

LPPC Minutes

Wednesday 3 February 2016

Attendees: Kate MacDonald, Kat Fogden, Kirsty Chatwood, Veronica Melichar, Justine Douglas, Suzanne McHattie, Marie Middleton, John Booth, Lindsay Grant, Dawn Moloney (Principal Teacher), Jen Shepherd (Chair), Judith Weir, Yula Hildemann, Kirstie Paton, Amy O'Leary, Bekah McVitie, Alasdair Friend (Headteacher), Billy MacIntyre (City of Edinburgh Council), Bryony Knox, Melisa Rodriguez, Katy McLean, Rachel Hein, Alexia Gaitanou, Rick, Christine Treche, Gordon Munro (Councillor)

1. Apologies: Chas Booth (Councillor), Adam McVey (Councillor), Phil Alcock, Kirsty Welsh, Emma Fensom, Wendy Kelly, Andrew Burnet,

2. Minutes of previous meeting approved

3. Duncan Place The meeting was attended by Billy MacIntyre who is the Council official heading up the project to replace the school's gym and nursery. Prior to the LPPC meeting there was a display of how the new gym and nursery building will look available for parents and local residents to view in Room 2. This was an information session and not a consultation session. The plans will go forward for planning permission on Thursday 4th February. The budget for the rebuild is £4.1 million which includes budget to make safe the community centre end of the existing structure. Mr Friend is part of the working group as Senior User to ensure the school's needs are met. Jane Rough, Early Years Manager from City of Edinburgh Council has represented the requirements of the nursery element.

New nurseries using a similar configuration of floor space have been recently completed in Duddingston and Wardie and feedback in those places has been very good so far. The nursery capacity will increase significantly in the new building from 30 children morning and 30 children afternoons to 40 3-5 year olds in both morning and afternoon, plus ten 2-year old places in each session.

The gym space is shorter and wider than the existing space. There is space for storing chairs, staging and gym equipment. There will also be toilets and changing facilities as well as a lift.

Jen asked if the demolition has been approved yet – it has not but a problem is not anticipated. Jen has already added formal support for it on behalf of the LPPC. It is anticipated that demolition will begin in June 2016.

The chimney is due to be demolished during the Easter break, although Jen will request clarification having heard other dates mentioned outwith the meeting.

Yula asked if there's any scope to expand the size of the gym – build out over the canopy area and add more light by making the windows on the south side of the building bigger and opaque for privacy. Billy Macintyre explained this was an additional cost for which there is no budget. In addition, any changes to the plans at this stage would cause delay in the project time-frame, currently due to be completed in September 2017.

Alexia asked if there were any visual interior images. These are not available but visits to similar gyms and nurseries could be organised if required. The planning boards from the information session show the internal configuration. These planning boards will remain available within the school for people to access if they are interested.

Alasdair stated that the new facility will be significantly better than the existing one. He is having discussions about built in projectors and sound systems as well as sports equipment etc.

Bryony asked if the new smaller sized gym space would be big enough for full school assemblies. Billy Macintyre did not have numbers available however it is known that it has capacity for 250 people seated on chairs. **Billy Macintyre reported back on Thursday 4th February that the 180m² gym hall has the capacity to hold an assembly for up to 500 children.**

Kirsty asked if the gym would be handed over complete with equipment such as basket ball hoops. Billy Macintyre stated there would be a “healthy provision” for this equipment. Alasdair, as Senior User, would be consulted on what was required.

Yula asked if the green space was for P1 and P2s too. It is only for the nursery children. Jen highlighted we lost our green space island when the temporary nursery unit was installed. We asked for clarification, would this and other elements (the Bikeability road markings etc) we have lost following the DP closure be made good by the council once the new building is complete. **It was suggested we make a list for Alasdair to convey to the project team. There was a suggestion that the boundary around the nursery outside area could be hedging in order to help attract wildlife that the school is sorely lacking at the moment. This has not been budgeted for but could be considered if there is budget left over. Playground sub-group will forward a list of suggestions/requests to Alasdair and Billy.**

Billy Macintyre urged us to individually and as a parent council support the application if we agreed with what's proposed as it only takes 6 objections for the application to go to committee rather than be approved by the individual planning officer. He doesn't anticipate any problems but significant objections would cause delays in delivering the building by September 2017.

Bekah wanted to highlight that she's been impressed with how quickly things have now started to move and that it is appreciated.

Gordon Munro had attended the first meeting of a new Working Party which was set up to consider how to move forward with the anticipated 'community asset transfer' for the other part of the Duncan Place Resource Centre building (as agreed by Children and Families Committee in October 2015). He anticipates them asking us our thoughts on the location of the lift to be installed in their part of the existing building as this could have an impact on our new building. Jen, as Chair of the LPPC, is a member of this Working Party and will be able to express LPPC views at future meetings. Initial plans had indicated the community access lift would be immediately adjacent to our new building however project staff feel having it nearer the existing reception area of DPRC makes more sense. This would make the linking building between our new one and the old DPRC a stairwell rather than a stairwell and lift area.

4. City of Edinburgh Council Budget Update. Jen looked at the proposal in depth and expressed concerns to the council formally on behalf of LPPC. This was distributed via email a few weeks ago.

Subsequently a vote has been taken by City of Edinburgh Council and the budget has been approved. Following the budget decisions, there has been a decision to reconsider how to offer music tuition, and this is welcomed. The Council response to the concerns in Jen's letter also clarified that pupil support staff ratios will remain unchanged at present. Unfortunately, the decision to reduce Business Support staff, including those working in schools, by 30% was taken. This will mean a 30% reduction in the school's Business Manager (currently 2.5 days per week) as well as the school's administrator who only recently moved into the reception area of the school (a change which has been very positive for parents and other school users). This is of considerable concern due to the possible additional pressure and responsibilities that could fall onto teaching staff as the school loses any admin or business manager support. It seems to be expected that the business support workload will be absorbed by the remaining business support staff and not given to teaching staff, although it is unclear how this is possible. As part of the McCrone Agreement all teaching staff are not expected to carry out administrative tasks, or those associated with property management, and it is a concern that if there is insufficient business support (including school administration support) there are key tasks which will either not be completed, or will be completed in contravention of the McCrone Agreement. It is understood that Children and Families have said that this cut was deemed to be the most palatable of all possible areas for cuts. It will be the role of Children and Families Department to decide who is needed or not, not at school level.

Concerns were raised by several attendees that if we lost 30% of our business manager allocation there would be a health and safety issue given building maintenance comes under the business manager's remit.

Alexia suggested going around our building to see where there are issues and highlighting that without a business manager our children and staff could be in danger.

Currently we have our business manager for 2.5 days a week. It was noted that some positive action schools and schools with a roll of 600+ sometimes employ a full time Business Manager as they have extra budget for either extra support or larger school roll.

Jen asked Gordon Munro if he could try to find out how Leith Primary might be affected. We need to know as LPPC and individuals if the education of our children will be compromised as a result of losing these vital support staff and want to know how it is decided and measured.

5. Head Teacher Report. Lots of positives for Leith Primary – Boyd Anderson trophy was awarded to the school for effort and enthusiasm for skiing! This was first awarded in 1974 to Leith Academy (our building!). Next week 39 pupils will attend a skiing and outdoor activities residential including skiing at the Lecht.

The entire school attended The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe at the Lyceum Theatre in December taking up almost the entire auditorium. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed their Christmas outing.

P5 were invited to attend Space Day run by Generation Science at the National Museum of Scotland on the day of Major Tim Peake's launch to the International Space Station. Staff said it was the best run event they had been too and the children enjoyed it too, and appeared on TV!

Leith Primary Girls team won the Lego League Cup! Sunday 21st February they set off for Loughborough for the final to compete against 44 other teams. It is a great achievement for the school and the 7 girls – 4 only arrived at school less than 2 years ago not speaking English. The team won £1,000 towards cost of getting to the finals and Mr Friend has secured further support from Amazon (£500) and ‘aps’ the printers of the school calendar (£250). There are special branding t shirts and sweatshirts for the team. Well done and good luck!

Scottish Opera performance took place again at Leith Academy and was another fabulous success. The whole school saw it at the dress rehearsal and then parents at another performance. Well done, looking forward to doing it again next year.

Mr Friend briefly touched on the curriculum rationale. This will be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

A new classroom needs to be created for the new school year to accommodate an additional class. He distributed the proposed classes: P1 will encompass two full classes and a composite P1 and P2 which would have 16 P1s and 9 P2s in it. There will be 3 P3s, 2 P4s, 2 P5s, 2 P6s and one P7. It is anticipated the current music room also used for breakfast club will be converted into a classroom. The other alternative room would be the library, however Mr Friend is very reluctant to use this room despite a report from HM Inspectors stating schools don't need a library. Breakfast club is likely to be relocated to the dining hall.

We are looking for volunteers who can support the school on a regular basis helping to run the library. Please get in touch with Jen at leithppc@gmail.com if you can commit – without regular parental volunteers the library is in danger of “closing”. Jen will coordinate a meeting of interested people between now and Easter, to identify how the LPPC can support a) the required revamp of the library and b) an ongoing, sustainable ‘volunteer staffing’ of this important school resource.

On Friday at 7:15am a window in Room 10 blew in. Luckily no one was in the room or injured, however as a result a full assessment was done that day. Over the weekend every window on the south side of the school were screwed shut as a precaution. This is a temporary measure and a solution is currently being sought. This accident was a result of high winds which also caused considerable damage to other schools in the city include Oxfords.

Kirsty highlighted this was another example of the council being reactive rather than proactive regarding the state of the buildings, regardless of the extreme weather conditions which are becoming more frequent. She called for a Council policy to be put in place to ensure buildings are checked regularly particularly around this time of year. Jen was informed that Duncan Place building was checked on Monday following the raft of storms in the area. **Jen will write to the Council highlighting the windows issue and requesting clarification on how this dangerous problem will be prevented in the future.**

Remaining agenda items

Due to time constraints several items on the agenda have had to be carried over to the next meeting the remaining agenda points were discussed briefly.

6. Feith Decides LPPC is applying for £1,000 to fund playground improvements and equipment. There is an open day session on Saturday 1-3 at the Leith Community Education Centre in the Kirkgate and **Bryony is looking for volunteers to man the stall for 20-30 mins.**

7. Marathon It was agreed that it would be good this year to support a charity in addition to raising money for the school, so please **email Jen any nominations of charities. Also Melisa is looking for people to run!**

11. School cookbook This would work in a similar way the Christmas card project does where a company prints it and takes a cut, we set the price and sell it etc. Wendy is willing to co-ordinate this. It was agreed this would be a positive project for Wendy to pursue on our behalf.

15. Culinary event It was proposed we organise a 'bring and share' lunch and/or evening to run as a social event and tie in with this year's activities to celebrate the school's diversity. It could also link in with the cook book idea. **Jen would liaise with Alasdair regarding initial logistics.**

13. Scottish Opera It was agreed we should support the event this year to the sum of £755.

Any Other Competent Business

- **We are looking for another co- vice chair to work with Jen (Chair) and Kate (co-vice chair). Get in touch with Jen if you would like more information.**
- Bird Boxes – the Forestry Commission will put up boxes in the links for us if we supply them. The LPPC agreed to spend approx £50 for the boxes. Future aspects of this project might include webcams inside one for pupils to see chicks etc.
- Christmas Fair – revenue has been assessed by stall and all made a profit with the exception of the Grotto which was down £200. However we needed to buy lots of new decorations for it and we have enough books to give out as gifts for 2016 fair too. Overall we made £3100.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 20th April 2016

6.15pm in the School Library

Hope to see you there.

