

Uryside School – Parent Forum

Minutes of Term 2, held at Uryside School on Thursday 26th November 2019 at 6.30pm

Present

Councillor Lesley Berry (CLB), Joanna Bruce (JB), Kim Dodd (KD), Alisa Foster (AF), Lindsay Glennie (LG), Catherine Liebnitz (CL), Monica Martinez (MM), Emma McKimmie (EM), Adrian Stewart (AS),

Apologies

Councillor Neil Bailie (CNB), Diane Brands (DB), Dawn Carnegie (DC), Kevin Christie (KC), John Cooper (JC), Rachel Corsar (RC), Tanya Doig (TD), Councillor Marion Ewenson (CME), Claire Green (CG), Craig Johnston (CJ), Jackie McBeath (JB), Lyndsey McGunnigle (LM), Councillor Judy Whyte (CJW)

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Previous minutes were approved.

PUPIL SAFETY

Traffic

DS stated that the police had been at the school that morning as an initiative with Junior Road Safety, with a Junior Road Safety Officer from every class taking part wearing high vis vests. They were carrying out random checks at various times with one group doing speed checks up on Oldmeldrum Road and then children interviewing the drivers. The other group were working down in the school car park but in the future they will be moving up to Peregrine Drive and the school service parking area. JB stated that people should not be using the drop off area for parking. DS felt that the initiative will help to raise awareness of the dangers, i.e. people double parking, opening doors and letting kids run across the road. EM pointed out that it was frustrating when people double park outside the nursery as this is dangerous for the children crossing the road. CL felt it was not obvious that there was a designated drop off point as there are marked spaces on it. EM felt these were marked large spaces to allow cars to drive in and out safely to drop off. DS said we really need people to man the drop off point. CLB suggested getting in touch with the community justice people for those doing community service. DS was concerned they might not have the necessary skills to be diplomatic. CL suggested making the drop off similar to the Garioch Sports Centre where the area is coned off. EM was concerned this might take up some of the spaces in the car park. AS felt that a survey would be a good idea to find out if people know this is a designated drop off area. CL also suggested using the service delivery area as a staff car park to free up spaces in the main car park. DS replied this is not suitable as it is needed for an emergency access point. JB asked if this could not be used as the drop off area, deliveries wouldn't be coming at that time. AS felt this wasn't the right shaped space for drop offs. Regarding the zig zag lines at school crossing, CJ hasn't had time to ask about this. Also the low level roundabout was brought up again. CLB to find out if something can be painted on. CL felt that even though it can't be changed at Uryside, things should be designed better for new schools going forward. JB suggested sending out a note reiterating the parking problem and stating that the police are involved now.

AS asked if Bikeability is going ahead. KD said they are still trying to do it. DS added that an 8 hour training session is required and that person can then only teach 8 kids. KD felt that the situation needs community resilience, not just down to the school. MM asked if we can slow down car speed any further but KD replied we can't go lower than 20. CL suggested having a flashing sign on the

Oldmeldrum Road instead of the small sign, as many of the drivers probably aren't even aware there is a school there. CLB stated that there are 152 primary schools in Aberdeenshire and all of them are having the same discussion. Action on CLB to find out about the possibility of a flashing sign as it would have to be done on a traffic assessment.. These only go on at specific times of the and have a very significant cost. AS suggested having the happy/sad face flashing sign. DS has a survey of what the driver's that they stopped thought the speed limit was and they were only there about a minute before they caught someone speeding. CLB felt this would be a great opportunity to get the Press involved.

Adverse Weather Conditions

CL stated that during the recent adverse weather she had to return home and take the car as the pavements were too icy to walk on. A bus also crashed into the island in the road that is supposed to be a designated safe crossing area for the kids. JB added that the stairs down from the main pupil entrance were really icy as well. CL put forward a proposal to buy a new grit machine, this would be about £7 - 800. DS felt that Mr Ross would love it but he has to clean one path from the school entrance to the car park, and if he's given something else there's an assumption someone else has to do it. At present he has a shovel and a grit dispenser that clogs up. MM added that nothing in the playground had been gritted at all. DS felt that Mr Ross goes above and beyond his duties and he had gritted that day but then it had rained and washed it away which was what had caused the problems. MM asked if kids can go in the front door in this case - DS/KD said they wouldn't have an issue with this. KD added that Mr Ross won't be allowed to do any more outwith the area that he does for insurance purposes. JB added that Osprey Heights was even icier than the Village as the council won't cover it yet. KD suggested asking if parents would be willing to assist, JB felt this would be good especially for the stairs. CLB is to find out if this could be done right at the top of stairs.

AS asked whether there might be any appetite for paying a private contractor, they monitor the temperature in the area to know when they need to grit and then only get paid the days they needed to work. EM was not convinced people would be willing to pay for this. CL suggested using bag packing in November in Tesco/Morrisons etc in order to raise money for a contractor. CLB to ask about this and contractors providing their own insurance etc and also about putting a grit bin at the top of the stairs as this might be an easy fix. JB asked whether the community justice people could do this. CLB to find out and also added that they are all vetted. DS to run the idea of a new gritting machine past Mr Ross and see if he likes it and action on CL to get quotes for equipment. CL also felt that the fund raising opportunity had been missed this year, maybe next November would be the time to push this. KD felt this could link into outdoor learning and would suggest booking this is January and to try and get the very last week in November before the Christmas rush starts.

MM also asked if there was any way the flooding at the bottom of the stairs could be prevented. Action on KD to raise with Mr Ross to have a look and report to property.

COUNCILLOR UPDATE

CLB stated that the problems with safety are an issue with all the schools apart from the Academies as the kids are old enough to make their own way there. JB asked why nothing was being done. CLB replied advised that enforcing this is a huge resource for the police and also that we should acknowledge that some of these issues are being created by those with cars. At the Inverurie Council meeting the police update was that there are only six policemen on duty to cover the whole of Gordon and they can't meet the demands of all the schools. CLB to find out what can be done to help the issue.

The Fire & Rescue had given a presentation to let everyone know they are entitled to a free Fire Home Safety Visit, you can book online and they do your whole house. DS to put this in the newsletter. Also CLB has a contact Dawn Lynch at MCR Pathways for anyone who would like to train to be a mentor for vulnerable kids, giving them one to one adult time for an hour a week.

The public papers on Rezoning are going to be recommended so get in touch with councillors before Tuesday - this can be found on the Aberdeenshire website. They are trying to solve the capacity issue, there are just too many families and not enough schools. They are looking to make the railway line a natural divide. The budget is currently horrendous with £27M cuts find, they are assuming they will get government funds for teachers pay but the budget is going to be tight. The snow wardens initiative has been really good, with about 17 teams, but these have been aimed at the elderly rather than school children. CLB to send info to DS. Early indication on the 3 weekly refuse bins rotation is positive. DS stated that the school Christmas tree will be donated to the town hall for the Community Xmas Lunch which is quite popular with about 30 - 35 attendees.

There is also the issue of fair share, a great deal of money is being kept in the Central Belt, so they are trying to get more funding up North. KD felt that the biggest challenge is that we have so many rural school buildings, with so many of the pupils requiring transport - Glasgow/Edinburgh don't have these same costs. Budget allocation per head is not that different as we are not designated as being very rural. Also many of the semi-urban Aberdeenshire new houses have not been evaluated for SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) so this hasn't been evaluated for pupil funding.

PF FUNDRAISING

EM stated they are trying to identify groups who are willing to organise different events. LG stated there had been a slight glitch with the Spree Books but they had made £680 for the school. LG had worked with Spree the way they advised but would do it differently and change the timing slightly next year. KD thanked LG for putting a lot of effort into this. LG to forward money to CL. EM stated that parents do seem to want to know what fundraising is going towards, especially when volunteering. KD stated that the Xmas Fair is always for general funds going back into the school but that the discos tend to raise for other things, for example the summer one was run by the P7s to fund the the P7 show. Events like Books'n'Bosies to enhance the educational experience also have to have funding. LG highlighted the amount of time she has had to, as a teacher at a different school, put money in from her own pocket for Xmas crafts, baking etc. KD agreed that that shouldn't happen. EM also wanted to know if the school has an expectation of them to do a certain amount of events or raise a certain amount of money. KD stated that only 21% of children had any input in the Readathon fundraising, and many were from the same families so it is all about engagement. There is a real issue about entitlement and people not seeing how lucky we are in this country. CL stated that we don't publicise to OSCAR, but going forward can do it - KD agreed with this. She added the

school has started several new clubs, i.e. art club, chinese club and didn't want to have to charge for this but the art club does need to be subsidised. KD felt that community building events are more important than the funding and it would still be a good idea to have a class rep from each class. EM stated that Sam Donald had asked to check whether it was too late to have a Secret Santa now - this would basically be a school shop where kids could buy something for their mum/dad in secret. There is a profit in it and the kids get a choice from about 6 different gifts that are pre wrapped. It was felt there wasn't time to organise for this year. KD stated that she will be putting out a collection box for brand new unwrapped toys for less fortunate children in the first couple weeks of December, SD could do this, then it would be just liaising with social services. CL suggested also having a similar collection box for unwanted Xmas gifts in January.

EM stated that Strathburn School has a Cashometer showing how much they have raised which she felt is a good idea for visibility. JB also suggested having a coffee morning type event to recruit new members for the parent forum. EM asked if volunteers need to have PVG checks, DS replied only if they are engaging with children.

Action on CJ to check if EM and LG are on the parent forum email list, and if not to add them. AS pointed out that his emails had been going to his junk mail.

HEAD TEACHER REPORT

- KD stated that there are currently 352 primary pupils - the nursery fluctuates slightly but will stand at roughly 78 by end of the year.
- Excellence time has now been introduced instead of golden time where the children choose focused activities
- The house system is working very well. P7 are supporting in the playground on a rotational system, helping pupils struggling with friendships by initiating play and helping with the p1's. We will need to review how to do this next year
- The p7 house captains are now in senior management teams, this is really insightful and they have some great ideas which are helping lead the school forward with a pupil voice.
- We have started community afternoons, once a month after assembly. Instead of excellence time that week, everyone will take part in community group - i.e. health group/gardening group. The Big Sing on 7th Dec is also a community event. The school is establishing these groups now so that hopefully with enough engagement every pupil will be involved in doing something for the community - i.e. litter picking, gardening etc. We will also need more community volunteers - the local rotary club are keen to help by bringing some pupils into care homes to sing, chat etc with the elderly. We are also hoping to start Rotokids which would be a spin off from the Rotary Club.
- Recent events run have been well attended, i.e. Books n Bosies and the parents evenings. The parent reading workshops could have been attended better but was a good start.
- The Seesaw app has been well received, and we will be organising a parent introduction to seesaw in the first half of next year. Parent night online booking was also very well received.
- The school would like to hold a World Cafe in February where different stakeholders come together for a day - kids, parents, business owners etc.
- The school also received an outstandingly good report from their Fire Safety Inspection which is carried out in rotation once every three years.

TREASURER REPORT

CL stated that the books have been officially closed today and thanked Lynn Stewart for doing the accounting. The books were closed at £8128.27 last year and are the same again this year. Money has been taken out buses, however the Spree money is still to be added. Very little money has been given out so far but we had agreed to £1000 for additional books, however KD has advised that this may be more. Everyone agreed this was OK as some parents are seeing the benefit of the new books. CL state there is plenty of money to use up, along with the amount sitting in the Parent Council account.

KD also suggested that all receipts should be covered to support teachers with Xmas crafts etc, for an average of £25 per class. She also suggested keeping ribbons off presents and sequins etc for craft upcycling.

CL stated that she is still in the progress of changing signatories to EM and DB and removing five other people, then we will be able to change the school account name. Once CL finds out how much other money is sitting there, she will shut down the other account and put everything into one account. CJ had been actioned to discuss with Kevin Christie and update KD as we want to ensure that OSCAR are receiving the correct information from the committee. The PTA weren't entitled to grants etc as they were for fundraising but the Parent Forum might be.

It was suggested that the school be added to Amazon spending - when you put your order through you pick your chosen group and 0.5% of the sale goes to them. Action on JB to look into adding school to this as Colony Park football already does this.

AOCB

P7 Ties

JB asked if these were still happening. They had been ordered in August and should arrive in January.

Chairperson Role

JB felt that no parents were going to approach to be considered for this role. It was suggested holding a family event (i.e. beetle drive/quiz) where we will have a captive audience to advertise it.

Parent Forum Minutes

Action on AF to look up approved minutes and send to DS and also copy the councillors in. Also many thanks to Councillor Lesley Berry for attending. JB to send AF councillors email addresses.

NEXT MEETING

6.30pm Thursday 5th March 2020.