

Torphichen Parent Council

Torphichen Primary School
The Loan
Torphichen
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Minutes & Actions of Torphichen Primary School Parent Council Meeting & AGM

~~23rd September~~^{12th} February 2020-2019 - 6.30pm

Attendees

Susan Campbell (Chair)	SC	Thea de Joode (Vice Chair)	TJ
Alix McFarlane (Treasurer)	AM	Richard Venters (Secretary)	RV
Marnie Ferguson (Head Teacher)	MF	Louise Johnston (Principal Teacher)	LJ
Julie Yuill Anne Telfer	AT Y	Julia Miller	JM
Paula Dunsmore Sarah McMonagle	PDSM	Jennifer Dunsmore	JD
Tom Maciver Claire Conchie	ECTM	Gillian Young Katy Maciver	GY KM
Anthony Bateman Tom Maciver	ABTM	Carlene Dunsmore Ruth Baird	RBCD
Dan Rosenfeld	DR	Anna Thomson	AT
Suzie McMorrow	ScM	Gillian Young	GY
Elaine Cook	EC	Marjorie?	

Apologies

Claire Conchie Dan Rosenfeld	Lynn Mallinson Julie Fisher
Liz Rosenfeld Anna Thomson	Steve Fisher Lorna Ritchie
Amy Fox-Roberts	
Suzanne Parry John	Lynn Turner
Cat Murray	Amy Fox Roberts
Donna Binnie	Suzie McMorrow

1. Introductions & Apologies

- SC welcomed all attendees and apologies were stated per above

2. Minutes & actions from last meeting

- The minutes from the previous meeting were approved and actions updated on.
- By way of an update on 23/01-01 – having engaged with both the staff and pupil bodies LT has now scoped out what the proposed outdoor classroom might comprise of and has presented some pictures and high level costings for consideration. They would like to acquire four adapted sheds to be placed in the school grounds with each one to be equipped to support learning in one of the following areas; Literacy & Creativity; Maths; STEM; Making/Bigger Bulky play (ie planks and crates etc). These sheds and contents will be available to all ages of children and will range in cost from c.£400-£800.

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- H&S assessments will still need to be undertaken by the School/Council ahead of these being acquired/placed.
- Feedback from attendees on the night was strongly positive to this idea and LT encouraged to now source more detailed costings which will allow us a) to look to begin supporting the funding of these, perhaps on a modular roll out rather than all at once and b) to begin looking for corporate grants/sponsorship inc known opportunities such as Tesco. TdJ and JY to look at this.

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3. Headteacher's Report

- Self Evaluation focus for this term is Health & Wellbeing (the focus on which was explained at recent 'Journey of Learning' evening) and it is being led for the school by Mrs Gallagher. In addition, the Council are undertaking an evaluation of how all schools in the region are addressing this area.
- MF advises that they are already seeing positive impact in the classroom as a result of the daily check in with pupils – which is some classes being supported by technology
- It was noted that in a recent survey of parents on the H&W subject only 9 responses were garnered which is unusually low participation by the parent body and so school will be recirculating and would ask parents to consider responding as the feedback in this survey will feed in to how the topic is approached.
- School are also now looking at embedding 'Skills for Life' with the children – follows on from the 'Skills for Work' focus last term, but is widening to encourage children to focus on areas that will hold them in good stead throughout their life/schooling. The focus is being led by LJ and covers the following topics including: Digital Learning, Leadership, Enterprise, Thinking. The school is looking to track, support and improve skills in these areas with a focus on bringing in their out of school clubs/experiences and using them to support their classmates in the same areas. The school and pupil leadership teams will review these on an ongoing basis.
- Planning for next school year is already underway with Mr McIntyre - who spent time in the school last year as a supply teacher and is now a data manager for WLC supporting all schools in the area will work with the school on how we can use digital innovation to enhance and support the curriculum.
- Digital Awards – school participation led by Mr Turnbull – again focussed on how the school can/is using digital resources/innovation to improve learning
- MF advised that all cluster schools have been awarded £1500 to create a therapeutic space in each school – the focus on this being a calm/cosy/peaceful space. This will probably be created in LJ's classroom for reasons of space.
- Nursery – Council has given budget to all nurseries in the region to have a teacher and Mrs Wilkes has been appointed for our nursery.
- MF noted congratulations to Mrs Alexander on her qualifying as a Froebelian scholar which adds another useful skill set to the staff body.
- School Clubs – MF advises that with the current block of clubs coming to an end she is very keen for parent volunteers to either advise if a) they are happy to continue/begin supporting the clubs they are already running; b) are willing to offer their time/skills to start new clubs – please contact the school directly on this.
- Football Club – the football club is looking for parent volunteers to help provide transport and supervision for the three rounds of competition our P6/P7 team will be entering into on 17th March, 28th April and 19th May at Linlithgow Xcite. The events will run from 4pm to 8pm.
- Can parents whose children are participating in afterschool clubs where a per event fee is payable please remind their children to take this with them each day.
- SC noted thanks on behalf of the parent body to all parents/volunteers giving up their time to support the afterschool clubs.

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4. Playground Alterations Discussions

The following update was given by the Chair regarding discussions with West Lothian Council ('WLC') and is shared in full for the benefit of those parents who were unable to attend this meeting; "As you know the Parent Council has been in discussion with WLC regards playground amendments, this has taken time and effort and involved gathering feedback as you will be aware from surveys. I met with the WLC last week and their proposal is follows; Phase 1 will see the introduction of large planters strategically placed around the corner to slow traffic and the addition of benches. In addition, there will also be a handrail added to the steps. The wall will not be altered. These amendments can be seen on the plan (shared via FB). We have also discussed the principles of a Phase 2 which will incorporate the introduction of a 'soft border' along the length of the rear wall with planting which might include an edible garden area (vegetables, fruit etc) and some rustic seating eg log slices There will also be picnic benches for the playground and a shed to store garden equipment to maintain the new garden area. We appreciate and recognise that there will be differing

opinions on any such changes". The opportunity was given for these plans to be discussed and feedback on the evening was a) that this seemed like a useful step forward from the Council and that whilst they had previously suggested that wall chamfering would be undertaken they were still offering alternatives which should enhance playground safety and functionality.

NB – further to this meeting and the minute above there has been further discussion between the school and the Council and a meeting between SC and MF is planned for w/c 2nd March – update will be shared via Facebook page by SC post that meeting.

3. EC, opening for the Council, confirmed that whilst the Health & Safety report undertaken by the Council, following the accident involving one of our pupils earlier in the year, had been finalised – its conclusion was that the Council does not believe that the playground as currently laid out and furnished does not expose the children to any abnormal risks and therefore, on the basis of the report, there weren't any specific recommendations that they could look to/needed to implement and the Council would not have an issue with the currently fenced off area being re-opened. EC was clear at several points during the meeting that she would not enter into a discussion around the conclusions of the H&S report as it had been compiled by the Council's experts and therefore was considered accurate by the Council
- However, she also confirmed that, the Council was not deaf to the concerns of parents and her attendance this evening (and that of her team) was so that they could listen directly to those concerns and begin a discussion about what adjustments/alterations to the playground we might like to see. Whilst these requests would need to be considered for their feasibility (cost) she and the Council were certainly open to some measures being adopted.
- There were various suggestions made by attendees around possible alterations which might be made, these included; the planting of natural barriers (hedges and/or a planting area for children) to restrict access from the paved area to/from the grassy area where the recent accident occurred; the introduction of a swing gate to similarly slow foot traffic around that area; the introduction of railings on the stairs leading from school entrance to the school building; the chamfering of the sharp edges currently found on the low walls at the back of the school; the resurfacing of potentially slippy surfaces to allow more grip; changing the wooden tops of the benches introduced last year as some of these are beginning to show damage and have exposed sharp metal edges/points
- It was agreed by the Council that, rather than make a series of requests 'off the cuff' a period of consideration/consultation was required and we would revert to them more fully post our next meeting in the New Year but in the first case and because all parents in attendance at the meeting were in agreement we would like to see the edges chamfered to remove that risk. In the interim the question as raised as to whether the currently blocked off area should be re-opened and it was agreed that this should be a decision put to all parents and as such the School agreed to send out a survey asking parents to vote and also asking them to advise if they had any specific suggestions they would like to make/be considered before the TPC responds to the Council. This survey resulted in the closed off area remaining closed off for now.

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4. Headteacher's Report

- Classroom Observations – these will be undertaken by staff over the next two weeks – this will use the HGIOS ('How Good is Our School') framework for self-evaluation and is part of the school's aim to continually improve – they are looking to encourage some pupil engagement/participation on this point
- Cluster Engagement work is underway with the other schools in our cluster aimed at ensuring a better consistency of approach all teachers currently have.
- Nursery – MF has put the nursery forward to be one of the first 'gender friendly' Nurseries in West Lothian
- Staff training – LJ is undertaking a new First Aid course which will equip her with a higher level of training than the basic training all our teachers currently have.
- Credit Union – LJ has met with representatives of West Lothian Credit Union with an aim to introducing pupils to the 'world of money' by offering them the opportunity to set up savings accounts with the Union. This would require some support from the parent body to coordinate deposits etc and if you are interested in supporting this please contact the school direct
- School Enterprise – continuing the theme of financial awareness, the Enterprise project is well underway again this year with pupils preparing products to sell again at the school Christmas Fair
- School Clubs – MF advises that there has been a fantastic take up by pupils of the various after school clubs now up and running with 93 sign ups seen to date, including 25 kids wanting to participate in the choir being run by SJ. Linked to this the school will be participating in Bikeability again this year with P7 children given the opportunity to be assessed for Level 2 and P6 children Level 1 – letters will be sent out soon and like last

~~year bike checks will be undertaken in the playground at the time. The school will also be doing 'The Big Pedal' again.~~

5. Fundraising Report/Forthcoming Events:

- ~~No events currently planned but the fundraising committee will be meeting between now and next Parent Council meeting to discuss future events. Date will be circulated on Facebook page and any parents interested in supporting this are encouraged to attend. Key focus is the upcoming Christmas Market (30th November) which was the single biggest fundraising event held last year. All stalls have now been booked (with more being sold than last year) and the hope is that this will generate another meaningful sum this year.~~
- ~~Bags to School (recycling of old clothes) scheme went well with 23kg of clothing collected, raising £95 for TPS funds.~~
- ~~Following the October Fundraising Committee meeting the team are looking at potential of arranging a family friendly Hogmanay event — would require uptake of 20 family minimum to be financially viable — Facebook survey has been issued. Committee are also looking to engage with the Gala Day committee to discuss jointly supporting/reinvigorating the Fun Day which has been running for many years but seen dwindling support.~~

Comment [CS(1)]: Didn't happen, could just mention family events...

6. Financial Report:

- ~~Limited income or expenditure in the period since our last meeting with result that the account currently stands at £2036. Following the success of the Christmas Fayre and various smaller initiatives, the balance in the account now stands at £3,324.81. A copy of the financial update is included as an appendix to these minutes.~~
- ~~A request was made by the Nursery via MF for support in acquiring a Bird feeding Station and some outdoor paint at a total cost of c.£70 — this was approved by TPC.~~
- ~~MF advised that the school now have a £500 budget available to support uniform for any clubs and they are looking at how best to allocate this~~

7. AOB:

- ~~A query was raised by TdJ on behalf of a parent unable to attend this meeting as to whether provision could be made to make it easier for parents picking up children of different ages/classes to do so from one exit — perhaps having one entrance and one exit for the whole school. MF advised this wasn't possible as it would create too much of a choke point at beginning and end of school. LT advised that as teacher for the infant class she was confident that the children in her class know that if they leave the school building and were to go to the point where their parent/guardian should be and they aren't they are to go straight back to her and as such the meeting point for these children needn't be the nearest exit but could be anywhere in the school playground~~
- ~~MF asked that a reminder be made to parents picking up their children at the end of the school day not to enter school grounds until 5mins before the bell unless they are on their way to the school office so as not to distract classes or inadvertently interrupt outdoor time.~~
- ~~Crossing Guards — school was unaware the our long serving crossing guard, Denise, was leaving her role this month — it was agreed that she would be invited into the school to receive a gift from the parent body (TdJ organising) — no replacement has yet been appointed.~~
- ~~JM advised that she will shortly be completing her minibus driver training — she's been made aware that the wider fleet of minibuses owned by the council will then be accessible for hire (£25 per day plus a mileage charge) which could encourage school club participation at competitions events etc~~
- ~~MF was asked about School App for parents and whether there was any news on a replacement for Dojo — she is exploring this in the New Year and will update at next meeting.~~
- ~~Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 12th February 2020 at 6.30pm~~

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Existing Actions

Action Ref	Action Details	Action update	Status	Owner
12/11-01	Agree spec and source quotes for new projector bracket and associated equipment with school	<u>Update 12/2/20 SC and LJ meeting to identify preferred supplier and costs Costings now in hand and purchase to proceed</u>	<u>Open</u>	TPC/School
23/01-01	School to consider future projects they would like to agree funding for	<u>MF to revert at meeting on 12th November UPDATE – Mrs Telfer Telfer currently scoping costs to support an ‘outdoor Classroom’ area Update – 12/02/20 See above. Detailed costings now to be sourced and phased roll out planned</u>	Open	School
23/09-01	Constitution to be updated to reflect involvement of the nursery	<u>The proposed update will be circulated ahead of next meeting so it can be approved then</u>	Open	SC
<u>11/12-01</u>	<u>School/TPC to issue survey on parent preference on whether to reopen closed off area of playground and seek input on alterations we’d like to see</u>	<u>Done post last meeting</u>	<u>Closed</u>	<u>MF/SC</u>
<u>11/12-02</u>	<u>SC to write to EC to advise on outcome of above survey and formally request chamfering of edges in playground</u>	<u>Done – see above update</u>	<u>Closed</u>	<u>SC</u>
<u>11/12-03</u>	<u>TPC to put together some proposals to council for playground alterations.</u>	<u>Done – see above update</u>	<u>Closed</u>	<u>TPC</u>

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New Actions

Action Ref	Action Details	Action update	Status	Owner
11/12-01 <u>12/02-01</u>	<u>LT to begin sourcing more detailed costings for Outdoor Classroom project and to feed these into TdJ/JY to allow them to complete grant application forms etc</u> School/TPC to issue survey on parent preference on		Open	MF/SCLT/TdJ/JY

	whether to reopen closed off area of playground and seek input on alterations we'd like to see			
12/02/02 1/12-02	Next fundraising meeting to be organised and advised via Facebook page SC to write to EC to advise on outcome of above survey and formally request chamfering of edges in playground		Open	SC TdJ
11/12-03	TPC to put together some proposals to council for playground alterations.		Open	TPC