Newtonmore Parent Council meeting minutes

Meeting opens at 7:00 via Zoom

Welcome
Present: Sarah Fraser Head Teacher (SF), Gillian Bedi (GB) Chair, Liz McGill (LMcG), Treasurer, Kaylie Allen (KA) Secretary, Lisa Lavin (LL), Helen Gray (HG), Sarah Cheyne (SC), Jane Aly (JA),

Apologies: Catherine Chisholm, Heather Hill, Sandra Mackay, Cathy Grover

Minutes and Matters arising
- Allocation funding – Liz to update
- Sustrans – KA didn't receive any suggestions for
- Alltnacriche – no parents took up the option of financial assistance
- Answer messages – communication with school: School is getting a new phone system put into the school with a phone line in each classroom, but this will take a while to be put in. Currently no phone line to the office (as currently in old office and not monitored). Trying to use workarounds at the moment. Carly won't be in the office for the next 10 days so as an interim SF will look at the possibility of one the PSAs being allocated to listen to the messages as late in the day as possible.
- Bike shed – tables still there, but Estates Manager has been to the school and potentially building a new store and there will be room within the school for them.

Previous minutes
Action: AGM minutes were proposed by SF, and seconded by GB.

Chair Person's report
- GB first report as has only been in Chair role for four weeks.
- Kids returned back after October school holidays and seem happy
- Parents evening went well (some tech issues highlighted on the first evening) and parents enjoyed having the opportunity to speak with teachers.
- GB asked about plans for an open afternoon mentioned previously. SF confirmed this won't go ahead as current Covid restrictions will not allow it.

Head Teachers report
- **Staffing** – Miss Dixon returned from maternity leave on 5th November. Mr Amran and Mrs Olds from KHS providing ASN support on Tuesday and Thursdays.
- **Alltnacriche** – P7 enjoyed their two day residential at Alltnacriche with Gergask pupils last week. Although it was a slightly different format to previous years (due to Covid guidance) still very enjoyable. Mrs Grover accompanied the children and I stayed overnight on Monday. All children managed overnight stay. Used minibus from KHS to transport and Miss McMillan also assisted with transportation. Thank you to Mrs Grover and Miss McMillan. No parents took up option of financial assistance.
- **Bake sale** - Following on from discussion from last Parent Council meeting a bake sale was organised last Friday to fundraise to support costs of ski team to Glasgow for finals. Huge thank you to all who donated baking and pupils and staff who bought cakes. £165.00 raised.
- **School lunches** – P5 will be entitled to FSM from January 2022. P6 and P7 in August 2022. Reminder that parents need to apply for FSM to get clothing grant entitlement and

this will also affect amount of PEF money, which the school receives. Paul Short from Highland Council's Estates Team visited the school to check if any additional storage needed to be constructed to accommodate additional tables for the potential increase in pupils having school meals.

- **Covid** – continue with guidance as before. Staff testing twice weekly. Pupil and staff absences higher whilst awaiting results of PCR tests. More cases involving families recently. Guidance is to get tested with Covid symptoms and if a negative PCR, pupils can return to school. If living with a positive sibling a need for extra vigilance for symptoms and retest if symptoms begin. GN closed today due to staffing issues within school. Please be assured that this is a last resort and pupil and staff health and wellbeing will always be a priority.

- **Christmas** will be online again with classes recording performances for Christmas Classroom. HC in consultation with Eden Court regarding a live streaming of the pantomime.
- **After school clubs** –multi-sports for P1-3 Mondays 3.30-4.30 – run by Highlife Highland with Sport & Rec pupils from KHS, Shinty - P1-3 Mondays 5.00-6.00 with Michael Ritchie
- Young Leaders additional sessions with Finlay MacBain, Highlife Highland. Coming in on Thursday to help P7s start activities in playground
- **School Improvement Plan** – pupil friendly format Staff training – Active maths – two sessions after school for staff
- **School fund** – thank you to Liezel for auditing books
- **Halloween** – thank you the Coop for their recent collaboration with the school. P1-3 decorated pumpkins and P4-7 created their own mask which were displayed in the shop in the run up to Halloween. Each class was also given a pumpkin to carve which were also displayed in the shop. Thank you to the Coop for the goodies received by the children.

Key dates:

8th November – school photographer CANCELLED
15th/22nd/29th Nov & 6th Dec – YMI (P5/6 and P4-7)
19th Nov – Children in Need
20th Dec – Xmas lunch
21st & 22nd Dec – Xmas parties
22nd December – Christmas holiday
6th Jan – Term 3
21st Feb – holiday
22nd Feb – holiday
23rd Feb – INSERVICE DAY
1st Apr – Easter holiday
19th Apr – Term 4
2nd May – holiday
5th May – INSERVICE DAY
3rd June – extra holiday Queen's Platinum Jubilee
30th June – summer holiday

Treasurers report

- No changes to Parent Council account.
- It stands at £9744.01 of which £9,532,72 is the Pitch Fund and the Parent Council fund £211.29
- In process of changing bank signatories and then will apply for Highland Council grant

Highland Parent Council Partnership – Facebook Group

- Lots of good information about things going on with other primary schools and source of information on Facebook

Friends of Parent Council group

- An outstanding action from KA to look at options for setting up a Friends of the Parent Council group for fundraising and to look at getting charitable status.
- There are a number of options to consider and the potential for using an online platform for different fundraising projects
  - Option 1 – set up an incorporated organisation with charitable status. (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation – SCIO). There is a template constitution that could be adapted. Benefits are the organisation has a legal status/ identity so there is no liability on the management committee. Drawbacks are it is a more complicated structure with requirement for named members and some uncertainty about what would happen as parents move on.
  - Option 2 – set up an unincorporated association and apply for charitable status. There is a model template we could adapt. Benefits are a simpler structure. Drawbacks are it is another organisation to get support for.
  - Option 3 – instead of setting up a new organisation, look at amending the current Parent Council constitution (again) and apply for charitable status. There are some Parent Councils that have charitable status (checked on the Scottish Charity Regulators database)
- Whilst we are deciding or working through an option we could make use of an online platform for specific fundraising requirements. https://www.collectionpot.com/ appears a simple platform to use.

JA commented that using the platform whilst exploring the easiest option of changing the Parent Council constitution could be a good balance and it would be good to go for charitable status.
LL asked what the benefits of going for charitable status are and what the extra requirements were. KA said that you could apply gift aid to any donations and it potentially opens up more grant funding that could be applied for. There would be the need to submit annual returns to OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) but they should be easy to do with the potential income for the Parent Council.
LMcG stated that the Highland Council financial guidelines for Parent Councils said that usually independent examination of accounts was sufficient for Parent Councils reporting to OSCR so we could continue to use Liezel as independent examiner.

Action: Agreed to start with changing the Parent Council constitution and applying for charitable status and to use online platform Collection Pot in the meantime for any upcoming fundraising for school events (in addition to or instead of events).

Fundraising

CoOp Local Community Fund

- The Parent Council was successful in the application to the CoOp Local Community Fund. CoOp members can select the Parent Council as their 'cause' and 1p from every pound spent on CoOp products will be raised. Details of how to do this was sent out in Sarah's Friday email and to date £32 has been raised.

- KA raised that it would be good to let people know about it and SF agreed to put on the School Facebook page. Other suggestions were posters in the CoOp and there is poster ideas available from CoOp.
- Good opportunity now to re-visit ideas from pupils and facilitated through the Learning through Landscapes visit now that the building works have been completed and the CoOp application is specifically for improving the outdoor play and learning opportunities. Also discussed contacting Ellen Quinn who is the named local Member pioneer
- SF also raised that she would like to revisit with the Golf Club the potential of using the area adjacent to the pitch for an additional natural play space.

Action: KA to send Sarah the document on ideas from Learning through Landscapes and agreed to look at current 'wish-list' that CoOp funding and any funds raised could be put towards, alongside volunteer input.

- **AOB**

Children's Groups – GB raised that children used to participate in different leadership groups (eg Pupil Council, House Captains) and whether there was any plans to restart these. SF has looked at what other schools are doing, and wants to find a way to start up the Pupil Council and House Captains and look at the Eco committee in the spring time. Taking a cautious approach but recognise that children want the opportunity and having a leadership opportunities in the school.
LMcG – Is using Google meets an option? It could be but is complicated by staff involvement and space at the school
Communication with school – GB asked if parents want to contact the school, what is the best way to communicate with Teachers.
SF – meeting with Teachers, do so through office to let Carly know that you want a face-to-face appointment or phone call. Preferred way to do it rather than email. SF to put out info in the Friday email.
Christmas – selection boxes - SF asked if the Parent Council were happy for the school to buy Selection boxes for the children similar to last year. Agreed yes.
HG – asked if there was a way to buy in bulk in a way that reduces the amount of plastic. Agreed to look at different options including local providers.

Action: SC – going to contact The Blonde Baker and LL going to get a price from Kirsty

- **Date of next meeting**
  1st February 2022 7pm