

Leith Primary Parent Council

Minutes of meeting Wednesday 17th June 2015 18:15

Present: Jen Shepherd (Chair) Kirsty Chatwood (Vice) Alasdair Friend (HT), Judith Weir (Secretary/minutes) Jule Hildmann, Kate Macdonald, Amy O'Leary, Natalie Deas, Nicola Lamberton, Rebecca McVittie, Rachel Hein, Christine, Anna Cox, Melisa Rodriguez, Justine Douglas (Treasurer)

1. **Apologies:** Dawn Moloney, Suzanne McHattie, Lindsay Grant, Wendy Kelly, Bryony Knox
2. **Minutes of last meeting:** approved

3. **Head Teacher's Update:**

Building update – no-one fell off the roof on 17th June! Work has begun on the tower but isn't complete yet. The area is now safe hence the fencing has been reduced and there is improved access on St Andrew's Place. Over the summer the fencing (150cm in height) will be put up round the extended playground area and the chimney in the back playground removed. The undercroft will be filled with the chimney rubble plus more. In the main school the boilers will be replaced over the summer too. The road surface outside will be raised to meet the level of the new fences.

Recruitment – has proved lengthy and problematic for the school, across the city and Scotland. A group of Head Teachers interview NQTs looking for permanent posts rather than each Head interviewing the same prospective teacher many times over. It is likely this will be under review for future years. Jen has offered the opportunity for parent council members to take part in training for participation in the recruitment process. Currently Andrew and Maggie are our trained representatives. Jule expressed an interest in being trained up.

Staffing updates -

- Sadly Mrs Brown will be leaving after doing a fabulous job for Leith. She is moving to a position in London. This leaves a position to be filled. Miss McArdle has moved across to class teaching so her role also needs filled. Mrs Clarkson remains with the school and is one of the few maths learning support specialists in the city.
- Nursery staff are being recruited 18th June.
- New teachers - 2 probationary teachers - P6 Miss Stuart and P2a Miss McDowall in addition to Miss Korotkich who joins from Lossiemouth
- PSA Miss Barr is leaving to do teacher training
- Miss Bruce – taking a year out.
- Miss Richmond – leaving after finishing her probationary year
- Our music specialist has left for another job and Miss Stevenson (p1) will cover music as well as her P1 class
- Mrs Roland (Friday PE specialist) is retiring and will be replaced by Mrs Doig

- Mrs Moloney and Miss Lester have been appointed principal teachers with a remit to further improve learning and teaching across the school and to extend the pupil voice

Lots of changes ahead but Mr Friend feeling very positive about our new school year and his team.

Sports Day – a great success, P1-3 sports day stopped slightly early as the weather looked poor. Excellent weather for P4+ and great help from Leith Academy pupils who were former pupils of Leith Primary. Tug of war was a new event!

Benmore – again very successful however cost will increase next time. The sustainability of this activity is an issue going forward. Next year is booked for May overlapping with in service and local holiday with a few logistics to be ironed out.

School improvement plan - will be explored in detail at the next meeting and communicated in a digestible format for parents.

4. Playground Update:

The independent review to check if the turning space is safe and adequate after the fence on the road area has been erected seems to have gone well, and will hopefully be formally approved **soon**. The existing stone wall of the current boundary is listed but the fencing attached isn't. We can request later in the year/term to have the fence removed to improve the space if we think this would be beneficial. Applying to do this now is likely to slow down the process of getting the first stage of fencing etc complete. This weekend (20 June) there is a playground meeting/training session at Preston Street Primary School to explore creative use of playground space. Space is available for this course, those interested were asked to contact Jen to organise a place. It was suggested that morning class line up could be revamped to make the most of the newly fenced area. Alasdair is going to review this a few weeks into the new term once he has a better idea of how the space would work and decide if it should be revamped.

5. Duncan Place Resource Centre Update:

Kirsty, Jen and Alasdair have been attending the meetings. The paper due to be discussed in May has been delayed until October. Kirsty has been flagging up to Malcolm Chisholm that many elements of the paper don't meet the requirements of the Scottish Government guidelines. Historic Scotland are still looking into the legality of any demolition. It needs to be established if an Equality Impact Assessment survey will be needed to be done in order to gauge if demolition will have a negative impact on the community.

Jen is to check if the lengthy email responses she received from Lindsay Glasgow can be put on the LPPC web pages. Alasdair updated other elements of the DPRC in his report.

6. Gala Day:

Despite it being a cold day and not as many people turning up as usual we raised £870. Well done and thanks to those who baked, made, set up, tidied up, bought, sold. The tombola prize list worked brilliantly. Special mention to Wendy and Dawn for all their hard work.

7. P1 Welcome Meetings:

Smaller groups were appreciated by parents as it was felt to be less intimidating and gave children and parents the chance to meet with others who will be in their class. LPPC Questionnaire given out at meeting rather than during first week or so of term in the playground as previously. We have 56 responses and have gathered contact information plus their views on a welcome picnic and got offers of help with activities and events run by LPPC. A picnic will be held on Friday 4th September where parents either bring their own picnic or do pot luck and bring a dish to share with others. We will be able to use the teepee. If weather is poor we will delay a week and Alasdair will text parents to let them know. It was suggested it might be worth doing a second recruitment drive for activities and members a few weeks into the term once parents find their feet and may be feeling less shy!

8. Fundraising ideas :

a) the School Lottery basics were discussed and it was felt this was definitely worth exploring further. We do have the correct licence to do this.

b) school Christmas cards – it was felt the pressure on school time and the low return on the relatively high card pack price means it will be run as an optional activity for parents to do at home. If we only get 20 children taking part it would still mean £20 additional funds for the school for little effort.

c) school calendar - It was decided starting early speaking to potential advertisers was a good idea. Kirsty to contact Jen with names of those who were keen to book early for 2016. All previous sponsors were to be contacted in the next few months so we aren't left with pages to sell at short notice which happened for the 2015 calendar.

9. LPPC Self-Evaluation :

As part of the aim of the LPPC to widen the numbers of parents who support the different activities, we have drafted up a questionnaire to try to establish how we can increase attendance at the meeting and participation by parents in fundraising etc. It was suggested we ask class teachers if they could suggest parents from their class who could be useful and enthusiastic to expand the range of people supporting the LPPC activities. A specific invitation from council members to become involved in the LPPC might improve rates of involvement and reduce the burden on the small number of parents who do most of the activities and events currently. Amy and Christine have offered support to update the website in addition to those already doing this. Kirsty has had to resign from the post of Vice Chair due to family reasons – we need to replace this role in order to continue to pressure Council officials etc regarding the DPRC via emails and meetings. Anyone interested in this role should contact Jen.

10. Things to explore at future meeting /AOB:

Planting some trees in the meadow in front of the school following the two mature ones being removed. Explore the possibility of revamping the white area above the front door with some attractive signage. The council may have no budget to provide trees but could help with the planting. Greener Leith and Woodland Trust were mentioned as possible organisations who could help.

Football - a parent involved in the football team has ended up using £142 of his own money to pay for pitch hire due to children forgetting to bring their £2 per week subs. It was agreed he should be repaid using LPPC funds and Alasdair will speak with the parent team who run the football in order to prevent this happening in the future plus some other issues.

School trips - It was requested longer notice is given for the dates and particularly the cost of the school trips. The disparity between the cost of the P1 trip (to East Links Farm Park £12) and other year groups e.g P4 to Stirling Castle £0 is to be looked at. East Links is a particularly pricey option plus the bus companies are in huge demand at this time of year and price their fees accordingly.

Anna mentioned the “mile a day” initiative from a Stirling school designed to improve stamina, behaviour and reduce levels of obesity. Alasdair will explore this idea.

Nicola mentioned a Glasgow school has a fantastic playground facility called Urban Jungle playground – more information can be found on their website.

Rachel expressed concern about the continued levels of litter in the meadow outside the school. This litter is not from the school /children. It was suggested Evie (crops in pots) may be able to provide some willow fencing to prevent litter being blown into the area.

11. The next meeting will be Wednesday 2nd September at 18:15 venue TBC either nursery or library.