



MINUTES

Avon Primary School Parent Council

10th November 2020 | 7.00PM

In Attendance

APC - Ruth Edmonds (Chair), Phoebe Dickinson, Jacqui Dingwall, Ingrid Robertson, Fiona Whyte, Kirsty Cameron, Caroline Paterson, Chie Kelly-Kano and (her husband) Scott Kelly, Cathryn McPherson and Sophie Spence.

APS - Wanda Clark and Lorna Sim. Donald MacPherson joined for the Bikeability item.

Councillor Gordon Adam

Apologies

Debbie du Preez, Asia Kucharczyk, Julie Mackay, Claire Weaver, Iona MacMillan

Minutes from last meeting

The School Improvement Plan will be discussed at the next meeting. The Parents with Partners will be discussed next year. The homework form will be updated when homework restarts at the beginning of Term 3. Wider engagement is ongoing: Phoebe is a direct link with Rosemarkie Amenities, Claire is a direct link with Avon and Killen Community Council. There are plans to engage with Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council.

Helen of AKCC is taking forward the AKCC proposed plans for the Braehead crossing which we reviewed and approved. We hope this will be taken forward to Highland Council. Helen of AKCC is contacting the owner of the old railway line re. proposed improvement work.

Report from the School, Wanda Clark

Providing school dinners is logistically tricky but has been progressing well. There are currently three sittings for lunch with no mixing of bubbles and everyone is finished and outside by around 12.55. The staff are now working on how to mix packed and school lunches. Concerns were again raised by APC about the time allocated for eating lunch. Wanda provided reassurance noting that the children are getting longer than before to eat lunch with packed lunch children getting 20-25 minutes and all are encouraged to take anything not eaten in that time outside with them. Scott Kelly, new to the school this year said he was impressed with the hot meals menu and the hard work of the staff is facilitating the lunch routine. Wanda confirmed that it was too difficult just now to reinstate a formal fruit break (cleaning tables and washing hands take too much time out of learning).

The nursery build is scheduled to start in January. Confirmation of the start date will follow when it is known.

There will be no Tempest Photography in school this year. Some schools had Tempest in but had been reprimanded as this was against Covid guidance. APC suggested taking on this arrangement (or a similar photography company) in the new year. Wanda agreed to discuss this as needed next year if we could provide further details of what may be required.

Actions:

Ruth / Jacqui to look into the possibility of the PC providing a photograph service next term

Ruth summarised the issue for the benefit of all attendees, especially Cllr Gordon Adam and those new to the parent council.

- Construction noise and vibration has been disrupting teaching
- Traffic measures required to put in associated services had been causing chaos for school drop-off and pick-up and particularly the buses arriving late.
- There are drainage, flooding and run-off issues, especially around the bus stop area where a drain has been broken and a knock-off impact on the pitch area.
- Part of the playground is damaged and unusable despite remedial works (over a badly sited tank)
- An overall lack of communication from the developer to the school.
- The situation is unacceptable, useable space is diminishing and a solution is required.

Ruth also noted our concern about the impact from more new housing (the application at Rosehaugh) and that the school has great site on plan but much of the area is unusable. We need a resolution and are asking that the developers can provide compensation and/or a goodwill gesture because of the unacceptable damage and disruption. It was stated clearly that we are being messed around on this issue and the PC is asking for clarity and support from elected councillors to get a successful resolution for the school.

Fiona has been in discussion with the HC Flood Risk Team (Duncan Sharp) with regard to the culvert that runs below the pitch. Lorna confirmed that this drain was inspected and cleared before the start of construction (as was required by planning consent), however following Fiona's correspondence it is likely that the inspection chamber has silted up due to increased water run-off from the construction site and will need looked at in the first instance. Ruth asked for confirmation of who is responsible for maintaining the culvert, inspection chamber and checking whether the burn (where the culvert discharges) is already backing-up.

Lorna had some additional information following discussion with council officers, including the Landscape Architect. This clarified that the HC School Estates is responsible for the pitch. There is a 10-year plan for spending and this is prioritised by the School Estates on making buildings watertight, etc. It is likely to be 'a generation' before there is enough money to sort the pitch. The Landscape Architect had advised that a drainage survey of the pitch may cost around £2k. There are no HC funds available for this; it is not in the School Estates plan and so would the PC consider taking it on? Lorna also noted that the information she had received said that putting in additional drainage on the pitch would likely result in it being out of use for one, possibly two years while the grass re-established. It had been suggested by the Landscape Architect that the pitch may simply be compacted and not allowing free drainage and that a simpler/cheaper solution may be just to aerate it. Would the PC consider organizing proper pitch aeration as a better option than a drainage survey?

Ruth confirmed that we accept there is no HC money for pitch upgrading but that if the drainage is blocked only 12 months after it was maintained, it is likely a direct result of increased silt and water run off from the construction work and we need to address the issue of compensation. We have photos showing the large amount of silt and water run off from the construction site.

Gordon Adam acknowledged the inconvenience from the construction, the problem of direct damage to the drainage and the irreversible impact on the playground from the siting of the tank. He confirmed that the waterlogging of the pitch was a long-standing problem and that the council has no money to resolve this as it is not seen as a priority. He noted that the Highland area suffers in regard to government funding as we have so many schools. Sports pitches are necessarily a low priority and this will not change for the foreseeable future. He agreed that our best option is to negotiate with the developer for formal compensation or at least a goodwill gesture. He agreed that this would be appropriate and justified and we could make a reasoned argument that the impacts to the drainage had been made worse by construction works. It is recommended that we negotiate directly with the managing director rather than the site manager. To date, the developer has argued that they already paid their developer contribution to the council and that nothing

further is required of them so it remains necessary to find out how much was paid and where this has gone (into a wider HC budget it is believed). Gordon Adam agreed to investigate where the developer contribution has been/will be spent as it is not thought to have benefitted Avoch directly. Similarly, the developer contribution from the ongoing housing site in Rosemarkie was to be clarified.

Ruth will put together a letter, to be agreed and signed by the councillors. She will also set up a meeting with William Gray or his representative and Gordon Adam agreed to attend. Robert Campbell of HC Estates will also attend on behalf of the council.

Ruth asked if Gordon Adam could secure some of the developer contribution for us directly to use in regard to the pitch and this will be looked into. Gordon Adam noted that the guidance for developer contribution will be changing soon and will allow greater community input into how this can be used.

Ingrid wanted it made clear that lots of parents/carers are raising this as a concern and that it is urgent as outdoor space is needed because of Covid requirements. Outdoor space is required for teaching, for PE and to keep the children safely in their required bubbles. It was again made clear that the developer had already publicised a successful working partnership with the school on their social media but that this was far from the truth and perhaps it should be addressed in the press. Gordon Adam advised that we should remain amicable with the developer and was hopeful that it could be resolved.

Various other issues were raised with Gordon Adam. One was the predicted school roll as the PC has concerns about the amount of proposed and ongoing new housing in the catchment area. Gordon Adam thought that the school roll was predicted to drop but he would check this. He confirmed that it is considered highly unlikely that any further housing developments will be consented on the Black Isle in the near future. It is recognised that the amenities and facilities on the Black Isle are at capacity (including roads and schools) and that this would need to be addressed before there was further large-scale development. The new Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) will be out soon and this will show the areas zoned for development. Following a query regarding the possibility of a new primary school in Fortrose (where land had previously been set aside for this option), Gordon Adam confirmed that this was no longer a 'live plan'.

Actions ;

Ruth to draft a letter to be agreed with Councillors

Gordon Adam to look into the developer contributions from the Memorial park and Greenside housing developments and whether some of this could be used directly to address the issue.

Bikeability, Donald MacPherson

Donald now has responsibility from the school side for bikeability and active travel related projects. He got the go-ahead for running bikeability at school last week in an email from Emma Garden, Highland Council Bikeability Co-ordinator. Risk Assessments are all in place. Fiona (who leads on this for the PC), has also been updated by Emma Garden. This year's P6 is a large year so it will be logistically tricky as the group numbers are limited. Training courses are being held in the next few months and APC will put out a call for volunteers or helpers who may want to be trained. We already have a good group of volunteers already, only a few of whom are trained. There will be a video of how to deliver the programme safely with regard to Covid and this will also need to comply with school policy. It is expected that the course will be delivered in Term 3 or Term 4. Bike sharing is likely to be necessary although at the moment no sharing is permitted and adults are not allowed to touch the bikes. Lorna confirmed that it would be better to leave this till later in the year and appraise in terms of (hopefully) easing Covid guidance and restrictions as well as (hopefully) better weather. An assessment of what is required will be made nearer the time.

Actions;

Ruth/Fiona to issue a call for volunteers to attend the training course

Christmas Fundraising and Raffle, Jacqui

The lottery is going really well with 89 already signed up and our target is 100 by the end of the year. This means that it will raise £1851 by the end of the year.

Raffle tickets will be sent home with children soon, with two books going to every family (10 tickets and 215 families). Additional tickets will be sold at local shops, including the Fortrose Co-op which is happy to sell until the end of November (when the focus becomes the Cash for Kids campaign). Jacqui has ordered 7000 tickets and we hope to sell as many as possible. The draw will be on December 11th and APC members have managed to get loads of great prizes contributed. All prizes will be individually advertised on our Facebook page. Our fundraising focus at the moment is purely on the lottery and raffle, nothing else is proposed for now but we will look at other fundraisers after xmas.

Actions:

Jacqui to continue to promote this on Facebook

Toy Shed and other Christmas Proposals, Ingrid

Ingrid had suggested that a toy shed for recycling items no longer wanted or used would be a good idea, particularly as this year will be harder for many families. The suggestion was that the shed required for the polycrub (with funds allocated) could be put to this use straight away and perhaps sited in the car park near the Sea Scouts building. There are community sharing sheds already in various villages, including one recently put in at Fortrose. These are mainly for food, but some toys are available too. The time frame for this is tight and following a wider discussion, it was agreed that this would be pursued for next year with the aim of recycling toys and games for everyone. The siting of the shed would need to be agreed with Derek Martin of the Sea Scouts and also the HC Area Manager and the problem of potential vandalism would need to be addressed (Lorna noted that there is an ongoing problem in and around the school grounds).

The wider discussion was led by Lorna noting that as toys/games may already be provided from other sources, a better idea for this year may be providing treat hampers for any families who may be having a hard year. The PC agreed to cost up the option of providing hampers in time for Christmas with a approx. budget of £300 (similar to school supplies support) (with hampers to be allocated and distributed in confidence by the school).

It was also agreed that our Unicycle clothing recycling would be expanded to include warm outdoor clothes in addition to uniform. Carrie Budge is happy to take this on. This will be open to all. Lorna suggested that post-Corona restrictions, there could be a 'sharing rail' for outdoor jackets in the school (share, borrow or keep; to be restocked from Unicycle stock as required). This was agreed to be an excellent idea and we will work towards this option when restrictions ease next year. Ingrid noted that outdoor clothing can also included in the polycrub funding applications.

Actions:

Carrie to promote the Outdoor Wear through Unicycle page

Treasurer's Report, from Claire

See below.

AOB

The issue of class representatives was raised again. This is considered to be a good idea and should engage parents/carers who do not want to take part directly in PC discussion. The class reps would be a useful liaison. To be considered in more detail at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on 9th Dec, via Google Meet.

Appendix 1 – TREASURER'S REPORT

AVOCH PARENT COUNCIL

TREASURER REPORT

10th November 2020

Opening balance as at 6th August 2020

£16,772.86

Income

The Giving Machine

£16.78

Parklands Polycrub donation

£300.00

£316.78 Total Income

Expenditure

Unicycle plastic boxes

£29.99

£29.99 Total Expenditure

Closing balance as at 22nd October 2020

£17,059.65

£13,037.23 (Play equipment fund)

£300.00 (Polycrub fund)

£3,722.42 Net Total

Outstanding Items:

	Income	Expenditure
Cheque – Kate		£80.00
Cheque - Keri		£97.98
		<u>£177.98</u>
		£3,544.44