

Strathblane Parent Council Agenda – AGM

Via Video Conference link 6.30pm

Thursday 17th September 2020

1. **Chairperson’s Welcome and apologies** 1830 - Victoria
2. **Chairperson’s report** 1835 - Victoria
3. **Treasurer’s report** 1845 - Heather
4. **Official Business of the Parent Council -** 1855 - Victoria
   1. **Confirm Appointments of Office Bearers**
   2. **Confirm Appointments of Ordinary Members**
5. **Head Teacher’s Update** 1905 - Sharon
6. **Depute Head Teacher’s Update** 1910 - Anne
7. **Next meeting TBA** 1915 - Sharon/Victoria

***In attendance:***

***Victoria Carson, Alistair Pickard, Heather Smith, Lucy Sinclair, Katie Goodier, Jenny Dawson, Anne Young, Sharon Cassidy, Anne Spencer***

***Apologies: n/a***

**Victoria - Chairperson’s welcome**

Welcome to the AGM. Thanks to all for their attendance and support.

**Victoria - Chairperson’s Report**

This past year has been a new and challenging experience for me as Chair, likewise for Anne Young as Secretary and Heather Smith as Treasurer. Lucy Sinclair’s experience on the Council and in Fundraising and Katie Goodyear’s experience on the Council and in running the Grounds group certainly held us in good stead. The parent council’s 2 committee members have been committed to supporting the parent council and helping where needed. Alastair Pickard jointly leads our Grounds work and will stay with us into the next session. Fiona Nicholl supported the Council for this period and has decided to step down. Very many thanks go to Fiona for her support and guidance throughout the year. Mrs Cassidy, Head Teacher, and Miss Spencer also attend meetings and their contribution is valuable. It’s so important to the school, parents and pupils to be able to come together to discuss issues.

The Parent Council strives to be supportive and encourages parental involvement when required for events and raising awareness of issues that impact them.

During the school term time the Parent Council met quarterly. Things have gone off track with the pandemic. The 3 extraordinary meetings via Zoom allowed us to understand more about what was happening during the COVID-19 period to update on the latest guidance from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and to consider what lockdown learning meant and what the opening up of the school again would entail.

We are open to receiving feedback, and communication lines are always open.

This year, communication has been even more important than ever, as we all transitioned to the “new school way”, to reflect the challenges in life, and the way the school operates. The continuing development of the SPS website as a valuable tool for teacher, pupil and parent engagement is key. This, alongside the regular newsletters and all individual class notifications from teachers, which have been appreciated, will prove beneficial during this slightly dislocated period. Communication between the school and Parent Council is positive and it is envisaged that this will continue this coming academic year.

We have operated through an unprecedented situation and our thanks go to the complete SPS staff for preparing so thoughtfully and thoroughly for lockdown and return.

Volunteering from parents has been really good. Parents have volunteered their time for events and spoken up aboutissues. It would be great to further involve parents and see even more participation in the future. As PC we’ve been able to support the school and spoken about school operations, fundraising events, resources, nursery extension, grounds, school inspection, internet safety, all have made good headway. The grounds group have done tremendous work and I will let Katie update on this:

**Katie – Grounds Update**

The Grounds Group has managed to keep active over the last academic year in spite of the current challenges. Our Autumn Welly Day took place in October and various Autumnal tidying up jobs were done, as well as the enlarging of the perimeter fence around the pond. Thank you to the P5 class for taking charge of the topping up of play bark in the play frames around the tyre structures and the trim trail.

**Huge thanks to** **everyone** involved in the big job of completing the daily mile path**.** The major project for the Grounds Group this year. Thanks to Alastair Pickard, who planned and managed the project incredibly professionally, with the support of Andy Edwards, and Tom Furniss organising groups of volunteers over three days to construct the pathway which was completed in record time.

Machinery loaned by GAP Group and the expertise of Scott Carson driving the digger was invaluable. A huge thank you to everyone who got involved with this and to Tom Furniss for all his efforts in the planning and fundraising of the project over the last couple of years. A final working party was organised this last weekend to top up the path with whin dust to try and smooth out the rough stones. The path has been rolled and is now functional again and looking great. The school has also asked if the Grounds Group could help with the installation of a gate at the path exit towards the play park, to deter people from the community from walking along the path during the school day. The overall costs spent on the pathway have totalled £2938. There is £578 left in the budget which can be spent on any future path maintenance required and possibly a nice bench or signage if any money left over. The school can decide. If an Autumn Welly Day is able to go ahead, this could be a project ear marked for then.

A group of parents also kindly gave their time in the summer holidays to weed, strim and tidy up the school grounds in preparation for the children returning in August. Many thanks to those who helped out with that.

We were sorry to see damage done to some of the structures in the playground (part of the tyre pathway and the base frames around the tyre circle and the trim trail) and the removal of the tree, during the installation of the portacabins. Hopefully this can be rectified once the building work is complete and cabins removed.

Lastly we would like to say a huge thank you to the Grounds Group Team for all the ongoing time and commitment given to Strathblane Primary School in helping maintain the school grounds, and a big thank you to all parents and staff, including Peter Bendermacher, who have supported the projects to date.

Victoria -Thanks for the update, Katie. This year we have been able to provide funding towards some key initiatives that all support our childrens’ learning experience.

**Lucy – Fundraising Update**

Our fundraising was cut short due to the pandemic. We raised £4000, plus receiving £1000 from the co-op. Tom raised funds for the path which was great.

We were delighted to be able to purchase the chromebooks for the school which seem to be working well. Thanks to everyone involved, parents, grandparents, children, teachers and Mr Bendermacher for all the support given to all our fundraising events prior to the pandemic.

Let us know what you feel may be needed in the future. We are of course, conscious of furlough ending and the impact that may have.

Victoria – Thanks to everyone in the group for fundraising and all the ideas.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a sincere thank you to my fellow (past and present) Parent Council members, who have devoted their time, enthusiasm and commitment to support the school and the Parent Council during the past year. Also a big thank you to Mrs Barratt and all the Staff for support and to Mr Bendermacher for going above and beyond to make our Fundraising possible.

I know, even in the current circumstances, the Parent Council will continue to provide opportunities and support for the school, raise well needed money, as well as welcome new members and volunteers to help in any way that they can.

**Heather – Treasurer’s Report**

Due to the pandemic, there is not much to report since our last full meeting in February.

Starting balance £5,560. We have £3383 left in funds. Prior to February we had over £5000 raised plus Easy fundraising and Co-op funds bringing us to £7,374. Path funds have been used. Total expenditure £9551. Additional path cost to be added. Funds are healthy. Report available.

**Official Business of Parent Council**

* Current office bearers agree to remain.
* Agreement that Alastair Pickard will lead Grounds Group ongoing with support from Katie Goodier.
* Fiona Nicholl leaving creates a vacancy for an ordinary member to support the fundraising group.
* Jenny Dawson volunteers to fill the vacant position and is seconded.

Victoria – Thanks to all and welcome to Jenny Dawson.

**Sharon – Headteacher’s Update**

Thanks to the PC and everyone for all their support. Also thanks to the fundraising team - the chromebooks arrived in good time considering the current climate. The events held were also very enjoyable. Thanks to everyone involved. Thanks to the grounds team.The path and improvement to the path this week is great. We are enjoying using it and all the little out shoots. Pupils and staff appreciate all the efforts which have gone in from the grounds team and especially Alistair, for project managing.

Thanks to Fiona for her involvement and support in the PC. Welcome to Jenny.

Thanks to Miss Spencer for her work on the nursery. Everything has been challenging and continues to change. We have a weekly meeting with head of healthcare and education to discuss issues around Covid-19. We have invested in procedures and processes in school to manage track and trace. Also we need to ask questions and be vigilant. We are required to know where everyone is at all times. There is lots of scrutiny in schools and we need to be hyper-vigilant with our processes to protect everyone. We are working hard at this while the children appear very happy to be back at school.

There is more emphasis on 2 metre distancing. Currently we stay outdoors for PE. Inside we have windows and doors open, however this will be a concern over the winter months.

The Local Authority and Schools are wanting to do everything possible to keep schools open, but in doing so it may lead to more mitigating circumstances as time goes on. We are trying our best to keep everything as normal as possible, but it is anything but normal. It is very challenging. We can have no events. However, we see happy children. We don’t want blended learning. We will do what we can to maintain this.

**Victoria** – There is a balance for good communication, though difficult, during the continuous changes and constant reviews on the situation with Covid-19. A second lockdown - What might happen, should we reach this stage?

**Sharon** – Preparation was carried out prior to lockdown. We are working on the here and now. Staff don’t have computers provided. The government committed to ICT support for staff and pupils happening all over Scotland. Secondary schools are getting chromebooks and laptops and ICT support is prioritised there initially. P6 access to chromebooks is delayed and the roll out slow. We are working for the here and now – not planning for further lockdown. Preparation was carried out previously for blended learning.

Question to parents: what are the lessons learned from lockdown? What suggestions would they recommend?

Victoria – it was good to have lessons planned with paper exercises or video – this was helpful.

Jenny – Good if someone was there to be available to speak to children. Some children work better to video clip instructions.

Stirling Council employed people to work with technology in schools. Is this happening?

Sharon - Secondments are to secondary schools for exams. Rules make it difficult to video children and provide video guidance. The focus is on pupils doing exams.

Helpful to have feedback. If conditions improve legally, etc, staff want to help where allowed, to do what they can.

Katie thanked school, teachers for all the efforts made during the lockdown. Feedback that not everyone has access to a printer.

**Anne – Depute Headteacher’s Update**

Nursery - With the portacabins being put in place we are disappointed with the state of the playground. We have been assured that the damage to the area at the back of the portacabins will all be sorted out. We have been promised that it will all be made good. We are hopeful that will be the case. Thanks to Mr Bendermacher for helping out in lots of ways.

Nursery had to put fence area out into playing fields for children to have access to play. Education authority have been supportive. A door is to be available for there to be access to a wooden ramp to allow free flow play.

Digital technology – we always worked off paper. Due to Covid-19 we will now go to e-journals (it avoids paper going back and forward). It’s early days.

Stirling council asked for a letter to go out to change nursery sessions. Currently we work in one bubble but soon we will work in 2 bubbles. We will work out how to do this going forward.

We have applied for a grant to purchase sails to enable more outdoor learning.

Hard to have 8 members of staff with distancing. Key worker groups will stay in their groups.

Transitions on the whole have worked well. Building work is still out for tender. No confirmed plan as yet.

**Jenny** – Gazebos for outdoor learning – is that a consideration? Would primary school benefit as this is something being considered at the high school.

**Sharon** – Fine for PC to look into this.

Jenny - Action – to find out about gazebo type structure for primary school.

**Next Meeting Agreed – 28th October at 6.30pm**