



Strathblane Parent Council

<http://www.strathparentcouncil.org/>

Minutes of Strathblane Primary School PC meeting – 6/09/11

1. In attendance: Sandra Logan, Anne Spencer, Mandy Malcomson, Wendy Hamilton, Sandy Kennedy, Simon Jones, Rachel Allen, Robin Hoyle, Paul Brogan, Anne Scott, Eleanor Forrest, Vicki Aitchison, Mandy McCarron, Beate Beck Schwann, Elaine Holmes, Nicki Sleight, Annabel Sharp, Steven McCooey, Stuart Nisbet, Alan Campbell, Jenny Park
2. Apologies: Sheena Mylles, Traci Leven, Linda Barclay
3. Formal Business:

Alan Campbell opened the meeting by introducing the new P.C. He stressed that the role of chairperson would be decided at AGM but was happy to chair for this evening. Sandra announced that this session Sheena Mylles and Rachel Allen would share duties as Teachers' Representative. Anne Spencer would continue in her role as Pupil Rep. Alan encouraged as many parents to sign up to the PC mailing list which would help reduce paper costs. Alan asked for any comments on previous minutes: in particular, mention was made of an agreement Linda Barclay had discussed at a previous meeting. This would give £25-75 to all of the organisations who had stalls at the summer fair. It was surmised by Linda that not all groups would take up this offer but if they did it would take £925 from the £4100 total raised at the fair. As a result, permission would be required from PC. This item was not present on the previous minutes, so Sandy agreed to follow up this issue.

Sandy spoke on behalf of the previous PC, stating what their objectives had been throughout the last two years:

- One of the highlights was the implementation of the school crossing. Sandy pointed out that it was not only the PC that were due praise for this - others parents and members of the community had been key in this success (Christine Baume and Linda Barclay);
- Working positively with Sandra, on issues such as school discipline, had been another plus point during the past two years;
- Extra curricular activities had been a great success. Particular mention went to Traci Leven as sports co-ordinator and her success in encouraging parental involvement. Thanks to all the helpers in clubs such as cross country running, netball, cheerleading, football and TOPS sports. Also thanks to Wendy Hamilton for her assistance. Cathie Moir and Sheena Mylles deserved recognition for the Gardening Club; Lynne James and Anne Brown for Chatterbooks. The other PC members: Libby, Vivienne, Jenny and Mandy key to encouraging direct parental communication through emails and website. Mandy Malcomson will continue looking at music provision. Thanks to Jenny for her continued work with the eco-committee.
- Sandy thanked the fund raising team: Derek Fabel, Beate Beck Schwan and Linda Barclay for their tremendous efforts. Money raised has been able to buy whiteboards for some of the classrooms, pay for sports equipment, subsidise class trips and parties, and even bought a wheelbarrow for our janitor.

Simon Jones requested that as it was a new PC perhaps a summary should be made on the role of the PC, for those parents who were new to the meetings. Sandra pointed out that there was a Parental Involvement Officer (PIO) to advise. Essentially, Sandra pointed out that the PC's role is a partnership to support the school and PC meetings are open to any parent or carer

Mandy Malcomson explained the formation of parent councils in 2006. This abolished school boards and PTAs. She also talked of the PC toolkit and explained its function.

Sandra outlined the school improvement plan, the key points being:

- Transitions across the stages and learning.
- Focussing on Literacy – moderating standards.
- Introducing financial education through the school year plan incl. a 'money week'.
- Homework policy – the aim being to end up with a school policy on homework. There is a range of views on homework – hope to achieve a balance. Maths and numeracy will be a focus. There will be a consultation with parents on homework.
- Health and Wellbeing – this spans learning in the Curriculum for Excellence. Continue to develop active/outdoor learning. House system continues to improve and will be further developed.
- School management system – establishing leadership groups and developing the child. Positive relationships – widening out to school community.
- Behaviour Management – there have been no incidents of violence recorded for months. Group fighting in playground has reduced.

Sandra wants to keep homework diaries as a way of communication between teachers, children and parents. Sandra and Mrs Bairner have signed up to 'Survey Monkey'. This will allow communication between parents and the school via online surveys. As a result, paper used by the school will reduce. Text messaging parents will continue.

Sandra announced that in future, anyone coming to help at the school would have to be disclosed again for that purpose. The school could no longer rely on existing Disclosure checks that had been performed on that person, by outside organisations. This would have cost implications.

Sandra outlined the extra curricular clubs:

- Monday- TOPS, Tues - staff meetings, Wed - netball, gardening, webcrew. Thurs lunch - choir.
- She suggested a walking club as that may engage the children who didn't participate in sports.
- Also, perhaps a chess club as pupils had excelled in a recent competition.
- Cross country is seasonal and would most likely start in due course.
- Sandra told us that Mr Begg, the new minister of Strathblane Church, had suggested an archery club - max of 8 children per club. Sandra mentioned that 2014 would release an opportunity for funding and she would investigate 'Sports for All' to perhaps fund the archery and other sports - or buses to sports' events etc.
- New whiteboards will be installed over Glasgow Sept weekend. One board, minus VAT costs £2187. There will now be boards in the computer suite and 4 out of 6 classrooms. Sandra said that the classes who still didn't have a whiteboard were able to use the one in Mrs Arrol's class, when the room was vacant. Alan suggested a demo of whiteboards for parents to see its advantages.
- The willow tunnel may be constructed in Oct. Anne Spencer waiting to hear an update on this date.
- Sandra will investigate the status of the installation of the new picnic benches. Plans are for an 8-person bench (purchased for the school by Jim McPherson) that will be secured to the ground. Sandra offered to find out costs to perhaps install more benches. She suggested that in good weather, the children could eat lunch outside. Steven McCooey suggested that some tables could have integrated outdoor toys such as chessboards. This would allow children different options for play.
- Jenny asked if there were any plans to develop the school grounds. Sandra said that pupils want dens, benches and shelters. Sandra thought that pop-up tents would be a good alternative. The school doesn't want too many permanent outdoor structures. The children also want an extension to the adventure playground. Finally, in the future there could be a fruit and veg plot for the pupils to work on.
- Sandra explained that there will be emergency maintenance only with no rolling programme. Sandra explained that the school has lots of water damage, outdated

toilets and unusable sinks. Planned maintenance incl. safety hinges for the P1 and nursery doors and hand-dryers-all actually Health and Safety measures

- We are not entitled to a crossing patrol person now that the new crossing is in place. This may be revisited.

Spending/Funding Requests (See attached sheet)

Suggestions from parents:

- Anne Scott put it to the meeting that an hour may be too long lunchtime and a consideration should be made to reduce it to 45mins. The staff that monitor the playground reported a difference in the children's behaviour around the 45min mark. Sandra had dealt with such matters in her previous schools. Sandra will investigate if any schools in the cluster have a 45 minute lunch break. Parent consultation would have to also take place before moves were made.
- Mandy Malcomson suggested the school invest in a good PA system for use in concerts etc. Sandra concurred and said that it could be used throughout the year.
- Sandy suggested an introduction to languages- perhaps via a parent volunteer. He also encouraged sports competitions between Strathblane and other local schools.
- Jenny is keen to progress eco-schools through gardening clubs, bug watch. Sandra suggested that this could be done through leadership groups and was a good opportunity.
- Rachel Allen is setting up an anti-bullying group.
- Simon asked about cycling proficiency within the school – Sandra informed him that two parents had attended training.
- Sandy was impressed with the enterprise initiatives that the children had undertaken last year. There may be interest in Microtyco. The idea is to be given a £1 and convert it into a larger amount through entrepreneurialism. Sandra thought this would fit in nicely with the school's 'financial week'. Also, P7 will be doing an enterprise project this year.

Fundraising

Mandy emphasised the importance of fundraising and that none of these goals will be achieved without parental support. Several suggestions were made including a change of venue for the meeting, occasional change of times to after school instead of evening, organising parents into small groups to make tasks seem more achievable. Paul Brogan suggested the role of chairperson might be off-putting to parents and perhaps if it were a paid role to it may entice someone. Eleanor stressed that most of the fundraising tasks had been done before and needn't seem insurmountable. Sandy suggested a 'sign-up' for fundraising. Sandra thought this could be at the 'meet the teacher' eve?

Sandra gave a breakdown of school's annual report (on separate sheet - c/f sheet separate). The supplies budget had overspend due to budget cuts. The stationary budget includes expensive processes like laminating – not just pencils. As it's a devolved budget, response repairs' budget can accrue if not used during the school year (see c/f sheet). Sandra has applied to Co-op and Sports 2014 for grants – this is for outdoor education. The calendar will be axed this year due to budget cuts. Robin Hoyle asked how many parents are on the email mailing system. Is there the possibility of integrating both school and PC websites? Parents are encouraged to hand in Tesco vouchers and Nestle box tops. A good resource would be a box whereby parents could put recyclable material such as paper for drawing, boxes, cardboard etc.

AOCB.

Date of next meeting – 4th Oct 2011 (it will be the A.G.M.). Vicki Aitchison asked why there had been no election for PC members. It was explained that there was only a certain amount of people that came forward/were nominated for the posts, so an election wasn't necessary.

Sandra stressed the importance of pupil consultation and forwarded a request letter from p6/5. PC will respond to this letter.