

Minutes: Tynewater Primary School (TPS) - Parent Council (PC) Meeting 89

Friday February 25th 11:00 – 12:00

Online Teams Meeting

*Action point (*AP)

1) Welcome and apologies (11:00)

Apologies: Fiona Hayes, Stevie Blackwood, Mairi Milne, Emma Diffley sent apologies for arriving later. Anna Davanna (AD)

Present: Julia Critchley JC (Secretary), Aurora Mancini AM (Treasurer), Clare McCallum CM (Headteacher), Jo Clarke (Principle teacher) Laura MacKay LM, Laura Else LE, Sana Malik SM, Jane Brown JB, Julia Cochrane, Emma Diffley ED (Chair),

, 2) Minutes of last meeting/Outstanding Actions

(1) The minutes of the previous minutes were accepted.

(2) Outstanding actions:

- (a) Road safety: PC to contact Gillian Bathgate Travel Plan Co-ordinator & School Crossing Patrol Supervisor, Midlothian Council, regards congestion/safety. JC updated the PC that this is in progress and on agenda for discussion.
- (b) Garden Volunteering: Survey of parents regards volunteering with garden and forming a steering group. JC updated the PC that this has not yet been carried out and is on agenda.
- (c) Antisocial behaviour: Community meeting was planned for January 27th to discuss antisocial behaviour in Pathhead. PC were to discuss/suggest strategies to combat antisocial behaviour. No one present on 25/2/22 could provide update of either the outcome of the meeting or whether situation has improved. Next community meeting will be Thursday next week ED will be attending and will update PC and next meeting. **AP: discuss at next meeting**

3) Treasurer's Report

- a. AM reported on recent account activity and will share the summary report online. AM reported that currently over £5000 in PC account. However approximately £1000 will soon leave our account as cheques clear. Including £660 for the school reading cloud subscription.

4) Headteacher's Report

- a. Clare McCallum (CM) introduced herself and noted that while she has attended a PC meeting previously this was her first as headteacher.
- b. CM reports a very positive first week back after half term. Staff absences which of course present a challenge. Mrs Isobel Leonard (IL) and Joanne Clarke (JoC) our new principle teachers have been supporting CM in her new role.
- c. Sadly had to cancel Forest Schools this week due to severe adverse weather
- d. IL & JoC are now acting principle teachers however at present they are also covering for P6 teacher post which is as yet unfilled. CM and the school are waiting for local authority to secure new teacher. CM assures the PC that TPS is top of list in the local authority for class teacher provision.
- e. Covid 19 – Scottish government are keen to proceed with caution. Teachers are now allowed to remove mask in class providing they can remain socially distanced. Staff will continue to wear masks in corridors and communal areas. Assemblies are now able to resume. CM acknowledges that whole school assemblies will be a big change for many pupils and thus will proceed slowly at a pace to suit children.

- f. Scottish standardised assessments will commence soon. These assessments provide valuable attainment data for the school
- g. CM reported that TPS now has lots of new devices (tablets and chromebooks) which help with support for learning. Unfortunately there are Wifi issues which they are working on
- h. Transition preparation (Nursery/P1 and P7/S1) is starting and the hope is for this to be in person. CM is very keen to push for as much in person transition as possible.
- i. Permanent HT appointment – CM has heard very little about this but reports that Jennifer Allison the school group manager will be in touch
- j. Plans are in place to celebrate world book day this year on Thursday 3rd March. Fun activities are planned.
- k. CM shared background information about herself with the parent forum. She acknowledges that there has been no official recruitment for her role as acting headteacher. CM has 25 years teaching experience. Including 5 years as depute and 9 months as acting headteacher elsewhere in Midlothian. She has taught at all stages from nursery – P7. CM has specific experience with support for learning and has held role as principle teacher for support for learning. She has done expedition leader training and is very keen on forest schools and outdoor learning. CM is passionate about getting it right for individual children and particularly children with additional support needs (ASN). Overall CM is happy and excited to be at TPS and reports that she had an excellent handover from Mr Lawson.

5) Gardening Club

- (a) It has been confirmed at previous meetings that parent volunteers are welcome in the school grounds to attend to the beds and sensory garden. The PC has a key for accessing the grounds out with school hours. JC confirmed with CM that this is still the case.
- (b) Mr Lawson had previously suggested asking the wider parent forum to engage with plans for the garden and hopefully create a garden steering group.
- (c) **AP – PC to survey parent forum to gauge interest in garden volunteering**

6) Friendship bench

- a) The friendship bench is an important piece of play ground furniture. The school pupils having had a key role in its creation and deciding its purpose. A key one being for children feeling lonely to sit on during breaktimes which will alert other children to help out/invite to play.
- b) JC reported that there have been complaints from school pupils who have felt that it has been used as a 'naughty step'. **AP: CM will remind the school of the benches purpose at assembly today and investigate the allegations.**
- c) AD was unable to attend the meeting but has organised a sign to go with the bench to remind people of its intended purpose.

7) Traffic congestion

- (a) The issue with road safety and traffic congestion around the school at school drop off/pick times is frequently raised at parent council meetings.
- (b) Outstanding AP is for PC to contact Gillian Bathgate as multiple previous concerns from parents about unsafe parking/driving and risk of an accident.
- (c) JC reported that in recent weeks a local resident in one of the houses near the school has raised concerns to ED about cars which are sitting waiting with their engines running whilst the drivers are dropping/collecting children.
- (d) **AP the PC will contact Gillian Bathgate**
- (e) **AP CM kindly agreed to send an email requesting parents/carers to park considerately, consider park and stride using further away streets and not leaving engines running.**

8) After school club provision

- (a) ED has sent out a repeat survey for parents/carers to assess demand for Friday afternoon childcare.

- (b) JC reminded that approximately 6 months ago the PC surveyed the parent forum and established there was a demand for Friday afternoon ASC. However at that time neither of the 2 childcare providers based at Tynewater (ELOSCN breakfast club or Mayfield/Lawfield/Tynewater ASC) were able to accommodate. Main factor was staff shortages.
- (c) ED has been back in touch with these organisations and both are re-exploring whether they could now accommodate a Friday ASC. ED reports Lisa at Mayfield ASC still does not have capacity due to staffing. If we demonstrate demand Lisa could explore arranging transport (at additional cost) to the ASC in Mayfield for Tynewater children.
- (d) CM has contacted the council for advice as she acknowledges this is difficult & emotive issue. CM is keen to clarify with the Council what support can be reasonably expected of both the School and Parent council when a parent/carer requests a service. In this case the service requested is a new Friday afternoon childcare service. CM will update the PC with Midlothian council's response. CM requests that specific concerns regards this issue (Friday ASC) and other school related issues causing particular upset to parents are redirected to the school rather than the PC. JC thanked CM for supporting with this issue.
- (e) **AP – ED will collate ASC survey results and feedback to PC**

9) Recruitment of new headteacher

- a) ED reported that she has been informed not many HT applications have been received. Midlothian Council have assured ED that parent representatives will be involved in the recruitment process. Training for these parent representatives will be required.
- b) ED is waiting for more information from the council
- c) CM reassured the PC she will fully support the school for as long as is required

10) Chairperson's Report

- a) The PC have received a lovely card from Mr Lawson thanking us for the retirement gifts. To thank Mr Lawson for 25 years of head teaching the PC arranged a collection from the parent forum. £330 was donated and we bought him a bird table, champagne afternoon tea at the Balmoral and theatre vouchers. In addition with PC funds the PC bought a matching bird table with plaque dedicated to Mr Lawson for the children to enjoy in the school garden.

11) AOB

- a) LM raised concerns about parents bringing dogs into school grounds. She described finding dog poo in the school grounds. This was on the foot path towards the school office. Children have had dogs jumping up at them. Dogs left tied up near school gates and barking are frightening for adults and children who are nervous of dogs.
- b) LM pointed out that there is no signage on school gates stating the rule: 'no dogs allowed'. The PC agree that dogs should not be in the school playground, including when being carried, and also agree that barking dogs should not be left tied up near the school gates. **AP – (By this point CM and IL had left the PC meeting to attend school assembly. JC will ask CM to remind parents/carers not to bring dogs into school grounds and to have consideration regards tying dogs up nearby especially if they will be barking. JC will ask CM if the PC can put 'no dog' signs up on the entrances to the school grounds.**

12) Date of next meeting and close

The next meeting will be: Tuesday 22nd March 18:30 – 19:30
 Future dates: Friday 29th April 11:00 – 12:00
 Tuesday 24th May 18:30 – 19:30
 Friday 24th June 11:00 – 12:00