

# MINUTES

## Parent Council Meeting

*Date* Tuesday 8th March | *Meeting chaired by* Ruth Jays

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### In Attendance

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Ruth Jays (PC Chair), Andrea Barlow (PC Vice-Chair), Bill Scott-Watson (Playspace Group), Kyrsta Macdonald-Scott (Nursery rep), Liz Henderson (PSA Chair), Graham Elliot (PSA Treasurer), Kevin Cummings (TASC rep), Stephanie McCart (Depute Head Teacher), Norine Langlands (Business Manager), Joyce Gilmour (Headteacher), Patricia Morrison (Depute Head Teacher), Alex Boyack, Jacqueline Taylor, Emma Gieben-Gamal, Beth Morrison, Emma Dennison, Jo Wishart, Joanne Macaulay.

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### Introductions and composition of the Parent Council

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- RJ and AB proposed year reps as part of the school council. After discussion it was agreed we would broaden this to recruiting class reps. (23 plus a rep for nursery and TASC). Several attendees expressed an interest. RJ and AB to follow this up and then advertise throughout the school for people to fill additional roles.
- Eilidh Scott (unable to attend last night) intimated to RJ that she was happy to step down but equally happy to continue in her role as clerk. Attendees were invited to express their interest in the post. RJ and AB to follow up interest and define the role more clearly over the next couple of weeks. Many thanks to Eilidh for all her hard work thus far.
- The current treasurer, Charles Keegan was unable to attend. E-GG agreed to contact CK and ask to contact RJ asap to discuss treasurer role.

It was great to see so many people at the meeting, especially some new faces, thanks all for coming along.

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### What is the Parent Council for?

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AB updated the group on discussions with the PSA as to what role each group should take and distributed a summary document listing what each has agreed to do. The two groups will remain separate but be closely linked and share a communications strategy and AGM. The agreed document will be communicated to the wider school community to remind everyone who does what. Document attached with these minutes for reference. Top line summary as follows:

*The PSA is events based. They conceive, plan and run events to fundraise for the school or just for fun.*

*The Parent Council is issues based. We act for the school and parents on issues affecting our children's time at school.*

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### Key priority for this year: school dinners

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RJ and AB introduced their key focus for this year: school dinners. The school has identified this as an area that could be greatly improved and would like parent support to achieve this. There are two key issues to address: one, the quality and nutritional value of the food delivered by the central catering company (and the waste generated each day) and two; the logistics surrounding school dinners – the space to eat in, staff involved in making school dinners work and the opportunity to influence the new dining space. Key points:

- The project is at planning stage. JG is facilitating meetings with CEC to establish what scope we have to address the issues and the best approach.

- Meanwhile we are recruiting people to form part of a school dinners 'task force' to take action once the scope of the opportunity is known.
- RJ is leading on forming a task force and more details will follow.

The topic generated a lot of interest and comment. We'll keep you posted!

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## Project updates

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### **Playspace**

Work on the 'grass circle' is due to take place over the Easter break. It will be the culmination of a lot of determined hard work on the part of Andy Siddall and the Playspace Group. There have been many council-wielded spanners put into the works causing unnecessary delay but hopefully these have now been dealt with. Andy will be updating the school community on ParentMail next week when everything is confirmed.

The next stage will be the completion of the shelter. Mini-beach huts are to be constructed in the next few weeks, the school will be working on mosaic letters to complete the external wall of the shelter and work will soon start on wooden bunting and a 6-panel mural to form the back drop of the inside of the shelter.

The 'Towerbank 200', a running and scooting track, is to be added to the playground during the summer break.

- Andy to update school community via ParentMail
- Designer help needed to complete the mural – more details to follow as part of the Parent Council recruitment drive.

### **Samba Band**

JT updated us on the revival of the Samba Band. There are several interested parents meeting to talk about next steps and she will keep us up to date. GE confirmed there are still residual funds available for the band. Decisions about charges for the band sessions, musical tuition and involvement of high school students will be made within the Samba group itself and communicated on to the PC and PSA as relevant.

### **Camp Fundraising**

The continued excellent work of Donald Martin was highlighted by GE: his fundraising means a balance of nearly £4K in the CAMP fund. GE also outlined plans to help DM in his fundraising efforts, mainly through development of the annual CAMP disco. Lighting will be supplied by Colin Cuthbert, a local DJ is being sought, dance 'leaders' sourced and playlists and ideas from the pupils themselves included in event planning.

### **PSA**

The PSA continues to build up its funds (currently standing at £53,500) through fundraising events and initiatives. The bulk of the funds will go towards developing the playground as outlined above. As well as the Spring Fair and KiltWalk, regular dates in their fundraising calendar, they will be introducing a new event... the Zumbathon. Set to take place on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April in Portobello and Joppa Parish Church, it will feature local Zumba enthusiasts leading children and adults in an energetic Zumba session – 45 minutes for children, double that for adults. The event will be led by GE and Claire Donaghue. Lycra encouraged. More details to follow...

### **Uniform group**

JW reminded us that all uniform orders processed through the school earn us money. The uniform fund stands at just over £600, accumulated through original sales and second hand sales at Spring and Christmas Fairs. A suggestion to add a reminder to the order form and receipt that orders earn money for the school was well received. JW to action.

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## Head teacher's report

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- **ParentMail.** The new system has been launched. 76% of those registered have verified their accounts but there are still 425 parents who have not done so. A further electronic reminder will be sent out and class reps (when recruited) will be tasked with reminding those in their class to verify information. NL highlighted that it would also be useful to get feedback on the content of ParentMails and how it looks and is received by parents. This has been noted as a further task for reps. Teething problems with the related app should be referred to the school office.
- **Homework survey.** JG expressed her thanks to all parents who had taken the time to respond to the Homework Survey and provided valuable insight and suggestions. Key points from the survey have been digested and new approaches are being tried in homework pilots with several year groups. The results of these trials will shape the homework policy. JG will share a summary report of the results of the homework survey with the school community and subsequent homework policy.
- **Dining Hall.** The work on an extended dining space is due to be completed in October this year. TASC will be using part of the dining space as their base. The TU space will become two new classrooms. The classroom sited off the lower hall will become the dining room servery and washing up area.
- **School Streets Project.** The 18-month pilot of a traffic-free zone around Towerbank starts on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March. Times and affected streets have been detailed and communicated in a leaflet sent out in school bags on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March.
- **Whole school curriculum evening.** Next one to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> March and will showcase the children's work on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- **New High School.** Ruth Mackay, the new head teacher, reports that the school will not be open for the new intake in August this year but will be delayed by between 2 to 5 months due to drainage issues. The P7s have been told and the transition will be managed appropriately.
- **Advertising.** JG reported that she receives frequent requests to advertise local groups for the arts, sport, drama and other interests. This sometimes presents a dilemma as to what to pass on as it cannot be endorsed by the school. LH from the PSA suggested they would be happy to pass on details of any relevant classes / clubs via Facebook. JG to pass on anything to Liz or Ruth in future.
- **Ardeonaig trip.** Another successful trip and pretty decent weather too!
- **Basketball success.** Well done to the team for winning the Hope Trust Trophy. This is a first for Towerbank!

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## Next Meeting

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Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016 – 7.00 – 9.00pm