



MINUTES

Avoch Primary School Parent Council

Monday, 2nd December 2019 | 7.00PM

In Attendance

Ruth Edmonds(Chair), Kirsty Cameron (Minute), Ingrid Robertson, Iona MacMillan, Inga Ballantyne, Julie Mackay, Jodie Mullery, Phoebe Dickinson, Debbie Du Preez, Sarah Obern, Rebeca Rawlinson, Katy Grant, Eleanor Griffiths, Claire Weaver, Stef Rankine, Asia Kucharczyk, Fiona Whyte, Karen Patience and Donald MacPherson

Apologies

Kate Lackie, Jacqui Dingwall, Lindsay Smith and Lorna Sim

Minutes from last meeting

Last meeting was the EGM and Minutes are not yet available.

Head Teacher's Report

No report due to Lorna's absence.

Treasurer's Report

Attached.

Discos

PVG Requirement

Our Chair has been made aware of unofficial Highland Council Guidance for PVG requirements for all 'Regular Events' (which is how our discos can be classified). In addition, new formal guidance will be forthcoming next year and this is expected to be more stringent. It is clear that larger schools will need proportionally more PVGs to be able to cover events. As the Parent Council leads on these events, we are responsible for compliance with the (unofficial) new guidance. A commonsense approach to this issue was agreed. Discussion ensued about who already had a current PVG and whether this was purely work/site specific or would be relevant for covering APC discos.

Donald MacPherson noted that the school can help with obtaining PVGs for parents/carers (within reason) and that forms are held at reception. This would be the simplest option and would be a free service for us (though there are costs involved for the council). This would be an 'Enhanced Disclosure' check which gives a basic 'Yes' or 'No' to working with children. The school would receive a copy of the results automatically.

Donald MacPherson said that in the event of not having enough PVGs to cover an event (in accordance with the guidance) there is a simple solution that meets the requirement: that any non-PVG parent volunteers are not left alone with any children. As long as that is made clear to volunteers and put in place, we would be covered.

Consensus was to ask for volunteers to come forward by mentioning the forthcoming guidance but without unnecessarily raising fears. Five initial volunteers may be sought from the committee in the first instance. A phased approach was agreed and Ruth with discuss this with the school.

Action: Ruth / Asia to discuss with Donald MacPherson re. PVGs for volunteers in time for next disco.

Hi-Viz & Lanyard Purchase

This was raised by the Chair as a way to distinguish parent helpers from other parents/carers at the discos. Options for getting free/cheap Hi-Viz vests were discussed including SpecSavers in Dingwall (who often provide these for children) and from Rebecca's work. It was agreed that logos on the vests were acceptable.

Phoebe raised the option of getting APC lanyards that would be useful not only for the discos but all other events too. If we had a stock of around 12 that would be enough. This was agreed as a good idea.

*Action: Jodie to check with SpecSavers
Sarah to look into cost of Lanyards
Rebecca to ask at work for 10-12 hi-viz vests.*

Plastic/Sales

The Chair noted that there had been some feedback following the last disco regarding the sale of glow sticks and slap bands because of concerns with promoting single-use plastic, etc. It was confirmed that the last disco only used up old stock and no new purchases were made. There was a call for views on how best to resolve this matter. It was noted that although we don't have to sell anything at the discos in order to cover costs, the sales do boost our income. Alternative ideas were mooted. Eco alternatives for items like slap bands were thought to be prohibitively expensive. Iona suggested UV face painting (with an additional UV light). This could be amazing but may have to come with an allergy warning – more so than normal face paints. Debbie suggested a popcorn machine (using paper bags/cones) - an easy win that had worked well at her previous school. The success of the candyfloss sales at last years Christmas Fair showed that this could be a winner.

It was agreed that we will never please everyone and that sales at the discos will continue. The items for sale will be publicised in advance to allow a degree of parental choice (whether or not to give spending money). Current stocks, including plastic cups, will be run down. As usual, all children will be asked to bring a water bottle with them. In doing so, we will still be working in accordance with the school's Eco Flag status.

Action: ALL to provide suggestions and seek useful opinions of others not in attendance.

Social Media and Parent Council

The Chair asked for views on the current use of social media by the Parent Council. The use of Facebook as a way to communicate with parents/carers was welcomed. It was not widely known that the Avoch Primary School Facebook page (<https://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/category/Elementary-School/Avoch-Primary-School-878959445555012/>) belongs to the Parent Council and not to the school, although it is run in conjunction with the school and Donald MacPherson is an Admin for the page. Iona MacMillan is the dedicated (and only) APC Admin for the page.

It was noted that another page, called *Parents/carers of Avoch Primary*, is a different account and serves a different purpose. The page was set up and is administered by parent Keri-Marie Gibson who recently had asked committee members whether the APC would be interested in taking on

this page. This was not thought to be appropriate given that we have our own page and there is clear value in the school and the APC sharing a page. There was some confusion about whether another Parent Council page may have been set up independently but it was finally confirmed that this page had been since closed down.

It was noted that there had been problems in the past with negative comments on the official page and this can be difficult to deal with. However, more recently, this hadn't happened and it was agreed that Comments should be left on, as these are a necessary way to volunteer or to feed back, but that these would be monitored as necessary. A respectful and constructive tone to comments or suggestions is encouraged.

Action: Ruth to correspond with Keri-Marie Gibson and clarify that we will not be taking on the Parents/carers of Avoch Primary page and that no additional or independent APC page is required.

Ruth/Iona to consider changing the name to demonstrate this is a joint page and / or putting out a post noting that this is a joint APC/School page with overarching APC ownership and to promote this as a way to provide useful feedback to the APC.

Bikeability

Bikeability was previously known as Cycling Proficiency and is now provided by Velocity Bicycle Café and Workshop. Velocity has funding for 2019-20 to support Bikeability within all feeder schools of Fortrose Academy. It has been agreed between the APC and Lorna Sim that Bikeability will be offered to all P6s and ideally, regularly to P6s each academic year. The idea behind this is to enable children to build on their training throughout their time in P6 and P7. The logistics of running Bikeability are tricky in such a large school (sessions are limited to 15 pupils and the roll for P6 is 34). However, the school and Lorna Sim in particular, have been very supportive and are keen to make this happen to encourage cycling to and from school (for example, along the Fortrose-Avoch railway line) and to tie in with the Junior Road Safety Officer (JSRO) scheme at school. Other 'tie-in' proposals include a talk by Jenny Graham (local Guinness World Record Holder) fastest unsupported circumnavigation of the globe by bicycle) and getting the Smoothie Bike for the next Summer Fair, plus a number of other spin offs. Bikeability sessions will be inclusive by encouraging children to share bikes and / or providing bikes where necessary. Lots of challenges are expected but we will work through them one by one. There is a Cycle Trainer Assistant Training programme running on 16th December for those who want to get qualified. Fiona Whyte is booked in to do the training. Additional volunteers will be needed for the Bikeability sessions and there is no need to commit to all six if that is not possible. Volunteers do not need to be qualified. Letters with information about Bikeability for P6 plus asking for volunteers will be sent out to parents/carers/carers soon. The Bikeability sessions will start on 23rd January 2020.

Before the Bikeability starts, there will be a Dr Bike session proposed for 17th January at school and open to all pupils/parents/carers/carers. Bikeability 1 is covered by two 1.5 hour sessions in the school grounds. Bikeability 2 is covered by four 1.5 hour sessions on quiet roads and junctions, probably in Avoch Fishertown.

Action: Ruth to finalise letters and get them out.

Class Reps

This was suggested by Debbie at the last meeting. The APC was asked to consider whether having a parent representative from each class, or year group, would be useful. Debbie and Ingrid had this at previous schools (both big and small sized schools) and it worked well. The Class Rep had been the main liaison between the school and that class; organising, for example, a Christmas present for the teacher and volunteers for class trips, etc. It had been a really good communication method. There was related discussion about a split role for the PC in that model as there was a PC for the Events and Fundraising and a Liaison Committee for more problematic discussion with the

school. The Class Reps were involved in both roles. Eleanor agreed that this would be really welcome for parents/carers new to the area or just joining the school as a way to ask questions that maybe weren't 'big' enough to bother school or APC directly with – such as 'what are the school dinners like?' and 'what exactly happens at the Christmas fair?'. There had been a buddy-up system for new parents/carers at Debbie's old school which also worked well. There were some concerns raised about this idea in that the Parent Council has struggled (for some time) with a low numbers and that it would be prudent to allow the current committee to "bed in" before making big changes or commitments which require more of people. This was agreed and the idea of Class Reps can be revisited in the future.

Donald suggested that in the meantime we could get an APC table at the school event for new P1 parents/carers to promote joining up and what we have to offer. Iona noted that the APC table at Parents/carers Evening the previous week had worked well in this regard and was definitely worth continuing. Donald and Karen confirmed that the school could let us know about additional new parents/carers so we can offer a parent buddy as necessary.

Action: Ingrid to liaise with school regarding the new P1 Parents/carers information event; to ask for notification of any other new starts and act as liaison; and to remind us to have a table at the next Parents/carers evenings / plus possible sell tea, coffee.

Fundraising

Tullochs have donated £500 to the Playground Fund, which means our total now stands at £15k. A Fundraising Meeting was proposed and possibly a sub-committee will follow from that. We have also received £4k from the Raddery Trust for equipment for children with additional needs which is to be put to the Playground fund as this will serve such a purpose.

It was noted that because of the recent drainage works and the proposed new demountable units for the nursery, the exact layout and location may need to be altered from the plans we have. This depends on a decision about the location of the new nursery, which is expected soon. The plans we have are still useful though and provide a good illustration of what we can expect.

*Action: Iona to post on Facebook with the plans and our current total.
All to consider new ideas for fundraising.*

Christmas Enterprise Fair

Ingrid said that a barrier to getting parent helpers at the fair in previous years had been that parents/carers were not able to buy the craft their children had made and asked Karen and Donald if particular items could be put aside. This was agreed and list will be sent to the school in advance.

An Excel spreadsheet of volunteers/timeslots/stalls has been produced by Ingrid and will be distributed.

Jodie noted that the Fortrose Co-op are trying to promote their loyalty card scheme and that signing up means we would get more help with fund raising. Although space is limited at the fair, room will be made for Jodie to promote this. This can go alongside the other APC information and promotions by the bake sale in the GP Room. It was agreed that the raffle draw will start at 2.15 with the last ticket purchases at 2pm.

*Action: Ingrid to send list of pupil names to school so their craftwork can be set aside.
Ruth (or any other volunteer) to announce the draw and the prizes.*

- Rebecca stressed the importance of attending the forthcoming Additional Support Needs meeting at Fortrose Academy and of completing the online survey in regard to ASN cuts by the Highland Council. The Parent Council does not yet have a formal position on this, but one will be required in due course. This will be a big issue for next year and Stef and Donald agreed that filling in the survey is key to what happens next. **The deadline is 11th December!**

Action: Ruth and Donald will liaise about an email to all parents/carers raising awareness of this matter and what it may mean. Sarah / Rebecca will draft the email.

Rebecca and Jodie offered to attend on behalf of the APC and to report back.

- A link to the Pupil Council is to be discussed at the next meeting.
- As we want to be more inclusive, a Skype link for future meetings was mooted for those who are stuck at home.

Next Meeting

Tuesday 4th February 2020. School staffroom but alternative venue suggestions are welcomed.