that Muirton Place approaching Balhousie Primary School could be closed except for resident access, staff/contractor access and delivery access. Alice Arnott, I-Bike, is joining a group that will discuss transport around the school.
- HT attended a virtual Parent Council Chairs meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020. She provided a note of the meeting:

#### **Parent Council Chairs meeting 6pm 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Given the increased use and success of virtual meetings for a variety of meetings throughout the Council, PKC are looking at the possibility of Parent Council Chair meetings being a blend of physical attendance and Teams in future, to maximise attendance.

Sheena Devlin introduced the meeting.

8 double-sided sheets of questions were received prior to the meeting and as it is impossible to answer all of them at the meeting, there will be an FAQ section added to the PKC website for parents and Parent Council members to refer to as time goes on. Specific questions for schools will go direct to Head Teachers.

There will be ongoing communication and consultation, mostly on a school by school basis.

The PKC Education Recover Plan will be based on the Scottish Government guidance, then on a school by school basis. The Council is looking at how to get as many pupils back to school from 11<sup>th</sup> August, but not necessarily all on that date as it has to be in a way that is safe for all.

There is a Scottish Government Strategic Framework available to read here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/excellent-equity-during-covid-19-pandemic-strategic-framework-reopening-schools-early-learning-childcare-provision-scotland/pages/6/>

which is based on the most up-to-date advice.

Within the Chief Medical Officer Advisory Group, there is a minority that believe it would be safe to allow all pupils to return in August with no social distancing, etc, but the Scottish Government went with the majority of the CMOAG who believe it is best not to put all pupils back to school at the same time.

There are 3 phases for schools:

Phase 1 – schools open to staff from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. PKC are working with Tayside Contracts, etc, to make schools safe for re-opening. Certain criteria have to be met for insurance. School-specific Risk Assessments have to be done. Staff returns to school will begin in a measured way from week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

It is hoped that ‘transitional experiences’ will be offered to pupils who are transitioning from nursery to P1 and from P7 to S1 – this information and any activities will be school specific. It is hope that those identified as having Additional Support Needs will be offered the opportunity for enhanced transition.

Children’s Activity Centres (Hubs) will continue over the summer:

10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 is an in-service day.

11<sup>th</sup> August 2020 is the return to school for some.

Models may look different from school to school but the aim is for as great a level of equity as possible.

There are national standards for cleaning in the Hubs which will be transferred to schools.

We all need patience and forbearance because, although the closure and non-attendance to school has been challenging, it was not on the same scale as re-opening schools under the COVID-19 cloud, which is an even greater challenge. The Council cannot say that what they’re working with will not change – the situation means that things may change suddenly and quickly and it is impossible to say what those changes might be.

Some Chairs asked about the possibility of live-streaming lessons to those still at home and about the use of portacabins at schools to aid increased numbers of pupils returning (answers to these will either be on FAQ section of PKC website or be school specific).

Ms Devlin handed over to Bernadette Scott.

Ms Scott reported that 270 children are attending Hubs across PKC or with Partner Providers.

Good progress was being made on the Expansion of Early Learning (1140). 2000 applications were received and progressed, but it has all stalled due to COVID-19.

It is unlikely that families will receive their full 1140 offer at this stage.

A lot of learning has been taken from the Hubs –

- there is a programme of staff inductions that covers safety, cleaning, distancing, etc.

- Risk Assessments and what needs to be included
- Infection Control Guidance, etc.

They are in the process of creating a video to pass onto schools.

Ms Scott handed over to Gill Doogan who spoke about Recovery Planning.

There has been a lot of digital learning but some schools have also provided paper-based learning through pick-up boxes.

The Centre is working very closely with external service providers to get schools ready and safe.

There are 5 key areas:

**Environment:** Physical distancing, moving around buildings, where children will eat, outdoor space use, getting buildings ready.

**Curriculum:** a blended approach to learning – looking at the best options for this on a school by school basis. Focus on Health and Wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, core numeracy/literacy, supporting children with the new normal.

**Children and Family Support**

**Support for Staff**

**Communication:** the PKC website will be updated with FAQs but parents should communicate directly with schools on specifics.

They will look at family groups and try to ensure that all members of one family are in school at the same time, but they cannot take friendship groups into account.

There is a national definition of ‘blended learning’ – it is not just a case of some at school and some at home, there will also be different types of learning – paper, digital, active, etc.

Donald McLeod spoke about the situation for secondary schools.

Sheena Devlin spoke again

Pupil support plans will be updated to take blended learning into account.

There is a £25-50 million deficit in PKC.

- Schools will not be individually responsible for additional transport costs or cleaning, etc. Certain costs will be picked up by the Council.
- Some schools may use PEF funding differently and have been given the green light to do so – e.g. funding for online apps to support learning, etc.
- £30 million has been provided nationally for laptops (PKC usually receives between 2% and 2.5% of national funding). PKC has already purchased 300 devices for lending out to pupils ahead of receiving the funding.

Fiona McKay – Inclusion Manager

Many families will have seen a significant change in their financial situation.

Many ASN children have had their routines significantly changed.

There are re-engagement/transition challenges.

Enhanced transitions – familiar approaches that schools have previously used will be used in addition to new videos.

Focus groups will be set up to engage parents in :

- Learning for children who are shielding
- ASN transitions
- Inclusion group

The initial focus on returning to school will be on relationships and getting back into the school norm.

Concerns about gaps in learning – we need to acknowledge the learning that has gone on and schools will pick up the gaps as time goes on.

The decision about whether school uniform will be enforced will be left up to individual schools. PKC does not advocate the need to boil wash clothes – the clothing will shrink.

There is no need for repeat years due to COVID19

Social distancing will be suspended for fire alarms to ensure everyone gets out of the building as quickly and safely as possible.

There were 6 tests on people within the Hubs – all were negative. There have been no cases of COVID19 in the Hubs.

The end of term is still 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020.

There will be support for Safe Routes to School.

\*(There needs to be a Balhousie Parent Council discussion about maintaining safe routes and minimising the use of cars).

The Council gave its thanks to teachers for everything they have done to keep the pupils going.

#### **4. Head Teacher Report:**

- School roll: 91 pupils: p1 – 20 pupils, p2/3 – 17 pupils, p3/4 – 20 pupils, p5/6 19 pupils, p7 – 16 pupils. There are 26 p7s leaving, 5 pupils moving to other schools and 20 new pupils coming into p1.
- When returning to school in August, under the COVID-19 Recovery Plan guidance, there needs to be 4m<sup>2</sup> per pupil in each classroom, which is why only half of each class is able to be in school at one time. Guidance is constantly changing and emerging as is the nature of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Balhousie Primary School will follow the guideline Recovery Plan as laid out by Perth & Kinross Council. Balhousie Primary School's specific Recovery Plan has been submitted to the Council for approval – this covers our plans for distancing and infection control, etc. This recovery plan will be followed by the school until we are informed otherwise.
- There will be 2 set in-school learning days per child. Notification will go out to families about which days their child will be attending once the Council and HMI have looked at the recovery plans for all Council areas.
- All nursery children will be in 5 days.
- FW noted that she understands that parents need more information, but she can only give information as she gets it. The next update from the Council is next week. She re-iterated what Sheena Devlin (Executive Director of Education and Child Services, PKC) has said: schools are not in a position to suit parents' individual needs.

- Every school needs to cater for a Hub to allow for children to be looked after 5 days a week if parents are key or critical workers. Teachers/support staff/ECPs will all need childcare for their primary-aged children.
- Children who attend the Hub will do so on days that they are not timetabled to be in school for class-time. Support staff will be looking after the children in the Hubs.
- There will probably be no visiting specialists to the school for the time-being, both to minimise the number of people coming into the school, but also because they will be allocated to other schools for teaching.
- The Parent and Family Team are likely to be out of their office for the time being.
- Teaching staff are working very hard to make sure everything works as best as possible for August. Support staff are in school to prepare it for August and the teachers are disinfecting their classrooms.
- There is a national directive to use outdoor space as much as possible, so there will be lots of outdoor learning.
- PPE arrived in school this week.
- There are 2 school funds: The Devolved School Management Budget (DSM) which is used for teaching salaries, jotters, etc and has been used this year to purchase a pencil case and contents (writing pencils, colouring pencils, rubber, glue stick, etc) for every child in school; and the School Fund which is raised by the school for the school and pays for extras such as buses for school trips etc.
- FW said she is currently working on the Standards and Quality Report which will go out to parents next week.

#### **5. Treasurer's Reports/ Finance Report:**

- Income: £200 from RBS.
- Outgoings: £397 for library hosting and £71 for p7 leaving gifts (calculators)
- Balance: £981.51
- FW noted her thanks to the Parent Council for the calculators for the p7s. The P7s will be invited to the playground in small groups for a socially distanced farewell from their teachers and a gift. It will be a small send off, but it is the best that can be done under the circumstances.
- It was agreed that teachers will ask pupil's what to spend the money in the Parent Council account on. It could be things such as painted markings on the playground floor for (socially distanced) games. We could buy some masonry paint and paint it onto the playground ourselves. DS mentioned that there is a very good independent DIY store called Jac's on Arran Road where we might be able to get paint. Bannermans may also be a good place to try.

#### **6. AOCB**

The Parent Council gave thanks to the teachers and staff at Balhousie for all their hard work during the year, but particularly during lockdown.

#### **7. Next Meeting**

– AGM – Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 3pm. We will need a new Chair and Treasurer as both no longer have children at Balhousie Primary.