



MINUTES

Avoch Primary School Parent Council

27th April 2021 | 7.00PM

In Attendance by Google Meet

APC - Ruth Edmonds (Chair), Phoebe McDaid, Claire Weaver, Jacqui Dingwall, Asia Kucharczyk, Fiona Whyte, Kirsty Cameron, Ingrid Robertson

APS - Wanda Clark, Lorna Sim, Karen Patience – and Sarah Byham for Item 5

1 Apologies

Debbie du Preez, Julie Mackay

2 Review of Minutes from 8th March 2021

Outstanding Action Points that aren't discussed elsewhere are as follows:

- The EasyGiving school site is still active.
- Discussion regarding forming a Black Isle PC forum is ongoing.
- Tempest will be arranging outdoor class photos for P1 and P7.
- The schedule for the new play equipment may slip, depending on the nursery construction completion. HC have agreed to the construction of the new playground and the fact that we have adequate funding in place. We need to order the equipment 12 weeks in advance of installation and so need advance notice of when the window for installation will be. Wicksteed will provide an updated quote before we order. The HC will appoint a Clerk of Works to oversee the construction and guide us through the process.

The Minutes were approved.

3 Report from the School, Lorna Sim

PE: The recent ScotGov announcement means that PE can take place inside again, though the children will not be allowed to shout. The teachers will continue to arrange outdoor PE as much as possible.

Enrollment: At the moment there will be 34 P7s leaving the school and 34 P1s in the new intake. There have been some enquiries from others so there may well be a few more pupils as new families move into the area. As a result, classes will be announced late (towards the end of June) as it is not yet clear if any additional class will be required.

Staff Absences: Two PSAs, one teacher and a Breakfast Club leader are on long term leave. A new Breakfast Club staff member will be starting this week, but another member of staff is still urgently needed, or the club will have to close.

Nursery Build: The construction was delayed because of old unmarked pipes but will be restarting soon. The builders are confident they can make back some of the time. It will be great when it is finished and is worth waiting for. The old nursery will be refurbished in tandem, to make a new (12th) classroom.

Nursery Update – Wanda Clark:

Nursery have settled in at the community centre and the set-up is working well. The lunches are going well and both the children and the staff are enjoying this new aspect.

Questions:

Ruth asked about the predicted school roll as this has been raised several times and concerns have been raised since the rolls were published recently. This will go on the agenda for proper discussion in the next meeting. Claire noted her concerns about how full the school was looking and what the future holds.

Action: Add the School Roll as an item to the next Agenda and invite councillors to attend.

4 Treasurer's Report, Claire

The bank balance is healthy showing c.£19k at the end of February and now just over £20k with the coming from the Co-op Outdoor Project grant, lottery money and JustGiving. A separate tally for Outdoor Project fund will be maintained going forward. It was agreed to aim for having a simple fund raiser towards the end of the final term this year.

Action: Jacqui to consider a fundraising opportunity and report back.

5 Our Outdoor Space: learning, playing and growing, Sarah Byham, Ruth, Ingrid

This item has been in development for some time and a presentation was shared by Ruth & Ingrid on the discussions and work so far. The ideas were originally raised in part because of the growing school roll combined with seasonally unusable outdoor space and ongoing pitch flooding issues. The PC wants to look our outdoor school space from a 'big picture' perspective and work to enhance this with the school and other community input. This is in line with creating a usable school (and wider community) outdoor learning, playing and growing space which will also align with the Highland Council's *Growing for the Future* Programme and directly benefit the school. The HC are prepared to look at community proposals regarding working to grow local food. This will also tie in with broader environmental initiatives such as Transition Black Isle, the *Food Growing in Schools* workstream and community orchards. Tarradale Primary (together with MOO Food), is already showing how this can be done successfully. Funding opportunities have already been identified and some applications are in already or part-developed. There have been expressions of support from various places, including the Men's Shed, community groups and an invitation from HCPC to host a meeting to connect with other primary schools to discuss outdoor playing, learning and growing spaces and improvements more generally. We would hope to eventually produce a 1-year plan and longer-term plans and visions for the Outdoor Space project.

One main issue is to get the pitch drainage and surfacing sorted before we can move forward. At the point we have had the pitch assessed and developed a proposal for fixing the drainage issue and ensuring on-going maintenance. This has been based on expert advice and broadly involves repairing two broken drains, clearing another and implementing surface treatment. We are now at the point of securing quotes for this work. On-going maintenance will be needed every 1-2 years and will require funding.

This item was raised here as we are seeking the school's input and advice. Sarah Byham will be leading on this for the school and attended for this item. Sarah recommended that we work on two basic levels: one for immediate action and the second for gaining interest and showing how the school can be involved. In this regard specifically, we must demonstrate how this will benefit the children. Avoch's outdoor space is brilliant and we need to make the most of it by improving the current space; thinking about how to use it next year; and creating a legacy plan for the longer term. To that end, she advised having shorter and longer term plans that are put down in a development plan template - we could zone the school grounds to create a plan together with timescales and ideas for funding or in-kind help. Outdoor plan templates available

online are useful in this regard. And, we can kick off with some immediate activities to get everyone interested and excited.

Short term ideas:

- The existing Sensory Garden needs completely rebuilding with new paths, benches and willow sculptures. This would be well used. If we can gather good ideas and agree a design, we could then involve the wider community to build this. A 'mood' board is a good idea.
- All classes would love to grow stuff and a Growing Challenge would be great. It was suggested that we could get some packets of seeds and compost for a class challenge.
- There is a space behind Betty for a new garden which could include fruit trees or vegetable beds. This may have to be terraced and it's worth asking the nursery construction contractors if they could do this as an extra. It would be good if each class had their own raised bed and then could all aim to grow stuff for a school picnic next year (it is thought that producing food for school lunches at Avoch is beyond the resources available).
- Teepees would be great but this would have to wait till August after the building work is completed (so this is for next year). Ruth noted that the Men's Shed have offered.
- An outdoor workbench for the Nursery to use for woodwork (Wanda)

Longer Term

- New boardwalks in the woodland trail and some refurbishment of existing areas, new benches etc (an audit to see what is needed would be a good start)
- The Men's Shed are keen to get started collaborating with the school on this project and they have a lot of skills to offer.
- Once the pitch is drained/maintained there would be space for an orchard and other uses, while still leaving a huge area available for play (Ruth).

Ruth has already shared an interest in all this at the Highland Parent Council Partnership (HPCP) and is planning to run focused meeting on outdoor spaces if there is interest from other primary PCs. Tarradale Primary PC have lots of experience on this and Dingwall PC are interested too. Moo Food have done a lot of work in this area and we hope to arrange a visit to the school with them to see if there is an opportunity to work together in the future. Other community organisations are also keen. The Men's Shed have expressed an interest in helping with / using the pitch and we could look at the potential to make improvements to the pitch with community support.

Lorna suggested that something in the plans could memorialise Mrs Jack. Ingrid suggested that something like a cup for an annual growing competition may be suitable but recognised that this will need careful consideration and family agreement.

Wanda noted that the children's learning must remain key and we have to remember that is the priority when gathering ideas. We need space for the children to run free as well as for structured activities, especially so as the school continues to grow. Wanda has an old 'development plan' and could pass this on for use as a template so we can prioritise.

Ingrid stressed the importance of following up with Highland Council in regard to developer contributions. Recent housebuilding in the area will garnered significant funding and this is likely to have gone into a general HC pot. We need to be vocal so that some of the funding can be used to directly benefit the school community. Helen of AKCC is also pursuing this with the council to enable access to the development income.

The committee agreed to fund a Growing Competition for the remainder of the term that will be led in the school by Sarah. Sarah also offered to be on a subcommittee for the Outdoor Space project.

Action: Sarah to write up her meeting notes and pass them on and send in the development plan template.

Action: LS to follow up with Mrs Jack's husband.

Action: Wand to follow up with development plan template.

Action: Ruth will be attending a meeting with Avoch and Killen Community Council later this week to ask for support and/or ideas about a wider community use of the pitch area.

6 Bikeability, Fiona

It was proposed to delay the Bikeability for this year due to limited time and lack of playground space as well as not being able to find another suitable venue outside of the school grounds. It was agreed that this should be held over for the next school year and be offered for next year's P6s and the P7s who missed out this year. Lorna suggested that if it was possible to run each block in a single week (rather than one day a week for five weeks) this may be better logistically, though this would depend on the availability of the trainers and other logistical issues.

Action - Lorna will let the P6s know that Bikeability won't happen this term.

Action - Fiona to create a post for our facebook page to update parents/carers.

7 Breakfast Club, Wanda Clark

The Breakfast club is run by Highland Council. It is tricky to staff as it only runs for one hour a day. At the moment, one of the BC staff is on long-term leave and continuing to staff the club is proving a problem. One new member of staff is starting this week, though another is required urgently as the present situation is not sustainable. The club was hard-won and is important to parents/carers and the school have asked HC and CALA to help them staff it – but without success. At the moment the post is being filled by Lorna and Wanda in their own time but this cannot continue indefinitely. Lorna asked if the PC could push this issue and if anyone suitable could be recommended. Anyone qualified would need to sign upon the HC Supply List.

Action – Ruth to draft something suitable to help find staff and promote this on Facebook.

8 P7 Leavers Plans, Lorna Sim

This item was raised by Lorna to clarify the somewhat remote Transition process this year and the latest plans for the P7s leavers who have missed out on a lot, including their residential trips and other activities and outings. It is hoped that the P7s will attend the academy for two days for Transition familiarisation and activities. To date, everything else has been done virtually. The school plans to have a Leavers Assembly, either outside or inside, as allowed, and it is hoped that P7 parents may be able to attend. ScotGov has given money to Highland Council to fund a P7 day trip. This is not yet confirmed, but it may be a half-day or day of outward-bound activities alongside Cromarty and Resolis schools. This can't take place at Avoch because of the nursery construction so it may take place in Cromarty. In addition, the school hopes to provide another day trip and hopes that APC can contribute towards this (APC 25%, parents/carers 25% and school 50%). There was agreement from the committee to contribute to funding this for P7 leavers due to the difficult year they have had. The school has already been trying to do some fun stuff in class with the P7s which includes the Resilient Kids programme but another day out somewhere local would be good for them. APC were asked for any connections to offer fun experiences or outdoor activities and contributed some ideas.

Action – Ruth to liaise with Lorna re an APC donation.

9 P1 Transition, Karen Patience

The Parent Council had asked how we could help with the new P1 transition and Karen Patience attended the meeting for this item. A P1 information evening was held mid-March which had been well-attended and

successful. The P1 teachers are not yet confirmed but a series of google meets has been arranged for the children as well as a simple photo booklet to show them what everything looks like at school. Information has been sent out to parents/carers including stories from the school and the Unicycle scheme. A buddy system has been set up and it is hoped that a visit might be possible before the end of Term 4. It was agreed that the Parent Council will provide a Q&A google meet with new parents/carers. Lorna and Karen will also attend. A flyer introducing the parent council will be distributed and a meeting arranged to engage with new P1 parents/carers. The Class Reps plan can be shared at this meeting.

Actions – Ruth / Debbie to prepare a flyer/email and to agree a date for the meeting with Karen.

10 AOB

Nothing was raised.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is 7pm on Tuesday 2nd June via Google Meet.

Appendix 1 – TREASURER'S REPORT

Opening balance as at 26th February 2021				£19,832.64	
Income					
Your School Lottery			£139.70		
The Giving Machine			£16.89		
Co-op grant (outdoor project)			£621.82		
				£778.41	Total Income
Expenditure					
Lottery licence renewal			£20.00		
				£20.00	Total Expenditure
Closing balance as at 24th March 2021				£20,591.05	
				£13,037.23	(Play equipment fund)
				£921.82	(Outdoor fund)
				£6,632.00	Net Total
Outstanding Items:					
	Income	Expenditure			
			Total		
			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

Funds for Outdoor Project		
		Funds
Polycrub donation - Black Isle care home		£300
Co-op grant		£621.82
Total		£921.82