



MINUTES

Avoch Primary School Parent Council

9th December 2020 | 7.00PM

In Attendance

APC - Ruth Edmonds (Chair), Claire Weaver, Debbie du Preez, Asia Kucharczyk, Jacquie Dingwall, Ingrid Robertson, Kirsty Cameron, Scott Kelly, Cathryn McPherson and Julie Mackay.

APS - Wanda Clark and Lorna Sim.

Cllr Gordon Adam and Cllr Craig Fraser

Apologies

Phoebe McDaid, Fiona Whyte

Minutes from Last Meeting

- Ruth will investigate the possibility of the PC organising photographs (similar to Tempest) in the new year.
- A letter to WGC regarding the construction disturbance was sent to Dougal Murray of WGC earlier this week. It was signed by Ruth for the PC and on behalf of our three councillors. AKCC and Highland Council were also copied in. A response has just been received but will not be discussed at this time. The response notes that they are open for discussion.
- Gordon Adam had been looking into the possibility of using some of the developer contributions directly for the pitch remedial works but had not yet had a response on this matter. Julie Ferguson of Highland Council had provided a response on the specific sums paid as developer contributions, but it is not yet clear if we can access any of this money. The upfront developer contributions included £36,720 payable towards development/extension to the school and the Black Isle Leisure Centre from the WGC Memorial construction site.
- Ruth will set up a meeting to discuss this followed by a formal meeting with WGC.
- Wanda confirmed that the playground proposal has now been green-lighted by HC (it just needs signed-off as a formality). However, it may not now go ahead till October 2021 as the site will be "cleaner" then following the completion of the new nursery and the two projects will not overlap.
- The Minutes were formally proposed and agreed.

Actions:

Ruth to set up a pre-meeting and a meeting to discuss the construction disturbance/solution.

Claire to check if we can get an extension to the playground donations that were time limited. Alternatively, to offer the time-constrained funds as a down-payment to Wicksteed which would ensure that the quote is honoured.

Treasurer's Report, from Claire

This remains the same as at the last meeting and the details are appended below. Our balance is healthy at £16,980.87 (with £13,000 of that earmarked for the playground equipment) and the raffle takings will be added in the next report. A cheque from Kate Lackie for £80 is a donation. The online lottery funds are coming in slowly and are expected to show in the next report.

Report from the School, Wanda Clark

A parental questionnaire was sent out, included in the folios sent home prior to Parents Evenings. 183 were returned and the results have now been analysed. Overall this was a good number of returns with a positive response. Some good ideas were also proposed. Please see attached data pack.

Ruth noted that she had fed back to the Highland Council Parent Council Partnership (HPCP) meeting about the Avoch pilot online parents' evenings. It seems that Avoch was one of a few schools to get material home beforehand and this was much appreciated by parents.

School Improvement Plan (SIP), Lorna Sim

Lorna outlined the cyclical process by which the SIP was written each year. The SIP forms part of the required continuous improvement agenda and is produced annually by every school. The SIP is based on evidence that comes from all stakeholders (including pupils, staff, parents/carers and the wider community). This will include the comments, questions and compliments received from parents/carers. Lorna notes that all parents' comments and letters are valued as they form the important evidence on which the plan is produced.

The SIP is based on evidence (which must be robust and triangulated) to produce a Standards and Quality Report known as "How Good is Our School?" (or HIGiOS). There are Quality Indicators in that report and Avoch grades itself according to a six-point scale. If there is a decline or the results are below expectations, then the school chooses this as part of their next plan. In this way, the SIP is built.

Because of the pandemic, the authority has instructed schools to make the plan 2020 much slimmer than usual and the timescales this year are necessarily much later. This year there are far fewer priorities with a focus (from ScotGov) on Recovery of Literacy and Numeracy and Recovery of Health and Wellbeing. Avoch has also chosen Inclusion and Equality as a priority. The children have been working hard on Kindness.

A summary of the SIP will be coming out soon and will be made available to all parents/carers. Feedback will be welcomed.

Actions:

An item will be added to the next meeting agenda to discuss the summary plan (assuming it will have been sent out by then).

Highland Parent Council Partnership (HPCP), Ruth

Ruth had attended a useful online meeting with HPCP last week. There are 212 PCs included in this forum. The following issues were covered:

- The email platform will be changing. This must be set up by HC to allow all PCs access (as so many have lost passwords, etc over time). The new emails will allow HC to be able to get in touch with *all* PCs which means that we can claim voting rights in Education meetings. The new emails are being set up now and access will be given in the new year. The email must be used for all PC business.
- Ruth had fed back on the success of the Avoch pilot Parents Evenings. The overall feedback from other pilot schools was good. Some schools just had a phone call which also worked well.
- Nicky Grant confirmed that homework would restart in Term 3, though it would be up to individual schools if they wanted to take this up.

- Singing continues not to be allowed in schools following Scottish Government guidance. It was noted by the HC that there was strong evidence that singing could project the virus considerably more than speaking or shouting.
- There have been 18 cases to date of coronavirus in Highland schools and these were contained successfully. Only a single small school had to close completely to allow for the isolation period.
- Teacher well-being is a focus just now with support provided as helplines and other resources.
- HPCP has a new chair and is offering support for PC chairs. It is also proposing to run sessions on roles, responsibilities, offering help and how to engage councillors.
- Discussion regarding outdoor classrooms and how to get funding towards them. Ruth suggested that we have a meeting with other schools who have already successfully applied for funding and created new outdoor classrooms similar to our Polycrub project. This will be discussed at the next meeting.
- It was suggested that a smaller group would be useful (in addition to the HPCP meeting with its usual 100+ attendees) and that a Black Isle area group should be formed.

Actions:

Further discussion about Outdoor Classrooms – Ruth/Ingrid

Discussion about forming a BI PC forum at the next meeting.

Class Reps, Debbie

Debbie described the benefits of having class reps which could provide a useful, easy link between the parents/carers and the school. There would be one parent/carer for each class (or possibly year). It doesn't need to be a big commitment or even a formal tie to the PC. The rep would be the link for things like providing reminders for events coming up, can call for volunteers or materials required in class and can arrange social events so that the parents/carers can meet. The last point is particularly needed for Avoch PS as the parents/carers live in dispersed communities and have little chance to meet in person. The teacher can have contact with the rep to ask directly for specific things to be mentioned. Both Wanda and Lorna said that this was standard in other schools they worked in and parents/carers at the meeting who had come from other schools said the same. There is a massive benefit in this, and it could foster a sense of community that is really needed at the moment and especially in the future for new starts. Wanda noted that this should be promoted as a Class Champion, that would *support* the teachers and get contributions and volunteers when needed. This would be welcomed by the teachers too. It would have to be clear that this is only a positive thing and is not for negative feedback to the teachers or for raising concerns.

The process could be a WhatsApp group, to which parents/carers could ask to join. This works better than Facebook and is more personal. Provided that joining the WhatsApp is voluntary, then there are no concerns in regard to Data Protection Regulations. The reps would send out their contact number and ask for other parent/carers to contact them to be added.

Actions;

Debbie will draft an email (or FB post) to call for volunteers to go out in the new year.

Wanda will check that the teachers are happy with this initiative or at least with starting this on a trial basis.

Fundraising and Raffle, Jacquie

The Raffle closing date was today and the returns so far are looking really good. The draw is on Friday and will be done by a parent who is not part of the PC. For clarity, the draw will be recorded (but will not be broadcast). The winners will be notified individually as Data Protection does not allow a list of winners to be posted online. Thank you letters will be sent out in the new year using

the template from 2019 but also including some additional specific thank yous to those businesses that provided gifts for both the lottery and the family hampers.

There was a discussion about the merits of continuing with The Giving Machine or combining this (if possible) with the school account on Easy Fundraising (and splitting the funds). The APC Giving machine account gives us around £40 annually, but the Easy Fundraising is a much better account and should have a higher return. Lorna will confirm who has the account details for the school Easy Fundraising and whether this is still active.

Fundraising for the Polycrub project is ongoing with the Co-op having us as one of their three causes for October 2020 to October 2021. Ingrid will begin a wider promotion in the new year and will also look at seeking corporate funding or sponsorship.

Actions:

Lorna to check about the Easy Giving school site and whether this is still active / if there is scope for us to combine and promote together, splitting funds.

An item of Outdoor Learning and Fundraising to be added to the next Agenda

AOCB

No issues were raised.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on 21st January, 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	
<u>Income</u>					
The Giving Machine			£16.78		
Parklands Polycrub donation			£300.00		
				£316.78	Total Income
<u>Expenditure</u>					
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			
		£177.98	Total		
		£3,544.44	Net Total		

Playground equipment funds	
Funder	Total
APC	£5,000.00
Raddery Trust	£5,000.00
BIG Stall	£454.01
Envoy	£250.00
Ross-shire Engineering	£250.00
Avoch Harbour Chippy	£60.00
Tullochs	£500.00
Christmas Raffles	£1,523.22
Total	13037.23