



MINUTES

Avoch Primary School Parent Council

8th March 2021 | 7.00PM

In Attendance by Zoom

Ruth Edmonds (Chair), Phoebe McDaid, Claire Weaver, Jacqui Dingwall, Asia Kucharczyk, Fiona Whyte, Kirsty Cameron, Ingrid Robertson, Julie Mackay, Maru Fraser, Debbie du Preez,

Wanda Clark, Lorna Sim - and Helen Webster (for Item 3)

Apologies

None noted

1 Review of Minutes from 8th December

The Minutes were approved.

Actions carried over:

Discussion about convening Black Isle PCs to discuss local relevant issues.

Lorna to check about the Easy Giving school site and whether this is still active

2 Report from the School, Lorna Sim

1. **Return to school.** This has gone extremely well for N-3 and hopefully will be the same for P4-7 from next week. P1-3 returned to school enthusiastic, keen to learn and delighted to socialise with their peers.

Parents have done a fabulous job in supporting learning at home. It is appreciated that this won't have been easy for many parents and for many reasons. Parents have also been supportive of what the teachers have been endeavouring to do and very respectful towards them during this lockdown. Whilst we have returned to in-school education, we must still be mindful that we are still at level 4 so must be vigilant and follow safety procedures to the letter. This means that there continues to be restrictions in what and what we cannot do. Alongside a nursery being built, there has had to be a lot of problem solving to allow it to happen. Safety will always take precedent over all else. Staff are doing lateral flow tests twice weekly which is an additional mitigation. It's a strict protocol and the results must go onto a public health register.

Our biggest concern is what happens at school gate, the nursery and at the bus stops. The children are lower risk but adults congregating at any time is a worry. The research is saying that if the virus was to arrive in the school, it is most likely to be from what parents and staff do outside school. This is the reason I am constantly reminding everyone.

2. **Curriculum.** There are key focusses on literacy and numeracy and this time we have added in science and technology (not the IT kind). Above all currently is health and well-being. At Avoch, children's wellbeing is being supported through a very wide range of things such as

learning outdoors, which is known to have huge benefits to well-being. Indoor play has been increased for the infants to help ease them back in to help them reform effective relationships with their peers. We continue with our Decider skills programme which teaches children strategies for coping with feelings and are introducing a new one called Fix it, which helps build resilience. On the same note we do a programme with nursery into P1, P3 into P4 and p7 into S1 called 'Resilient Kids.' Identified children will have access again to our therapy dogs and the Government is funding a little bit of counselling for those in P6 and P7 who need it most. The teachers continue with daily check-ins and circle times and we are introducing a whole school art therapy initiative. Also new is a programme called Treehouse from a business called the Tree of Knowledge. Highland Council have bought a year's subscription for all schools. It is based on building good mental health. Your child may start to talk about some of these things in the coming weeks. I have also sent out a link to Parent club which is a great website for parental support, including support for parents own mental health. Finally, whilst talking about the curriculum, Ms Webster has kindly offered to speak to you about a programme we are about to start called Relationships, sexual health and parenthood.

3. A quick update regarding numbers for next year, to date, we expect in the region of 285 in the school, excluding the nursery next session. This is 11 classes according to Highland Council teacher formula but with some small rooms in the school, it will be tight. Once the nursery build is complete, the plan is to re-do the old nursery room as an extra classroom which will help. If we are not allowed an extra teacher, which is likely, it will be fantastic to have a second GP room which is much needed. **LS**

Questions followed that clarified that the school has 11 Full Time or Equivalent (FTE) teachers. The school is just over the threshold for 11 FTE, but unfortunately some way off requiring 12 FTE. Over the last year we have had an extra probationer teacher, but this was a one-off. Ingrid asked if we could lobby for another probationer and Lorna confirmed that she had requested this, but it won't be decided until mid-June when the school roll is better known.

Some of our year groups are already full and it's not clear if these already include anyone new to the area.

Ruth asked if HC permission to use the Avoch Pavilion MUGA pitches was still required. Lorna stated that this is guided by the Level 4 regulations and it depends on 'having no alternative' and that we will probably get this permission.

Ruth asked if there was any information being sent to parents/carers about the Treehouse Programme. Lorna can send a website link if wanted, but there is not a ready-made pack for parents, as it is purely a teaching tool focused around mental health and well being.

Lorna noted that the School Improvement Plan has stalled and has requested that it now becomes a two-year plan due to the disruptions this year.

Update on the Nursery – Wanda Clark

Extended hours - increasing to 9am-3pm - will be starting earlier than previously expected, following the Easter break. At the moment, nursery is running at the community centre where the maximum capacity is 30 and there is only one space remaining on a few days. They are getting ready for extended hours from August, offering 8am-4.30pm with 30 hours offered and a flexible approach. Most parents/carers have chosen the maximum hours according to whatever suits best.

The staff rota from August is already being arranged. To date, 37 children are booked from August though the new building can take up to 48. Some promotional material will be sent out after Easter and APC will help get the word out beyond the current school community.

Wraparound care will begin in August. Wanda confirmed that the Breakfast Club, After School Club and Nursery will become one service. There will be an Early Years Practitioner at Breakfast and After School Clubs where needed for any nursery children booked in. Phoebe requested the consideration of a different price point, for example up to 4.30pm (not 6pm) for ASC for those who would be collecting school and nursery pupils together. This is being discussed with other ASCs but nothing has been set yet.

The construction team are very accommodating and are working carefully around the children as needed. The school will assemble a time capsule to be put under the new nursery. Younger pupils will be asked to suggest things to put in it and the older children will put a letter in about lockdown to make a historic record.

Risk assessments are being done for nursery and for the childminders of nursery pupils to maintain a consistent approach. Child minders also have their own risk assessment/policies.

Treasurer's Report, Claire

Considering our usual fund-raising has had to change, the bank balance is looking healthy. £300 is ring-fenced for the polycrub and £13k for the playground. We have generated just over £3k from the Christmas lottery and the school lottery. Expenditure was limited to lottery prizes at c. £400. An Easter fundraiser is not thought necessary and we should take a break till after Lockdown (hopefully sometime after Easter).

It is not likely that a Summer Fair will be allowed, but Jacqui thinks we can plan something fun after lockdown. The lottery is ticking over and she will start promoting it again soon. The lottery is doing really well, with over 70 subscribers.

Ingrid asks if it we should consider spending some funds on children who may have been badly affected by Lockdown. Debbie suggested another Buddy-bench (there is one in the infant playground) and Lorna confirmed that another one would be great. Ruth agreed to look into this, perhaps following the completion of the nurse build when the social play areas have been properly defined and we are turning our attention to outdoor spaces in the school and how we might help to improve them.

Claire asked whether the teachers could specify something to spend on the children; perhaps resources that would benefit the children. Lorna noted that the teachers share resources and so would probably like to work together to purchase what they needed so they could share them. Helen Webster thought that the teachers would probably be happy to get additional resources for their class.

Action: Lorna to gather feedback and let us know how we could help especially in terms of PC funds direct to teachers for spending on resources / items they need in their classes.

'Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood' Education - Helen Webster

Ruth noted that this item has arisen following interest from parents as to how and when this is taught in school. HW provided an overview. Sex education has been taught previously only to the upper stages using an outdated resource (from Channel 4) called 'Living and Growing'.

The new resource is called 'Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood' and will be taught across most of the school under the Health and Well-being part of the curriculum. Traditional sex education is included in this resource. It has been produced by the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, the Health Board and Local Authorities for all schools in Scotland. The RSHP website is available for any parents to access and to see the lessons that the children will be taught. 2021 will be Avoch's first year using it and HW will be looking at it with staff this week.

There are four main topics; Physical Changes, Sexual Health and Sexuality; Role of Parent/Carers; and Positive Relationships. It is designed as a resource for the full age range and it covers a lot with different levels for different ages. Consent is taught throughout and some examples of the second (older) level includes Safe and Happy Online, puberty and personal hygiene, managing emotions, etc.

There is a good PowerPoint designed for parents/carers which could be sent home if wanted. The information and presentation are available on the website plus a 2.5-minute video on why it matters and needs to be taught. The information breaks down what is taught and at what stage.

HW confirms that the school will let parents/carers know when items are being taught and so they can also look at the website with children at the same time. For info, the link to the website is here.

<https://rshp.scot>

Action: HW to share the resource with parents/carers once it is in use at the school.

Attenuation Tank – Meeting with WGC (update & next steps)

A meeting was held to agree the way forward earlier this year (27/01/21). This was well-attended with Dougal Murray (*Managing Director*), Rhona Donnelly (*Senior Quantity Surveyor*), Mark MacLennan (*Contract Manager*) attending from WGC Ltd; Derek Martin (*Area Care & Learning Manager*), Robert Campbell (*Estate Strategy Manager*) and Lorna Sim (*Head Teacher APS*) from Highland Council; along with Councillors Gordon Adam and Craig Fraser; the Chair of Avoch & Killen Community Council, Helen Baillot; and Ruth, Ingrid, Claire and Fiona from APC. The minute has been agreed by all parties and is available on our webpage.

WGC have agreed to repair the tank site area to a standard that will reinstate what was previously there. The depth of the topsoil over the tank has been measured and this has been deemed as acceptable and at the agreed level (though we have yet to have sight of the original specification). WGC gave several useful funding sources that can be applied to in order to improve the playground. The onus will be on APC to monitor the next steps as although this is our priority, we recognise that it is not theirs, and it might slip. The APC is already taking this forward and putting pressure on the relevant partners for the next steps. It will also be important to coordinate carefully with Morgan Sindall in regard to the nursery construction.

Following this overview, it was agreed that we could put something on Facebook about the progress towards an improved playground. It was thought that this would help give accountability as well as illustrating how hard the parent council work behind the scenes. LS agreed that this could go out on the APC social media; it is not appropriate to go out directly from the school.

Action: Consider a post to share an update on where things stand (Ruth/Phoebe)

Class Representatives Discussion - Debbie

A draft call for Reps had been circulated prior to the meeting and it was agreed that the content and tone worked well. Debbie would like to start promoting this next term, so we are ready for the new academic year. Ideally there would be a social evening where a rep could be nominated but this is not likely this year. Debbie is happy to be a rep herself and to coordinate this for 2021-2022.

It was suggested that Reps are mentioned when the school puts out the new classes towards the end of Term 4; the teachers could introduce themselves and ask for a class rep at the same time.

LS says that the school used to have 'Meet the Teacher' evening and this can still happen in the future. The teachers see it as a positive that they can be approached directly by parent/carers through email and would welcome the Class Reps initiative.

Action: It was agreed to introduce the idea of class reps along with new classes in Term 4 and the ask for Reps for the new 11 classes in August. APC to coordinate with the school to get the info out.

Playground (update & next steps) – Wanda Clark

The play equipment is due to be installed in October 2021 but no formal confirmation has yet been received from HC. The council officer liaising with Wanda had asked for confirmation that our Wicksteed quote still stands and if not, we need to get a new one so it can be looked at *asap*. Ruth has already asked and received for two quotes from Wicksteed during the planning process and felt it might be better if a new quote was sought closer to purchase/installation. At that time we will also need an answer from the HC about the requirement, or not, for a welfare unit as there is an additional cost for that. Ruth noted that the delay in the time since the last quote was received was due to HC delays in dealing with our paperwork not APC or Wicksteed delays. Claire confirmed that we have the money for the valid September 2020 quote and that, even if it goes up a bit by October 2021, we have a contingency built-in and this wouldn't compromise the installation. Ingrid suggested the latest Treasurers Report is shared with the HC liaison to satisfy their requirements so that they can issue formal consent.

Action: Wanda to discuss with the HC officer / liaison and share APC financial statement with HC to confirm that the money is in place.

Update since the meeting: APC have received confirmation from Wanda that the HC have confirmed their official approval for the playground build with this to take place in October 2021 once the nursery build is complete.

Co-op Fund (update & next steps) - Ingrid

The Co-op fund is advertised as being for the polycrub, but this is being scaled back at the moment as the location is not ideal. In addition, there are a number of ideas for outdoor learning environments that could be considered. As time was short, it was agreed to hold a full discussion on this topic at the next meeting and gather ideas. We are aiming to tie this in with a wider HC promotion of community growers, the Good Food Consultation. Ingrid is working to get a poster designed and put up in the Fortrose Coop.

Action: Lorna to invite Sarah Byam (lead for outdoor learning) to join our next APC meeting

Action: Ingrid to get our poster up in the Coop

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan

The deadline for this is now the 30th April.

Action – Ruth to ask for anyone to share their interest in a specific meeting about this.

AOB

School photographs, raised by Maru Fraser. Maru Fraser asked whether it will be possible to have school photos this year, even just for the P1s as it's their first year. LS confirms that we are not allowed to have anyone in school while we are in Level 4. She asks that we wait until Term 4 as we may be able to get Tempest

in by then. She will raise it again at the next area meeting. The teachers could take a class photo and send it to parents, though professional quality would not be guaranteed. It would be a priority to take a final class photo of the P7s at least.

In addition, the APC are still interested in organising professional photographs themselves. Jacqui and Maru will look into the option of APC organizing something off-site and in accordance with Covid regs, as an alternative to Tempest. This could even be a (small) fund-raiser.

Action- Jacqui and Maru to discuss some options for the APC running photographs and get back details to Ruth.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is on 27th April, via Google Meet.

Appendix 1 – TREASURER'S REPORT

AVOCH PARENT COUNCIL		TREASURER REPORT		8th March 2021	
Opening balance as at 22nd October 2020				£17,059.65	
<u>Income</u>					
Your School Lottery			£489.60		
Christmas Raffle			£2,373.00		
Christmas candles donation (Georgie)			£40.00		
Unicycle sale			£21.70		
Hampers donation (Emberton)			£50.00		
Highland Council Grant			£220.07		
				£3,194.37	Total Income
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Christmas Raffle prizes			£97.98		
Lottery tickets			£101.00		
Hampers chq. (Fiona)			£151.20		
Hampers & Staff gift chq. (Ruth)			£71.20		
				£421.38	Total Expenditure
Closing balance as at 26th February 2021				£19,832.64	
				£13,037.23	(Play equipment fund)
				£300.00	(Polycrub fund)
				£6,495.41	Net Total
Outstanding Items:					
	Income	Expenditure			
	Lottery licence renewal chq. (Rutl)	£20.00			
		£20.00	Total		\
		£6,475.41	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