

Minutes: Tynewater Primary School (TPS) - Parent Council (PC) Meeting 93

Friday 24th June 0900-1000, Community Room, TPS

*Action point (*AP)

1) Welcome and apologies

Apologies: Fiona Hayes, Sana Malik, Stevie Blackwood, Mairi Milne, Anna Davanna AD, Aurora Mancini, Jane Brown, Nicky Faux

Present: Emma Diffley ED (Chair), Julia Critchley JC (Secretary), Laura Mackay LM, Laura Else LE, Clare McCallum CM (Headteacher)

2) Minutes of last meeting/Outstanding Actions

(1) The minutes of the previous meeting (92) were accepted

(2) Outstanding actions:

(a) Playground equipment: CM notes that an audit of current stock is required prior to planning new playground game purchases, P1 teacher and CM both keen on a mud kitchen for the younger end of the playground and AD's husband Ewan is happy to design and build this.

PC will fund purchase of wood, Ewan has sourced a suitable Belfast sink.

(b) Friendship bench: organising sanding and varnishing has been deferred until next term

(c) PE kit: CM updated the PC that this is to return next academic year

3) Chairperson's Report

- a) Garden: ED reported on the gardening work which has involved parent helpers working with Jackie McNairn (JM) and groups of children to prepare and then plant in the raised beds. Overall a great success with children seeming to get a lot out of the experience and the raised beds now looking lovely. ED and LE both noted that next term we should dig up the finished bedding plants and plan to plant more permanent plants in some of the beds as this will reduce ongoing maintenance workload. Skanska has allowed JM and ED to enter playground over the summer to water the plants. ED proposes purchase of a hose to facilitate this to which the PC agrees.
- b) Books: Isobel Leonard has sent the PC a list of the books purchased which ED has circulated to the PC. The PC had agreed £1000 but the total spend came to £1200. Due to marathon fundraising success the PC agrees the extra £200 spending.
- c) Marathon fundraiser: this was a huge success with £936 raised for the PC. The runners were keen that book purchases were prioritised.
- d) PC Meet and Greet: the PC has a presence at one of the recent parent/teacher evenings and sold home baking. It was an effective social opportunity and raised c. £90. PC agreed to do similar in future and try and attend more than one of the parent consultation dates.
- e) Fundraising/social events for next term: it was briefly discussed and agreed that the PC would host a Halloween party in the school with details to be agreed next term and also that we would hold a Christmas Fair next term as in previous years before Covid.
- f) Coldwells photography: There have been complaints from a few parents about this company. The sales method appears old fashioned and their 'sale or return' approach with pressure to buy has caused distress to a number of parents. This has not been helped by communication errors from the company with angry letters going to parents

who have already returned or paid. It was noted that the 'sale or return' method is wasteful as we assume any returned photos then get thrown away. Electronic proofs would appear a more environmentally friendly and modern approach. There have also been complaints about the quality of the photos with some disappointed families. CM said she would check in the office that there were no missed photographs awaiting return. ED will create and send out a survey to gauge a wider opinion on Coldwells prior to potentially investigating other suppliers.

4) Treasurer's Report

- a. AM sent apologies and ED updated the PC with the current balance (£5378.13)
 - This does not include the upcoming outgoing of £1200 for new books
 - There is also £50 owed for restocking our consumables

5) Headteacher's Report

- a. Transition: The P1 and P7 transitions have gone very well. The new P1 parents had an open evening with tour of the school. The P1 children enjoyed their 2 transition visits. The P7 children have been on in person transition visits to Dalkeith High School (DHS) and these have been successful. They have also had virtual sessions delivered by curriculum leaders from DHS and these have been a success and will be continued next year.
- b. Transition feedback: The Dalkeith cluster is planning to evaluate the transition process for P7s. They will survey children at the start of P7, the end of P7 and then during S1. Dalkeith cluster is keen to continue trying to improve the transition process.
- c. P7 celebrations: They had a fantastic trip last week and enjoyed pizza at the Cavaliere afterwards. The Cavaliere complimented the class on their excellent behaviour and manners.
- d. Achievement assemblies: these are going well with each class enjoying their chance to celebrate achievements with the school and also parents. Parents have enjoyed being back in the school. LM raised that the nursery children who will stay on at nursery next year have no planned achievement assembly as the nursery has arranged a graduation ceremony for the children moving on to P1. **AP CM acknowledged the gap and will address the issue.**
- e. Gardening: CM also acknowledged the excellent work in the school garden/raised beds and thanked parent volunteers.
- f. Active schools: the format and activities planned for next year will change from that current format. CM has not yet heard specific details to share with the PC. The Active Schools classes will all be free for all children from next year. This is fantastic for accessibility but may bring limitations on what is on offer. LE noted that having these activities that are accessible to a range of ages at lunchtimes is great for variety and mixing. In a small school children can get frustrated being with their small group of peers all the time. LE also noted that in the past (pre Covid) there were excellent after school clubs at TPS which were not through Active Schools and were popular, including judo, tennis and football. It would be nice to see a return of such activities.
- g. Playtime: plan is for the whole school to mix again at break times from next term.
- h. Parent teacher consultations: these went very well and CM thanked the PC for running the baking stall.
- i. Quality report for the school: CM is working closely with John Dagger (JD) on the school's quality improvement plan. Jane Gray (attainment advisor) informs that TPS attainment is above average for Scotland. CM informed the PC that in April a

tracking document was put in place to track each individual child's progress and help spot children who are off track.

- j. Digital: All staff will receive training in Google Workspace aiming for Silver/Gold awards. The P7 class next year will also do the Google Workspace training.
- k. Reports: these will go home with children today
- l. Class lists/staffing: School has as yet been unable to share this information with parents as final staffing arrangements have not yet been agreed at a Midlothian Council level. CM understands it is frustrating for children and parents but the school cannot agree next year's arrangements until the Council has finalised staffing.
- m. Headteacher: the current shared arrangement with CM and JD (incoming headteacher who will be based 50% at TPS) is working very well. CM assures the PC that there is frequent communication between herself and JD.
- n. New diary app: This is planned to be introduced next term to help give parents notice of dates for the diary. JD has set up the calendar app for TPS. The app has been used successfully at other Midlothian schools. CM has prior experience of this app.

6) Update on new books and Reading Cloud subscription

- (a) £1200 of PC funds agreed for new books. Isobel Leonard (IL) has shared the list of purchased books.
- (b) ED has asked IL for an update on the Reading Cloud subscription. It is an annual cost of £650 which the PC has been funding. PC keen to understand the value of this subscription.

7) Behaviour management & incident reporting

- a) Concerns have been raised about the School's system for documenting and recording incidents. CM informed the PC of the newly updated nursery incident reporting form designed to improve the process in the nursery.
- b) ED raised that in the past when the PC was tasked with investigating the 'spinneys' there were reports of multiple accidents yet ED could find no documentation of any in the schools records. CM assures the PC that she is happy to share details of incident reporting with the parents. Regarding incidents of challenging behaviour the forms for documenting these episodes are called 'positive handling' reports. The report will include details of the incident and also how staff action would relate to a child's personal plan and individual behavioural needs.
- c) ED raised the issue that the other children perceive the action of the staff when some children display challenging behaviour as a reward for this behaviour – e.g. getting to leave class and play outside with a member of staff. CM emphasised that the staff are trying to both manage the challenging behaviour and reduce disruption to the other children's learning and they will endeavour to explain these complex issues to the children. ED noted that it would help if parents also understood how behaviour is managed so can reinforce the right message at home too.
- d) CM explained that with serious violent incidents these are reported on Sphera which is a Midlothian Council level incident handling database. The council then gives feedback on the incident.

8) Playground/outdoor learning equipment

- (a) This item had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

9) P1 start routine

(a) CM had had to give her apologies and leave to attend another meeting

10) Termly newsletter/diary

- a. As outlined by CM in her HT report the new app will hopefully improve communication with parents regarding dates. The PC discussed how posts in seesaw move on quickly and a date shared on seesaw is easily lost and forgotten. LE and JC both stress the importance of plenty of notice for working parents regarding important dates (achievement assemblies, school plays, sports day etc). Many working parents need 6 weeks' notice to take time off to attend these events.
- b. LM raised frustration at poor communication from the school on a class by class basis. Details like which days are PE days, what topics are being covered each term, termly focuses for numeracy and literacy etc. She suggested each class teacher could put together a brief summary to fit on 1 side of A4 to communicate with parents at the start of term. The school she works in does this and it seems an excellent and simple intervention which would greatly improve communication with school. Such a newsletter could be emailed out at the start of term and posted on seesaw with paper copies to those families requesting that service. The newsletter she shared as an example included term dates, PE days, focuses for language, numeracy, health and well-being and interdisciplinary learning. LM handed a copy into the office for the staff to look over

10) AOB

(a) Nil raised

11) Date of next meeting and close

Future dates: TBA