

## Comhairle nam Pàrant - Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce

### Clàr-gnothaich Coinneimh Choitcheann Bhliadhna / Annual General Meeting

Meeting note - 1 dhen Ghearran / February 2021 - 19.15 – 20.15

#### 1. Chairs Welcome:

The PC would like to thank the school for all it continues to do to operate safely.

**Apologies:** Saidhbhín, Laura Irvine

25 attendees

#### 2. Minutes of the previous meeting & matters arising

- **Minutes of the previous meeting (Seamus):**
- No response to the Treasurer call out as yet, and we still need reps for: **C1G, C1P, C3R, C3S, ChA, C5R & C6/7**. This role is increasingly important as comms get busier around the statutory consultation and GME secondary.
- Small Sums survey call for proposals has ended, with 9 applications received.

#### 3. Annual General Meeting and Report:

- Overview of the year and survey feedback
- The PC Annual Report covering the activities of the PC in 2021 was sent out via Parentmail, please see for more detail. Highlights include:

#### Acoustics

Throughout 2021 in dialogue with the Council, the PC Chairs have pressed for a commitment to improve the acoustics in the school building. This is an issue that dates back to the original refurbishment of the school.

The PC Chair had a meeting with CEC Officials in December 2020 and after consulting with the Headteacher submitted an Improvement Plan for Acoustics to the Council on 21 December 2020. The plan summarised the background/history, the main issues and proposed a timeline for work to be done on the four large spaces and consideration of other large classrooms. During 2021 the PC continued to make the case in different forums, with the Council, Councillors and in dialogue with other interested stakeholders including the Scottish Government.

As a result - the school and Council have successfully bid for funding through the Scottish Government to improve the acoustics of the school building. A programme of improvements will commence with Sgoil Araich (provisionally February midterm) and extend through the classrooms of the school. A second phase should see the improvement of the four large rooms and transitional spaces. The PC is seeking further information on timelines. Thanks to all parents who have worked over the years to raise this issue.

There is also planned improvement work to the Taigh na Dorsair (Old Janitor's house) with a provisional completion date of August 2022 (although delays may be expected) to turn it into a Cròileagan/Early Years permanent space with additional space to be used flexibly and

pedagogy-driven design embraced. With the commitment of mainstream funds the PC will consider re-purposing the ring fenced acoustics fund in the PC account.

### **Fundraising**

Thank you to all those who worked in the face of continuing restrictions to raise money for the school:

**Bec Phipps, Beckka Gould, Annabel Harrison** and Team for the pre-loved uniform pop up that raised over £400

**Caroline Daye** for organising the production of Christmas Cards raising £1,600

**Eleanor Ryan-Saha** for organising the talent raffle in place of Feill Nollaig raising over £400

### **Playground**

The PC recognised that part of the delay to the playground improvement work has been time and capacity pressures on the school staff team. The PC explored the prospect of covering the cost of a dedicated project manager/ landscape architect for the work. Contact has been made with a landscape designer and there has been further discussion with the school. At this stage the school is pursuing the appropriate approvals through the Council and due process which includes further staff and pupil consultation before any appointment of designers.

The PC would like to thank the Playground and Gardening Group for their continued support, patience and for all they have done over the past year.

Please read the full report in your own time and direct any questions or comments to the Chairs via email: [chairs@parantantaobhnairce.org.uk](mailto:chairs@parantantaobhnairce.org.uk)

### ● **Elections**

Laura Irvine stood down as Treasurer and Paidraic Kinsella was newly appointed. Iona and the PC thank Laura for her support and commitment to the PC over the years.

The Co-Chairs and secretary stood down and were re-elected.

### ● **Aithris an Ionmhasair / Treasurer's report (Tash)**

Last year we had £13,168.47 in the PnC bank account with £3,900.23 belonging to the acoustics fund.

At the end of 2021 we had £17,813.70 in the bank with the same amount relating to the acoustics fund.

£13,913.47 is available to the PC.

But £3,424.82 is due to cover the cost of the Christmas cards.

We have an additional £93.48 in the Paypal account.

So £10,582.13 is available at the start of 2022.

### **Income in 2021**

Christmas cards	£1,595.52	<b>(2021)</b> (£936.02)
Lottery	£1,172.70	(£1,486.40)

Easy fundraising	£192.54	(£238.04)
Edinburgh Council	£697.60	(£691)
Donations	£807.03	(£258.23)

### ***Expenditure***

£489.21 to the school after the Christmas Fayre.

P1s jumpers (£197)

Part funding for Tetrapak bins (£772.81)

Flashcards (£189.60)

Lego League (£180) – hoping to be of use in the Spring term

We also paid out £1,303.90 to the SSS (Waterproof coats, National Geographic magazines, Minecraft, Gardening, James Beaton for translation re Gaelic STEM kit, Bird watching)

### ***Expected expenditure***

We will be providing SSS funding of at least £2,000 for 2022 (February).

## **4. Head Teacher Update & Input from Deputies (Iona, Karen, Laura)**

**Iona Brown**- Head Teacher:

- We are proud to share photos of our Happy New Year display from the P7 class, where the Edinburgh skyline display has been adapted to show the fireworks that marked the New Year. P7s are excited about the Benmore visit and High School
- Health and Safety- key this year and last year, update to current guidance, children under 18 and 4 months if experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms must have a PCR and await results at home. If the PCR is negative they can return to school, if positive they must self isolate and conduct a Lateral Flow on day 6 and day 7. If both negative, they can return to the education setting. If someone in the house has tested positive, household members need to conduct Lateral Flow tests for 7 days
- Dynamic risk assessment in place which is reviewed regularly
- Managing staff absences is a key activity, and our priority is keeping the school open and staffed
- Currently working within bubbles arrangement which we understand we are about to move out of, working with CEC outbreak management guidance
- We will be briefed on new guidance this week, expect schools to take a phased approach to mirror what is happening in wider society, information shared as they have it
- New warn and inform letter encourages testing before entering school
- Home learning is available online but with no expectation to engage if learners are off school
- Ventilation and air filtration- this is an issue raised by some parents, I wanted to flag the work of the Fabric Team at Edinburgh Council- CO2 monitors used in school and data submitted to the council, which allows us to keep an eye on levels and maximise ventilation
- Current thinking is air filtration is not a substitute for natural ventilation, not the decision of the HT alone, a team would need to look into this, but at the moment the

position is we are not moving towards air filtration, any change to this would come to us from the EC ventilation

- Recruitment- live for Class Teacher and Early Years Practitioner
- Clàrsach instructor Ms Elinor Evans took up post last week
- Mrs Sarah Moore successful candidate for PT Expressive Arts role and will take up her role after maternity leave
- Mrs Lora Ward finished in our clerical team in Jan, in process of recruiting for a new member of admin team
- Classing- each year we submit a classing proposal, this year we submitted a 16 class model, can be changed up until the summer, this is what were currently planning for

**Karen Reid-** Depute Head Teacher - Leads on Early Years as part of remit

- New guidance on P1 deferrals- update on how guidance has changed, EC now fully funding requests from children born between August and February- replaces discretionary deferral- all submitted online and nursery parents have this information now, closing date is March 31<sup>st</sup>, recommend parents/carers discuss deferral with Sgoil- araich staff before applying

**Laura Young-** Depute Headteacher - Leads on Support for Learning as part of remit

- School counselling service- operates across JGHS cluster- delivering psychodynamic counselling for learners aged 10+
- Play therapy- delivered by student from Queen Margaret University
- Art psychotherapy from student at QMU, supporting 4 learners two afternoons and a morning a week

Head Teacher:

- Reminder that we are issuing a monthly newsletter which includes dates for your diary- key dates coming up are re. parent consultations (planning to be conducted online)
- We would like to highlight the winter window from P6/7 with thanks to Cara's dad (Declan) who collected it and brought it to school where it is now displayed, the theme was connection and kindness
- **Playground Parental Views 2019-** Katie Wight led parent and learner consultation- this will be shared along with PPT and Microsoft forms to see if this is still reflective of our views or if this should be changed
- Things have moved on since 2019 due to COVID-19 playground zones etc but encouraging people to think beyond that
- Parents liked the chipped area, lovely to see gardening group back in last week
- 2019- Learners priorities- Willow fence, loose parts play, football
- 2019- Parents/carers priorities- Social areas, loose parts play, gathering area
- Once this info is collated we can move on to next steps
- Would like to highlight from learner feedback this week how much they emphasised what they like already and how much they like the playground

## **5. Co-Chairs update**

### **Active Schools**

The PC continues to work with PCs across the City to seek an outcome to the current reduction and changes in Active Schools provision. Following the meeting of PC Reps with Jude Salmon the Active Schools Manager at Edinburgh Council and David Bruce in Sports & Leisure at the council, most of the PC Chairs felt understanding had been reached and ways forward could be forged.

However, at the next meeting with new Executive Director of Education and Children's Services at CEC, Amanda Hatton, it was clear that there remain a number of unanswered questions and no firm plan. Some schools have no provision after 6 months and have had limited contact with their AS coordinator. Chairs were unaware that activities can be charged for (as long as the PC or the school administer it).

There was a suggestion from the Council that PCs and schools could set up Social Enterprises or as charities. This would introduce a number of administrative and reporting requirements including reporting to OSCR, need for a Board of Trustees which for a Primary school feels disproportionate to the task.

There is uncertainty around the role of Sports Scotland (previously funded Active Schools), whether Edinburgh Leisure could have a part to play and concern around over-reliance on volunteers in the new model.

The next step will be to bring PC Chairs and councillors from other authorities to talk about what they do and how that works and have Sports Scotland in the meeting. We'll feedback following that meeting. Meantime, please continue to raise any Active Schools specific comments, questions and concerns with the Chairs.

In the meantime, we do however acknowledge for our school, Jess, our AS coordinator continues to do what she can. The Chairs are in conversation with other PC's and looking for pots of community funding to support her. We're very appreciative of her work and the opportunities she is creating in the face of the obstacles.

### **Survey Feedback**

The PC issued a Parent Survey in January 2022 in advance of the AGM, 67 responses were received from parents and carers with children across all years from Sgoil Araich to C7 (Appendix in the AGM report includes additional tables). Thanks to those who took the time to respond, your feedback is very helpful.

### **The Parent Council or CnP?**

Taobh na Pàirce Comhairle nam Pàrant/The Parent Council (PC) represents and engages families in the life of the school.

Comann nam Pàrant (CnP) is the national body that represents families in Gaelic Medium Education (GME)CnP has a regional group for the [Lothians - Comann nam Pàrant dun Eideann](#). The PC and CnP work together to ensure that the views of the families at TnP and across the Lothians are well represented in GME matters with the Council and others.

We recognise that there is a lot of information flying about from one or other of us! One idea we're exploring is to hold GME update sessions for; P1, P2-P5 and P6&7. We could run those this year, and then at the start of each academic year by way of passing on information and canvassing new opinions. Look out for more info on those sessions.

### **PC Website**

The Parent Council Website has information about what the PC is for, the work it does and how to get involved (we are always keen to hear from parents willing to volunteer). Here we publicise agendas of Parent Council meetings and the minutes of those meetings. The FAQ's page is handy: <https://tnpparentcouncil.org.uk/>

### **PC Comms**

Given the increasing number of families joining the TnP community and the unique size and spread of the TnP catchment, the PC was keen to investigate how we might better connect our community using digital platforms and introduced Classlist in 2021. More detail on communications and responses in the Parent survey can be found in the Annual Report 2022.

There is an ask for the school and PC to use one joint platform for comms, an ask we understand and appreciate. Research shows that platforms for school communications don't include sections for the PC and are subject to monthly fees. Classlist can accommodate both the school and the PC and has functionality unique and specific to both and the PC is in discussion with the school about if and how this can happen.

79.4% of respondents to the survey indicated that the volume of communication from the Parent Council was about right, though some parents commented on different approaches to flag or streamline the volume. Classlist enables targeting of communications more effectively, there is chat in individual classes and this is great to see. For the Committee it's more straightforward to manage and administrate than Facebook and enables greater connectivity between class and interest groups. We will continue investigating how to make the best use of it.

You can customise the notifications Classlist sends you, and we like to keep the **Whole School** feed as clear as possible to avoid too many unnecessary notifications, so it's best to ask questions of your class and Class Rep first, open out to the year group second if necessary and only to the whole school if the question remains unanswered.

There are a number of **parent groups** that support the school, the pupils and their families in specific interest areas. If any of these groups are of interest to you, you'll find them on Classlist. There is no expectation necessarily that you will be given 'work' to do in these groups, they are a way to stay informed, to connect people and to build the community.

Due to some feedback on the volume of communications, one thing we could do to reduce the traffic is turn off the ability to post to the Whole School. This would mean whole school posts go through your Class Rep or the Chairs. We'll canvas opinion through class reps about this if the steps above don't help.

## Meetings

Parents expressed a preference to meet when public health guidance permits through a mix of online and face to face and an almost equal proportion expressed a preference for face to face. It is likely we will combine a mix of online meetings, face to face events and gatherings in future.

## Community Building

We're not planning to return to Facebook for day to day communications. Data ownership is extremely problematic, tempers fray much sooner and in unexpected ways on social media platforms, and running a Facebook group is a full-time job.

We do have a Facebook Page and all are invited to share community news and events for your wider family, the wider community and the Gaelic diaspora:

<https://www.facebook.com/PCTnP>

## Getting Involved

We had an encouraging indication of 25 people willing to support the Parent Council through either their skills, participation in Classlist groups or joining the Committee - we will follow up on this interest in the coming weeks.

**Action** - PC to survey Parents and Carers for contacts wishing to support the PC

### **6. GME Secondary School update (Sharon May Convenor of Comann nam Pàrant Dùn Èideann)**

- Sharon provided a verbal deputation along with the PC to the Council Children and Families Committee on 24 January 22 on the proposed GME secondary school consultation- Liberton and Castlebrae sites. After hearing the deputation, results from the CnP Survey and a discussion, the Councillors took the decision not to proceed to statutory consultation, but to pause for further discussions with GME parents and consideration of existing and any other sites which will support the intent for quality education.
- We now have a pause in the consultation process, which is welcome to afford the Council more time to explore the support offer from the Scottish Government, potential sites in the city and develop the Educational Benefits statement
- Meeting scheduled with Amanda Hatton, new Executive Director of Education and Childrens' Services and CnP to take forward the engagement
- Parents and Carers involvement is absolutely crucial, you don't need to join the committee, letter writing and survey engagement etc is really helpful, Gaelic speakers especially needed to help with press requests from BBC Alba etc
- Next Education and Families Committee meeting scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022
- Blog with all info can be found [here](#) .

7. AOB None

8. **Dèitichean nan Coinneamhan ri Thighinn / Date of Next Meeting**

There has been a request that we alternate meeting days in the next academic year. We propose Mondays and Wednesdays and will reinstate the Friday morning catch up meeting.

The next meeting will be: **16th March 7.15pm**

Thanks to everyone for attending and to Iona, Karen and Laura, as well as Natasha, Eleanor, Laura - and welcome to Padraic.