



MINUTES

Avoch Primary School Parent Council

Monday 5th October 2020 | 7.00PM

In Attendance by Zoom

Ruth Edmonds (Chair) RE, Phoebe McDaid PM, Claire Weaver CW, Jacqui Dingwall JD, Asia Kucharczyk AK, Fiona Whyte FW, Donald MacPherson DM, Wanda Clark WC, Ingrid Robertson IR, Debbie Du Preez DD, Eleanor Blackburn EB, Julie Mackay JM and Lorna Sim LS.

Apologies

Kirsty Cameron

Minutes from last meeting

Updates from the previous Minutes:

- **Treasurer reports** - Bank details can be shared
- **Construction site** - Councillors Jennifer Barclay, Craig Frazer and Gordon Adam have all been contacted by RE. Craig Fraser expressed a desire to be supportive with regard to working with the H. Council and developers and has opened up lines of communication with the PC.
- **Pitch Drainage** - FW was signposted to and contacted the Highland Council (HC) Flood Risk Management Team and is awaiting a response. The previous contacts within the team have moved away.
Action: PM still in contact and will speak to Zoe to get additional contact details.
Richard Franklin noted that when he was a pupil at Avoch there was not a problem with flooding and was certain drainage exists. The drain is possibly now silted up and is in need of possible repair to assist in alleviating the problem.
Action: RE to speak to Avoch Community Council regarding sourcing independent advice on drainage in conjunction with the Sustrans cycle path drainage investigation.

Headteachers Report, Lorna Sim

Head teacher Update- Monday 5th October 2020

As we come to the end of our first term after lockdown, I thought I'd update you on the school recovery programme and the current ongoing Covid risk.

School Recovery Programme

We have had a good term in terms of minimal teacher absence, and, after an up and down start, pupil attendance has levelled out at about 94%.

In addition, the children have done remarkably well- all things considered. Some have needed a bit extra support in terms of friendships and resilience, but overall, they are coping well and settled well into their learning.

We have been tasked by the Government to look at three areas-

~Health and wellbeing

~Recovery of Learning, teaching and Assessment

~Attainment in 20-21- and in particular a focus on new or widening gaps caused by the situation

What are we doing so far?

~The teachers and other staff are working in groups, some of which is in their own time, to plan and to implement strategies to support or indeed challenge the pupils in these areas.

~All classes have been involved in doing baseline assessments to better gauge where the children are at. From this, the class teachers are targeting the learning gaps, as a whole class and sometimes with small groups or individuals.

~The teachers began the term with having anonymous worry boxes in the class and from that have discussed what is worrying them and ideas to help. There are regular circle times and check ins planned within the day; we are embedding the Decider skills introduced last year, to help them cope as well as a multitude of age appropriate activities.

~We have identified many children who will benefit from additional wellbeing support –for example our therapy dog Murphy will be back at school from tomorrow. We have identified small groups of children who need a wee bit extra support to plug the learning gaps and will begin this after the holidays. This will be in addition to the support they are receiving in class.

Our Government money- Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is being used to employ an additional PSA to directly support this work, and also money has been set aside to allow teachers to be out of class occasionally to help direct this.

The Government has also given us a sum of money for Covid recovery- We have been directed to use this as a central pot for the 8 Black isle schools to employ a teacher. This will be for one day a fortnight and the advert went out from the authority yesterday for all 29 posts across Highland. There are also posts advertised to organise home learning for those who are self- isolating; although for us at Avoch, the teachers will be the main point for as often as is do-able.

The second aspect is the current Covid risk

I have to commend the pupils, staff, parents and carers for following the risk assessments we have in place. This is especially important as the number of cases are now rising, and schools are not immune to having cases. When we came back in August the numbers were relatively low, but now as you now, this is no longer the case.

Although I am confident we doing as much as we can, this is a growing concern as some of the staff are in the highest risk category. It is an occupation where the risks are quite high, as the teachers cannot socially distance from the pupils and teach effectively.

In conclusion, we don't feel this is the time to relax what we have in place and will continue to monitor Risk on an ongoing basis.

I thank the parent Council for their continued support in this matter.

Finally I'd like to thank Ruth and all the members of the parent council for all the work you are doing for the school and for the local community- you are doing a great job and its very much appreciated.'

Lorna Sim, head Teacher

Questions arising from the Head Teacher report:

1. Who decided how to split the PEF funding as Avoch has the largest school roll? Decision was taken by the cohort of Head Teachers within the Black Isle.
2. What position is the school in with regard to the cuts to the ASN budget at HC level? Avoch budget for ASN has increased this year and PEF funding is not filling the gap in the budget.

Treasurer's Report, Claire

Income £0.00

Playground equipment expenditure £13,037.23

Closing balance £3,650.00

Highland Council Parent Partnership

222 Parent Councils engaged in the program. Has a new Chair Jason Hassan who is setting a new direction and trying to create true partnership working with HC.

- Jason attend the monthly Education Committee meetings to raise challenges
- HCPP are increasing support for PC's via creating templates, role descriptions and a programme of mentoring.
- HCPP are running sessions with Head Teachers of schools on developing good relationships with Parent Councils, organised by Donald Paterson.

Comms and Engagement

Parent Council and Pupils

WC has been given the role of supporting the Pupil Council and welcomes PC involvement. Historically the Pupil Council would attend the PC meeting. Going forward this will be changed to members of the PC attending the Pupil Council meetings when invited. Pupil representatives are elected by their peers from P2 upwards. They formulate the Pupil Improvement Plan and what subsequent actions they will take on both large and small issues. The PC want to ensure that they support/align with the pupils in delivery of their agenda and learn about what's important to pupils about their school and how to help.

Action: Wanda to invite Ruth and Ingrid to the first meeting and to go from there.

New Parents / involvement in the school

Discussion held about online open days and parents' evenings. There are a number of children who can't be filmed due to consents and the school don't want to be seen to be singling out children by having to remove them from class whilst filming takes place etc. This means it's not always easy to share what's going on in the classroom. However, parents' evenings will take place online this year.

Input into the School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Lorna is keen to encourage parents / carers to be involved in the formulation of the SIP. Existing mechanisms for this include tea and talk, surveys, post its at Parents evenings. Next year's plan is now open for input. This kind of input into the SIP sits within discussion about engagement of parents in learning more generally (see below) and warrants fuller discussion about ideas for encouraging this more generally as well as around the SIP specifically.

Action: Lorna / Ruth to discuss this and make a plan for engaging with PC specifically on SIP, perhaps through a meeting agenda item or a focused discussion.

Parents/carers engagement with the school

Lockdown gave parents more visibility and engagement in children's learning. It would be good to capitalize on this engagement. LS said that the however the primary focus of the first term was the children's wellbeing and establishing learning requirements. In addition, there was discussion about looking at how discussion / engagement / feedback on learning could happen on a more regular basis. We discussed ideas about how to maintain / continue to encourage parental engagement in children's learning. Ideas included a monthly Google form akin to that used in lockdown so children can share their experiences at home. The point was made that it seems more important than ever for parents / carers to be able to share any concerns or issues they are noticing at home with the school. Another idea included expanding the space for comments / input on the homework form – to encourage parents/carers to acutally be able to share any issues / concerns / positives about learning at home. It was agreed that this issue warranted further and more extended discussion than there was time for at the meeting and it would be important to be clear about what the result / actions would follow any further engagement.

Term 2 will see the following reimplemented:

- Learning letters will be reinstated so parents will be given an overview of what their children's classes will be studying over the term.
- Pupil Profiles will be going home for a week after Half Term.
- Online parents' evenings will be held in November
- Possible reintroduction of homework

Actions:

- Further discussion about parent/carers engagement in learning / school to take place.
- Wanda to amend the homework form

PC engagement with Parent/Carer Community

Discussion took place about parents' awareness and engagement with PC and how we might encourage this. The committee is small but it was noted that it was better to have an active group of parnets/carers who can work well together as well as reaching out to other parents/carers who want to support in lots of different ways but might not want to be part of a committee or attend meetings. It was noted that we have a number of parents who support in different ways like this. However, it was also agreed that we can do more to engage better (and in more varied ways) with the wider parent/carers forum. We agreed to continue discussions about this.

Facebook

Discussion took place on the merits of separating the school FB page from the PC. Concerns were raised that it may send the wrong signal to people that the school and PC were not working as a partnership. However, also felt that the PC could be more active through their own fb page which would have the effect of ultimately improving the support they can provide the school. The majority thought it a good idea and to ensure both pages share each other's content.

Action: Separate PC FB page to be set up by Phoebe

Newsletter

Collaborative agreement that a joint school and PC letter is a preferable medium to reach the widest audience. This also reduces more communications going out via email/paper.

Engagement within the wider community

Local Councillors

Ruth has reached out to all 3 councillors and invited them all to attend PC meetings. She has also tried to engage them on big issues impacting on the school such as construction site disruption. Craig Fraser has been keen to work with the school and represent our concerns within the HC.

Community Councils and local Amenities Organisations

Ad hoc approaches have been made by the PC to various local organisations in the past. It was agreed that a more consistent approach should be implemented going forward.

Actions:

- 1 – Claire to work with Avoch Community Council and Amenities to see how we can work closer together
- 2 – Phoebe to work with Rosemarkie as above
- 3 – Ruth to identify the relevant parties in Fortrose and Rosemarkie CC and establish a relationship
- 4 - Ruth to link with other Black Isle PCs and set up an initial meeting.

Fundraising Jacqui Dingwall

Zoom disco not taking place as reluctance from wider community to engage with it

School lottery agreement that a school lottery would be preferable to running a 100 club due to licensing issues and limited reach of the 100 club.

Other ideas: Virtual cake competition, Time trials, Just Giving, treasure hunts and what to do in place of the Xmas fayre were all briefly discussed. It was decided that a FuNaising sub-committee call would be needed to discuss these ideas in more detail.

Action: Jacqui to set up a zoom call to discuss fundraising ideas

AOB

None

Next Meeting

Tuesday 10th November 2020 7.00pm

AVOCH PARENT COUNCIL

TREASURER REPORT

5th October 2020

Opening balance as at 28th July 2020

£17,872.86

Income

£0.00 Total Income

Expenditure

P7 School trip deposit refund

£1,100.00

£1,100.00 Total Expenditure

Closing balance as at 6th August 2020

£16,772.86

£13,037.23 (Play equipment fund)

£3,735.63 Net Total

Outstanding Items:

	Income	Expenditure	
Cheque – Kate		£80.00	
		<u>£80.00</u>	Total
		£3,655.63	Net Total