



# MINUTES

## Avoch Primary School Parent Council

Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 | 7.00PM

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### In Attendance

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Ruth Edmonds (Chair), Iona MacMillan, Inga Ballantyne, Julie Mackay, Phoebe Dickinson, Sarah Obern, Claire Weaver, Asia Kucharczyk, Fiona Whyte, Kirsty Cameron (Minute), Rich Hamilton, Keri-Marie Gibson, Karen Patience and Lorna Sim.

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### Apologies

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Ingrid Robertson, Jodie Mullery, Debbie Du Preez, Rebeca Rawlinson, Eleanor Griffiths, Stef Rankine, Jacqui Dingwall, Kate Lackie, Lindsay Smith, Carolyne Wilson.

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### Minutes from last meeting

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Updates from the previous Minute that were not covered as Agenda items are:

- Lanyards for APC use are being organised by Sarah
- Hi-Viz vests for adult helpers at Parent Council events have been obtained and are kept in the cupboard by the HE room. These are for joint use by APC and the school.

**Action: Sarah to complete purchase of lanyards**

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### Report from the School

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This item has been renamed from 'Head Teacher's Report' to note that it will not always be produced by the Head Teacher.

40 children have been enrolled for next year with 15 children deferring till the following year. This represents the highest ever number of deferrals which reflects the change in council funding to provide an extra year at nursery where required. The 2021 P1 intake is therefore expected to be high. Following the departure of Miss Simms, a request for staff cover was put in during December but has not yet been costed or advertised (though this is expected soon). Temporary cover is being provided by a combination of two days from the Depute and three days from Fiona Cummings

The school is working hard to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy and is also pushing on 'average' pupils to achieve more. Health and Wellbeing subjects have included mental health such as emotional and social health. Skills for Life, Learning and Work continue to be taught.

The February In-service day will focus on a half day of neurological development and a meeting with all other local teachers as part of the Moderation project to compare teaching; this time with a focus on Maths.

Concern was expressed about the state of the playground and Lorna asked for the support of APC to help remedy this ongoing problem. Pressure from APC should not be underestimated in this regard.

With regard to the new Nursery building, Lorna is to attend a meeting with the Commissioner for Nurseries and the Highland Council Estates in February to progress this and hopefully plans will be confirmed after that.

An agenda item for Seesaw was requested for the next meeting.

Action: Ingrid to add SeeSaw to next agenda

Ruth and Lorna to discuss playground to put pressure on Highland Council Estates.

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## Treasurer's Report

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An updated report was distributed to those present and is appended here. Ruth asked for discussion about how much of the 2019 Fair funds should be put into the Playground Project. The raffle money and the wine raffle were specifically advertised as for the playground fund. The remainder of the Fair money will go into general funds.

The Chair noted that we could benefit from thinking about our funds and budget more strategically, e.g. by agreeing priorities rather than reacting in a more ad hoc fashion. Particularly so at the moment when the Playground project is on hold due to the proposed development of the new nursery building. Other annual APC expenditure includes things like funding school trips, some equipment at request from the school and training. We could develop a simple budget to guide the APC.

There was a brief discussion about using funds for refreshments at meetings and for e.g. Bikeability volunteers. It was agreed that teas/coffees/biscuits stored in the APC cupboard in the HE room can be used for this. A rota system for providing biscuits/cake for meetings was also mooted but this will remain informal.

Action: Claire to assign Christmas Fair monies accordingly with appropriate and agreed amounts to Playground and general funds respectively.

Claire and Ruth to discuss regular expenses and a budget strategy.

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## Subcommittee Updates and Discussions

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### *Playground Project (Inga)*

The donations from the Raddery Trust and Tulloch have now been banked. There may be a time limit to the Raddery Trust donation. An anonymous donation that had been discussed before Christmas is no longer expected. The fund now stands at £11,560 (plus the money allocated from the Christmas Fair).

Fluctuating plans within the current playground mean that the project cannot go ahead at the moment, even if funds were available. The timescale is not in our hands (or the School's hands). Building works will take precedence over the summer break and the best-case scenario would be that the playground was ready for the new equipment in the October break this year. Funds could be prioritised then if this was the case, though it was noted that this is an optimistic target; construction works must first be completed and the playground signed-off as fit for use.

Other fundraising options are to see if the project is applicable for funding from Scotland's Towns Partnership and to continue Iona's successful direct approach which resulted in two donations from businesses. Iona said that RJ Macleod (who are involved in the site construction across the road from the school) are also expecting an email to follow up an initial approach she made last year. Lorna confirmed that this was appropriate. Global Energy Group are another company worth approaching.

There had been confusion over a donation from the Co-op as both APC and school applied for the same fund. In the end this went to the school, but Lorna will check if this can be split once the funding comes in. Ruth had spoken to the Co-op manager about APC being the focus of the next campaign. This would need to be for a specific project, for example for the Playground and not general APC funds. It was also agreed that Asda and Tesco would be approached.

Inga warmly thanked the school for organizing the Thank You cards following the Christmas raffle donations. These were really appreciated by both the APC and the recipients.

- Action: Inga to check with Raddery Trust if there is a deadline for spending the donation.  
Jodie/Inga to approach Co-op for APC to be a Co-op Cause.  
Iona to approach Asda  
Keri-Marie to approach Tesco

### Fundraising (Ruth)

A subcommittee has already been set up but is needing someone to lead on this and provide some structure with targeted ideas and events. Ruth noted that Ingrid has been involved but the subcommittee had been led by Katy, who has since left the committee. Volunteers are requested to join the subcommittee.

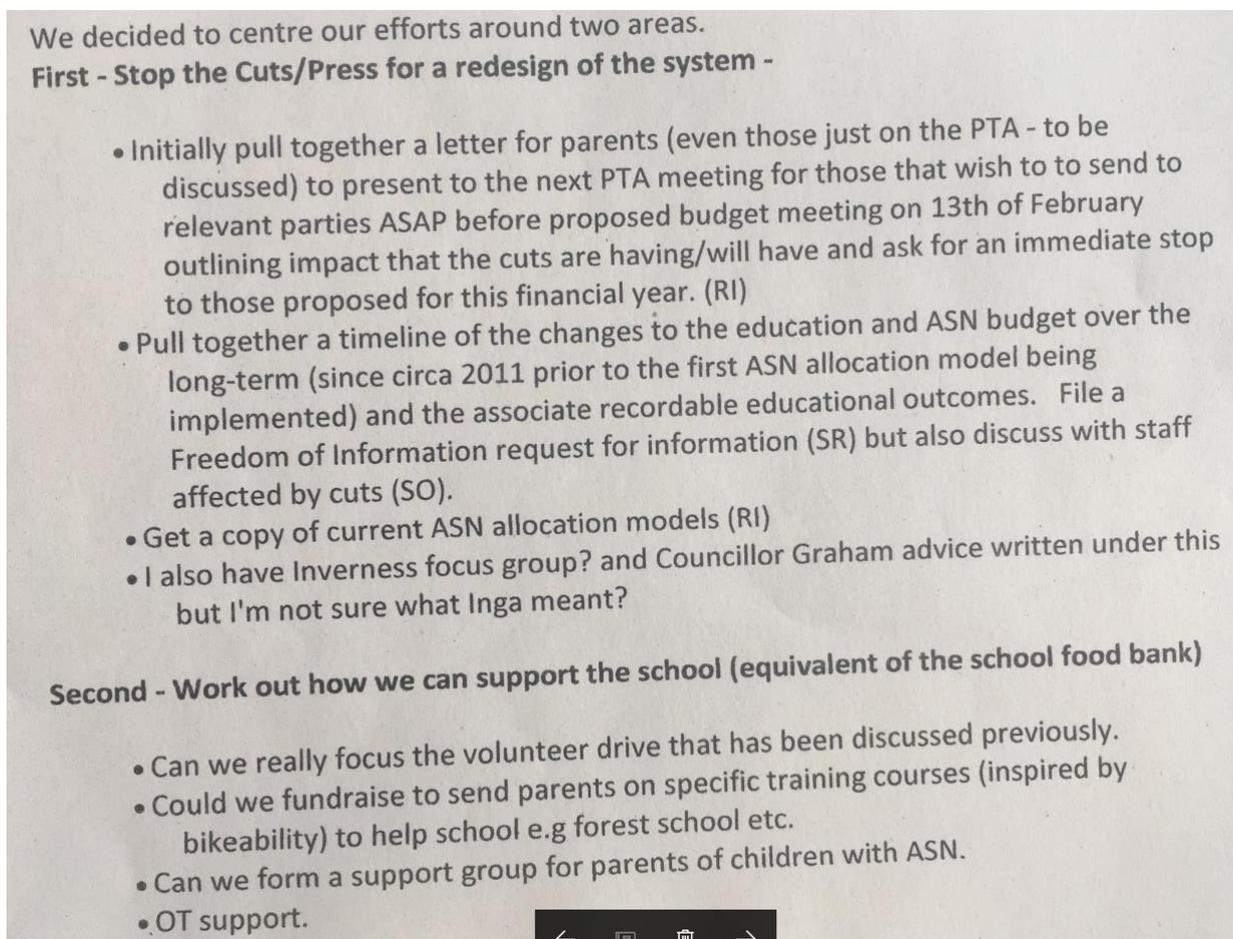
Each August, Lorna makes up a calendar for school events for the whole year; ideally APC fundraising will be planned and scheduled at the same time to avoid any clashes. Katy had begun to plan out such a fundraising calendar and it would be good to build on this if someone was to come forward to run the Fundraising sub-committee. Lorna confirmed that it is doubtful if we can run a Summer Fair this year because of the expected construction works and general state of the playground. We will need to think about another fundraising event for the summer term.

### Additional Support Needs

This subcommittee and has two main areas of focus (attack and support):

1. How to stop the cuts
2. How to support the school

The group distributed some notes on the agreed strategy (see below):



It was agreed that it must be made clear to the school community that the impacts will affect everyone due to a ripple effect that affects *all* pupil's learning. How do we share this information and what are we allowed to do? It was proposed that, as it is not clear what has already been cut, we find out exactly what has happened to date and the subcommittee will pursue clarity on this in the first instance. This must come from APC.

Before a response is sent to the council, we want to send a letter of explanation to all parents/carers; Rebecca has already drafted something suitable. There were suggestions that we could link to Fortrose Academy and to other parent councils. There was discussion about the best method of achieving this. APC could send out draft letters for signing and returning and could then coordinate their return. Alternatively, we could simply give our opinion and suggest that letters of response can be based on that. The response deadline is the 4<sup>th</sup> March.

Lorna noted that the school has more staff this year than ever, so the cuts have not yet been felt. However, staff cover is timetabled 'to the minute'. The support at Avoch was given on the basis of pupils who are no longer at the school and this allocation will revert in August (if not before). It is expected that the ASN level will eventually drop to cover only the minimum statutory needs which are very basic. The Adult-child ratio will fall and we must then rely on parent/carers to help.

It was agreed that an information table at the discos would be useful. A letter could be drafted either for signing there or for taking away.

There followed a discussion on how best to provide support to the school once the cuts hit. It was suggested that training parents/carers to give more confidence in helping at school could be a useful approach. To help in the classroom, Lorna noted that Timewise training and a PVG would be required. Karen Patience added that general helpers are equally useful (not just trained helpers). A message asking for expressions of interest in this opportunity could be put out by the school directly.

**Action:** Subcommittee to investigate training opportunities and pursue ideas to develop these.  
Rebecca to draft letter for distribution

### *Disco (Asia)*

The next discos are on the 13<sup>th</sup> February. PVG checks, although useful, are not yet compulsory. Asia will ask for helpers and start to compile a list of PVGs for future reference. The usual precautions will be taken otherwise.

Sales were discussed again. The last disco sold around 400 glow sticks and 150 slap bands and made additional income. We are left with around 50 slap bands to be used up. Other sales ideas were discussed such as face painting (yes), glowsticks (no, as they are single-use) and popcorn (no, as it could be a choking hazard). Pending further ideas, we are just going to run down existing stock. It was agreed that we can't send the children mixed messages and need to fit in with their school learning about minimising plastic use. We will lose income, but this is the ethical way to proceed. A Facebook post will be put out noting that we are just running down existing stock (as part of the general Disco promotion post).

Phoebe suggested investing in plastic cups (reusable, not disposable), otherwise paper cups will be used where needed and all children will be encouraged to bring their own bottles.

We need a good DJ who will get involved with the children, or a volunteer to prompt the DJ for specific events, competitions, etc. Asia will get some prizes for the dancing competitions.

The entry remains at £3, including a packet of sweet/crisps/fruit.

**Actions:** Iona to post on Facebook for Feb discos.  
Asia to compile a table of volunteers and PVGs for future reference.

### *Bikeability (Fiona)*

Fiona provided a report now that the Bikeability is in its third week (of six). The sessions are going well and the children are enjoying it, despite some awful weather. There have been some logistical difficulties in running the project, but these have now been overcome. A risk assessment has been completed and approved and will be used as a template for future years. It is hoped that we will have enough parent volunteers to be able to run this independently in the future. Fiona is seeking names for volunteers for the next training session on 19<sup>th</sup> March.

To follow up on the course, Fiona / Ruth are proposing to develop and send out two fact sheets to parents: one on 'Bike-fitting for Kids' and one on 'Basic Bike Mechanics'. To keep enthusiasm going, it would also be good to send out a map of short local family cycling routes. This is in progress with help from a parent (Rose Grant). The Black Isle Tourism Steering Group and Transition Black Isle may be approached for additional help in this regard.

The Dr Bike session had a good turn out with 35 bikes. Other sessions run in Fortrose but have a low take up and we could tie in with these for parents/carers in Fortrose and Rosemarkie in the future as getting bikes to Avoch is not always straightforward.

A number of spin-off events are proposed:

- Lee Craigie, the Active Nation Co-ordinator and part of the Adventure Syndicate with Jenny Graham can come to the school to give a talk to P4-7s and present the Bikeability certificates.
- *Match the Miles School Challenge* during 27<sup>th</sup> April to 8<sup>th</sup> May. This would mean that all active travel over that time (cycling, scooting, walking etc) would count towards the school total.
- *Big Pedal Week* runs within the same time frame and we hope to get a nominated teacher to lead on this with help from the P6s. Another Dr Bike session may run during this week.

Ruth extended a thank you to Lorna and to Amanda Macrae for all the help and troubleshooting with Bikeability.

**Action:** Ruth to liaise with school to send out email explanation to parents/carers who queried the project, specifically those who thought that P7s had been unfairly excluded and to outline the other spin off events which will include whole school.

Ruth to liaise with school to get Lee Craigie / Jenny Graham event booked and confirmed.

Lorna to nominate a teacher to lead on Big Pedal Week.

Ruth/Lorna/Fiona to coordinate re. plans for Big Pedal/MTM week.

Fiona / Ruth to lead on compiling the fact sheets and the Route Map for distribution.

### *New Parent/Carer Liaison (Kirsty & Ruth reporting for Ingrid)*

Karen Patience will be the school lead on this, working with Ruth and Ingrid. APC hopes to offer a link to new parents/carers, whether as P1 starts or just new to the school. This will start with the new P1 information evening on 5<sup>th</sup> March where we propose to have an APC presence. It would be useful to have an information table there as well as other parents to offer advice informally. We could also have the Unicycle clothing laid out.

It was also agreed that the APC presence at the last Parents Evening was successful and should be continued. The next Parents Evenings are scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March. A call for volunteers will be sent out so a rota can be confirmed in advance. There may be scope to offer teas/coffees/refreshments too, though this would only be if space was available.

**Action:** Ruth & Ingrid to follow up re. volunteers / information for P1 info evening.

Julie to organize unicycle for the event.

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## Nursery Update

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Nursery hours on offer are to increase to a minimum of 30 hours from August. Avoch is committed to providing this though without the new Nursery building, it is not yet known where this will be. It is hoped that Lorna (at least) will know more following a meeting with Highland Council Estates later this week.

Claire noted that the Early Years/Nursery Teaching framework is not clear to parents or always consistent and asked for more feedback from the school. There is a desire for Parents/Carers to feel more involved. Lorna or the Depute will ask the staff to provide more information such as an outline for each week.

**Action: Lorna / Depute to ask staff to provide more information for parents.**

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## Breakfast Club

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Several parents/carers have been asking about the possibility of an earlier start time as 8.10 is just not quite early enough. Unfortunately, this is not a simple matter of cost but is council policy which limits the start time to one hour before the start of school (so an 8am start is not possible).

Lorna thought that there may be more flexibility with this once the new nursery hours come into play as the Breakfast Club could be linked with the Nursery to provide wrap-around care. This is expected for the school year 2021-2022.

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## Safer Routes to School / Traffic Calming Project

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Claire raised this issue which is also being discussed by Avoch and Killen Community Council. It has been raised for years with no resolution yet found. The main problem is the junction at Braehead which requires traffic calming. Councillor Fraser is hoping to produce an Avoch Traffic Management Plan including a Safer Route to School link and village traffic calming. There is a plan for a crossing from the new housing (opposite the school). Claire volunteered to be the APC link with the Community Council if any specific issues are raised. Ruth noted that an improved cycle path and pedestrian route as a Safer Route to School will also feed into the crossing issue (for Braehead??),

Lorna noted that the road into the school is a public road – it does not belong to the school and neither does the car park. The zig zags have eroded and can hardly be seen and the speed bumps have been removed as they were poorly maintained and became a hazard. It is important that no-one parks along the road so that children have a clear line of sight to cross.

An icy patch at the bottom of the path from the playground to the car park has been causing trouble for years. Lorna thought that APC had agreed to take this on several years ago. It needs regraded and graveled.

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## Video Recording of school events

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A Parent/Carer had asked via Facebook whether there was an option for school events such as sharing assemblies to be recorded so that those who were not able to attend could watch it back privately with their child.

Discussion was had about how difficult it can be for some parents/carers to get to events and this is noted as a challenge for some. However, the only possible answer to the option of recording and sharing assemblies /events to be shared for private viewing is 'No'. School policy has always been

that videos/images can be taken but **cannot** be posted or shared. Child Protection Online is clear on this and anyone sharing images without consent, by law becomes a 'distributor'. This means that even if a parent/carer films the event and then shares it with another parent/carer for their own private viewing, they have broken the law and breached Child Protection policy. There is not an easy way to get around this and offering any alternative for "private viewing" means material has to be shared so it will not be possible. It was also noted that these child protection policies are there to protect children, especially in situations where children may be vulnerable. In order to ensure all children are protected, these policies need to be followed.

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## AOB

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Julie had requested part-funding from APC to complete Level 2 training as a gymnastics coach. There was brief general discussion about the merits of funding training like this and the benefits of thinking about it more generally rather than as one-off requests. Further discussion is required with regard to how we allocate funds.

The state of the playground was raised initially by Lorna. The works undertaken over the 2019 summer break that have resulted in a large portion of the playground being unusable were undertaken without her knowledge. Highland Council Estates would have had to sign it off though. Kirsty asked whether the council was aware that most of the playground, including the pitch, was unusable for a large part of the year. Could we ask that Avoch is put forward for improvements such as drainage or a MUGA pitch?

**Actions: Ruth to follow up with Lorna.**

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## Next Meeting

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Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020, 7-9pm at Avoch Primary School

## Appendix 1

### AVOCH PARENT COUNCIL

### TREASURER REPORT

4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020

Opening balance as at 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**£8,281.55**

#### Income

Raddery Trust (Playground)

£5,000.00

Christmas Fayre

£1,919.90

Wine Raffle

£205.00

Playground cheques

£560.00

**£7,684.90** Total Income

#### Expenditure

Lottery licence

£40.00

HD Tablet

£149.99

Refreshments

£23.76

**£213.75** Total Expenditur

Closing balance as at 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**£15,752.70**

#### Outstanding Items:

	Income	Expenditure
Cheque – Kate		£80.00
Cheque – Phoebe		£19.99
Wine Raffle	£15.00	