



Blackwood Primary School & ELC Parent Council

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BLACKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting – Wednesday 22nd November 2023

Present

Wendy Thomson, Laura Watt, Lisa Tweed, Christine McMillan, Vivienne Colquhoun, Jenny Bowman, Alyson Bennie, Erin Illingworth, Gail Hutchison, Kimberley Miller, Pamela Mitchell, Donna Neeson, Tori Summerville, Louise Grattan.

Apologies

Jo McGuigan, Cllr Mark Horsham, Cllr Ross Gowland, Emma McGeachie Gillian Clark.

Welcome

Wendy opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming.

Correspondance

Lisa advised there have been a few items received;

- We have received a lovely, surprise email from Cllr Ross Lambie, asking for our bank details as he would like to donate £150 to help support Christmas activities at the school.
- We have received our renewal notice for our small lotteries license, with a renewal fee of £20. We have decided to renew this license, as the bonus ball syndicate is a great way of raising money, and it has done well over the last year. Lisa will get the renewal application sorted and collect a cheque from Jo to cover this cost.

Treasurer's report

In Jo's absence, Wendy gave us a financial update starting with the closing balance from the last meeting of £7265.85.

Income

- £52 from the sale of Halloween glow sticks
- £236 from the bonus ball syndicate (4 draws at £59 each)
- £96.53 from Easy Fundraising

Outgoings

- £887 for the SumDog subscription
- £119.04 for the SumDog trophy and winners pencils
- £293.79 for the Halloween parties
- £20 for the lottery license renewal

- £60 for Forest Schools

Giving us a current balance of £6270.55

Head teachers report

The school continues to busy and we are heading quickly into the festive season.

Since our last meeting ...

- Parents Evening was well supported
- Sycamore House treat organised by our pupil leadership team
- A huge thank you to the band of helpers for their generosity, time and talents for Halloween. The hall looked amazing and the learners had a fun day. Halloween treats were purchased with left overs meaning that Christmas treats just need topped up
- Assemblies from P7/6 to celebrate World Smile Day, and P6 to share the sustainable message of food waste have taken place. The remaining assembly for this term is P5 which takes place this Friday 24th
- Primary 5 have completed their 12 weeks of swimming
- Primary 6 are visiting the forest on a Thursday and have 2 more sessions left – This activity continues to be hugely popular
- Football/Netball festival took place on Friday 17th November
- Children in Need was another success, with the ELC shop and activities around the school
- We managed to raise £187.07 for Poppy Scotland with the sales of poppies
- Thanks to Miss Colquhoun for organising the Read, Write, Count workshops for year groups 1-3. There was a lovely buzz about the school, having parents in with the children, and it was lovely to have the P7 buddies there to support those whose parents couldn't make it.

Congratulations

- P3/2 have been invited to the BBC studios on Thursday 23rd to be the live audience for a reading session. This is a fabulous experience for our young people and continues to raise the profile of our literacy developments on a national level

There is a very bleak message around budget cuts within SLC at this moment in time and some of them are having an immediate impact. Since our last meeting we have lost 0.3FTE (1.5 days) per week and this does have an impact on what we can offer and how we operate. Looking ahead to August 2024 we will lose a DHT post and a further 1.0 FTE teacher.

These cuts are being made across all schools within SLC.

Furthermore, with a reduction in per capita per pupil and the rising costs across all purchases from pencils, jotters and toilet roll the next few years will see cost savings not experienced in my time as a HT. This is a concern for the future, with the possibility of a reduction in our 'replacement equipment' budget, we could be sat here next year struggling to buy jotters, pencils or toilet rolls.

Staffing and Classes

- Miss Meldrum finished on maternity leave on Friday 17th November
- Interviews took place on Thursday 16th November and the pupil leadership played an active roll – asking the first question. The successful candidate will be named in due course after all checks have been completed
- Miss Kennedy joins us on a supply basis to backfill the maternity cover until Christmas

- We are still short on parent helpers, and SLC have now stated the PVG's are to be done at the headteachers discussion. This puts the school in a difficult position if we were to decide not to do a PVG and I don't think we should be in that position. *Action for Wendy & Christine to discuss how PC can help with this to ensure PVG's are completed for all parent helpers within the school

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

We started our SIP journey for the session with;

- Listening and Talking introduction to all staff. Took place on the November inset
- Transition with LHS continues with a range of activities and in-house session events planned

Any other business

Parent Council Support

- (Wendy Thomson) We are still struggling to recruit parents and found it difficult to get parents to help out with Halloween. We normally don't allow the children to assist with the decorating of the hall, but this year, we had some of the children help. This was a success, as they were really excited to be involved and have a part in it. I think in the future, we should look to getting the children involved more. Those parents who did come to help were amazing, and even though we were missing a box of decorations, we all pulled together and were able to get creative with what we had.
- We need ideas on how we can encourage more parents to take part and gain a general interest in the school. Donna suggested that someone from the PC have a 5 minute slot at the Christmas concert to try and recruit more support.

Sumdog

- (Alyson Bennie) Thankyou to the Parent Council for the SumDog trophy, I love it! We had a group of children who completed all 1,000 questions in the last competition, with P4/3 and P7/6 in the top 10 classes. These students got to have a shot of the trophy and they got a pencil each too. Next month, we are looking for the most engaged class to win the trophy and all get a pencil.

Playground equipment

- (Alyson Bennie) We have been looking creatively at sources of funding for some new playground equipment, such as shelters, canopies and possibly some ground painting. We were pointed in the direction of the Wind Farm, but the application needs to come from a constituted group, such as the Parent Council. The PC are happy to apply for this with the help of Alyson, to ensure accuracy of details.

Residential

- (Wendy) We have been asked by parents why the residential has been changed? (Christine) This is organised by PGL and Ford Manor are now not opening until 6 weeks later, which didn't suit us with the dates. The distance to the new venue in Yorkshire isn't actually that much further, so we had the choice to either cancel the residential, or accept the new venue.

Canteen Food

- (Wendy) We have had some complaints from parents about the school dinners. There are a couple of different issues, the first being the quality and how it is cooked. Some children have suggested that things are not cooked very well. The second issue is around quantity and wrist bands. Some children have been given the wrong colour wrist band and not being given an alternative meal to eat if they don't like what they were given. Some children aren't even getting a meal because there is nothing left when they get there. (Christine) As a school, we have no control over this. It is all

through Community Resources. When the children raise an issue with staff, we do try to resolve where possible, or pass on our concerns to the right department. I do have quarterly reviews with community resources and raise the catering issues with them. We have met and discussed these on-going issues. We recently took part in a SLC Food waste Project and discovered on any given day the food waste weighed more than a Primary 6 pupil. I would suggest that I request a meeting through this quarterly review with the parent council so you can raise your issues directly. Wendy agreed that this might be useful.

Christmas

- The school has a lot planned for December to celebrate Christmas. Party days, Jumpers, movie days, and the Christmas concert (tickets on sale on Monday). As we have a lot of treats left over from Halloween that we can use, we only need 200 chocolate treats, including 'free from' ones, to top us up for the Christmas treats. Christine will arrange these and pass the bill on to the parent council.

Next meeting

Wed 7th February 2024, again on Teams.

Close

Wendy and Christine again thanked everyone for coming.

Blackwood Parent Council 2023/2024 –

Wendy Thomson (Chair), Laura Watt (Vice-Chair), Jo McGuigan (Treasurer), Lisa Tweed (Secretary)

In support of -

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