

**ST CYRUS PRIMARY SCHOOL  
PARENT COUNCIL**

**Minutes of AGM Meeting held on Wednesday 18th September 2019 at 7pm, in St  
Cyrus Primary School**

**Attending:**

Claire Adam (Chair)  
Isla Mann (Head Teacher)  
Charlotte McWhinnie (Deputy Head)  
Marie Stark  
Marie Faherty  
Joe Fee  
Frances Adamson (Secretary)  
Susan Skene  
Kirsty Alchin  
Kerri Scott

**Apologies:**

Fay Howes (Treasurer)  
Karen Lees  
Sarah Foster

**Item Subject**

1. The Chair welcomed members and apologies for absence were noted.

**Matters Arising**

**2. Head Teachers Report**

The group discussed the submitted Head Teachers report (see email attachment).

The current vacant post for a PSA will be hopefully be filled by the end of this term, although the post will not go to an open advert and will be filled internally by the Aberdeenshire Council, as PSA's are employed by the Aberdeenshire cluster, and not directly by the school.

Mrs Mann informed the group that every class will receive Kodaly this term. Frances enquired as to what Kodaly is, and Mrs Mann explained that these sessions provide the pupils with an opportunity to participate in singing, rhyme and storytelling. This has been very well received by the pupils so far.

There have been 2 people who have contacted Mrs Mann interested in the school crossing patroller post. Aberdeenshire Council will again advertise the post and the two interested individuals have been encouraged to apply.

Mrs Mann advised that the school Improvement Plan will be made available on the school website, and there will also be a copy available at the school foyer. The plan has been revised taking on board feedback from parents, carers and staff, and the priorities for this year have been identified as languages and maths.

**Action**

Moderation is ongoing in conjunction with Redmyre and Marykirk schools. This will ensure that pupils are being assessed fairly and consistently across the school and cluster.

The Pupil Support Worker Carol Grant will be looking to provide family learning sessions for families in the evenings. Work will consist of cooking budget friendly meals and trying to involve male members of households in learning opportunities (This was highlighted previously in feedback as something to look at. The first of the mental health workshops was delivered last week and was well attended and received.

Mrs Mann explained that in relation to the various pupil groups running in the school, the children who are members of these groups have gone through the process of applying for their positions and completed 'mini' interviews to achieve the positions. This process has allowed the children to develop the skills required for work and in obtaining work. Staff have noticed a significant improvement in many pupils performance at interview in comparison to previous years.

The school will have a choir this year run by Amy Shand which will be provided on a sign up basis. Likewise, the Howe O' The Mearns pipe band training for p4-p7 will also be offered on a sign up basis, with pupils being able to attend for one or two sessions initially before signing up. All instruments will be provided free to pupils who sign up and there will be a choice of chanter or drums. Additionally, there will be no charge to the school for the provision of lessons. Both the choir and the pipe band training will run on Fridays with pupils having to choose between both as their running times will overlap.

The p7 Community Coffee morning will be raising funds this year for the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI), and there is hope that members of the RNLI will come along on the day.

Parent's evenings this year will be bookable for the first time via an online booking system. Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of October will be evening appointments, and Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup> will run in the afternoon after school until 6.00pm. The school will send out a global communication nearer the time to invite parents to book their slot(s) online via the new booking system.

Mrs Mann informed the council that the school continues to use golden tickets throughout the school year in order to allow parents of p1 children to come into the class room and to see the work that their child and the class have been undertaking. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of this.

Frances enquired about the funds that the classes raise from running the community café's and if they were successful in raising money for the school, and if so where the money was spent. Mrs McWhinnie and Mrs Mann informed the group that the classes themselves chose what to do with the money they raised, with many deciding to give money to a chosen charity. Some classes also chose to add the money raised to the school funds and in conjunction with the pupil council are deciding where they would like to see the money spent in the school.

### **3. Treasurer's Report**

Faye was unable to attend today's meeting, but she submitted the treasurer's report before hand for discussion (see attached).

The current balance is £1406.97, however we have still to receive the remaining £1000 from Tesco following the purchase of the stage equipment. Additionally, there is still £51 to be added to the balance from the funds raised at the school disco last term. Therefore, taking into account the pay-out for the p7 calculators the true balance is closer to £1985.

Further funding was agreed this evening for the following;

- Panto –£500 and provide the ice creams. Marie Faherty will order the ice cream.
- Bowls for the Christmas pudding.
- P7 leaver's hoodies, which will be ordered before Christmas. There are 23 pupils currently in p7.
- On-line booking system for parent's evenings.

The Christmas crackers have already been purchased for the school Christmas lunch.

### **4. Fundraising**

The Chair asked Mrs Mann and Mrs McWhinnie as to what the differences were between the money raised for parent council funds, and the money raised for the school fund, in relation to how the money was used. Further to this Frances asked what if anything specific the upcoming sponsored walk was raising money for, as a few parents had asked the question. Mrs Mann explained that the school fund is more frequently used to fund day to day necessities that may be required. Mrs Mann gave the example of having to use school fund money recently in order to purchase a white board projector bulb which cost in excess of £100. Although all the money raised by both the school fund and the parent council are used for the same overall purpose, for the school. School fund has also been used to purchase arts and crafts supplies, to pay for the story teller who came last year, and also additional costs of the Christmas show. The parent council funds are seen to be more for specific items and larger outlays or requirements such as the stage equipment or the p7 leaver's hoodies. Whereas the school fund can be drawn upon for any funding requirement necessary within the school.

Frances asked if the school would be able to indicate in a future newsletter after the sponsored walks as to where some of the money raised was used to benefit the school. This would enable parents to have insight as to where their donations have been used and facilitate future fund raising. Mrs Mann will include a short note in a future newsletter to communicate this.

The council agreed that we should target those fundraising opportunities that can raise the most amount of money for the smallest amount of time

invested. The council will therefore contact Tesco again to apply for a bag packing slot.

Susan Skene mentioned to the council that the 'wine man' Johnathan Simpkins cannot make this years Christmas Fair. However, he has offered to provide alcohol for a cheese and wine fund raiser for the school. Susan is just to contact him to let him know a date.

Claire raised potentially having a high end raffle at some point this year to help generate decent funds. The question of targeting local businesses who had previously contributed to the school calenders was asked. The council agreed that it would be an idea to contact those businesses who had previously had adverts in the school calender, to request either a monetary or raffle prize donation. The council felt that £10 a ticket was too expensive, however £5 a ticket was agreed. The option of purchasing an iPad to raffle was discussed, however not agreed upon.

Kerry mentioned maybe asking the owners of the caravan park if they would be willing to donate a weekend in their glamping pod as a prize, and also asking the new owners of the Old Bakery if they would be willing to host an afternoon tea as a prize. Frances will ask the owners of the village pub if they too would be willing to contribute a prize.

Marie enquired about foldable bags that we could sell at the Christmas fair. Some discussion was had in regard to the decal that the bags should have on them, it was agreed to make the design generic and to perhaps just say St Cyrus. Kerri mentioned a source that she had previously purchased

## **5. Mobile Phone Policy**

Frances had raised the question around whether or not the school had a policy in place for dealing with mobile use. Mrs Mann informed the council that the school implements the same policy as other Primary Schools in the cluster. This means that any children who come to school with a mobile phone should hand this over to their class teacher, who will in turn store the phone for the pupil(s) until the end of the school day. This system relies on the pupils being honest and handing in their phones, however Mrs Mann mentioned that until now there had only been one issue in regard to a pupil inappropriately using a mobile phone on the way to school, however the parents were contacted and the issue was dealt with quickly.

The teachers and staff in the school all try to raise awareness in regard to mobile phone use, and PC Crawford is invited in each year to talk about the issues and pitfalls of mobile phone use in the school environment and beyond. Staff would remove a mobile phone from any pupil who they found to be using a mobile in school, to ensure the safe keeping of the phone. There is information about mobile phones included in the school handbook, however their use is not encouraged by the school.

## **6. Office Opening Hours**

The office opening hours are not currently advertised on the school website. However, Mrs Mann stated that they were included in the last school newsletter, and the school will update the website with the office opening hours. Frances had asked if there were any plans to cover the shortfall in the office opening times. Mrs Mann informed the council that they have never had capacity to cover the entire school day, and there have previously been problems where lunch times weren't covered. Mrs Mann is now endeavouring to work out of the school office on Friday mornings to cover this period. The school would ask all parents to have patience and ring the bell and a member of staff will answer when they can.

## **7. Parents Evenings and Open Days**

Claire had received feedback from parents in regard to last year's open day in that they didn't feel they had been communicated with effectively in regard to the open day, replacing the traditional parent's evening. Many parents still thought there would be a parents evening and felt disappointed that they hadn't had an opportunity to ask questions about their children or receive feedback.

Mrs Mann informed the council that they school were trying a new approach following dips in attendance at traditional parent's evenings over the last few years (the second parents evening of the year). The school were trying to be more encompassing and to enable more parents to attend who may otherwise not have come to a parents evening. Marie Faherty mentioned that many parents may have received their child's report card and then subsequently not felt the need to attend a parents evening if they had been happy with the report.

Mrs Mann feedback that in one way the open day was a success as more parents attended, and in particular parents who would not have previously attended a parents evening. However, Mrs Mann also stated that feedback received from the teachers was that they felt at times that there were too many people in the class. Further to this Marie Faherty mentioned that there were times when parents might have wanted to speak to their child's teacher, but due to how busy the class was, some parents were reluctant to talk with teachers about issues that they felt were confidential. Moreover, Mrs Mann mentioned similar feedback from some class teachers who at times felt self-conscious and found difficulty in holding conversations with parents within ear shot of so many other parents.

Mrs Mann informed the council that this year they will revert back to the traditional appointment based parent evenings. Over the course of the year there will be 2 opportunities to hold parents evenings. The feedback from the children was that they enjoyed the open day, and Mrs Mann stated that in future the school will run open days, but not in the capacity to replace parents evenings.

Kerry enquired about the possibility of having a meet the teacher day/evening as its almost the end of term one and she hasn't as yet met her children's class teachers. Mrs Mann agreed to look into the possibility

of holding such a session for the purpose of parents being able to meet the new teachers and to see around the classrooms. Mrs Mann mentioned that drop-in sessions are often not well tolerated by some children who are just new in their class and not yet settled in.

## **8. Christmas Fair**

Susan informed the council that at present there are 32 stalls who have indicated they are coming, 22 of these have confirmed and paid. There are still 3 stalls that Susan has to chase up. This is down on last year when we had 41 stalls, however Susan did receive feedback last year that the rooms felt a little crowded, so less for this year isn't particularly an issue. There also won't be as many double tables so this will enable the space between stall holders to be better and allow better through flow.

We have kitchen issues this year as Marie can't make the fair this year. Susan suggested scaling down the kitchen provisions, unless other council volunteers come forward. Karen Lees will be happy to work in the kitchen again through the day, but she will only do so if there is another volunteer to work in the kitchen for the full day also.

Frances and Mairi Stark volunteered to run and manage the kitchen alongside Karen. Susan will then rota other council members and volunteers to work in the kitchen throughout the day.

A discussion was held in regard to whether or not we should continue serving both soup and bacon rolls, as well as tea, coffee and cakes. The decision was taken to have soup, but perhaps not as much as last year. We will continue to provide bacon rolls, tea, coffee and shortbread.

The veg for the soup last year came free from Aldi after Marie Faherty had gone in to talk to the manager. Although Marie will not be able to attend the fair this year, Marie said she will ask in Aldi again for the veg. There was discussion in regard to how to fund the purchase of the bacon, it was proffered that we could contact local businesses to ask if they would like to sponsor the bacon, or just sponsor the fair in anyway. Claire will contact previous calendar sponsors.

Marie Faherty asked how the council would display the businesses who had contributed. Claire mentioned that we could put the information up in the hall, also have laminated sheets on the tables. There could also be a sign made for the entrance at the foyer for the fair.

Susan asked the council what PTS stalls we will be running this year. Previously we have always run a wine and water, chocolate tombola and a raffle stall. Last year we also had a stall for selling calendars, although we won't be having calendars this year. A few members raised the point that the wine and water stall last year was purely funded by the parent council members as we received so few donations. There was a question therefore as to whether or not to run the stall again this year. The stall does generate in excess of £100 usually, and we still have a load of empty bottles stored by Fay.

**SS**

Again, the chocolate tombola also relies heavily on donations, much of which did come from council members last year too. Other potentials for stalls such as lucky squares, giant champagne or a hamper were discussed. However, the council agreed that they would run the chocolate tombola, wine and water and the raffle stalls.

Marie Stark had asked if there would be any stall holders this year who would be providing lucky dips for toys, as this seemed to be very popular at last year's fair. Susan mentioned that there was one such stall holder.

Claire mentioned the premise of balancing 20p on a lemon over a bowl of water. If anyone can balance the lemon successfully they win however much is in the bowl. However, considering this will involve water Claire thought it best to save this fundraising idea for the gala. Marie Faherty mentioned the idea of gift bags, where donations are placed in bags and sealed and then you pay for a chance to win a bag. This may be explored for next year's fair. Kerry suggested running a 'guess the amount' such as jelly beans in a jar.

Kerry suggested the marshmallow man, however Susan said that he had now given up. There will be no jam seller this year and Kerry and Claire suggested Cove Honey Bees who as well as selling honey also sells home baked honey based products. Kirsty mentioned that the community council would likely take a stall, however the community council have still to vote on this, and Kirsty will get back to Susan. Mrs McWhinnie suggested checking with the farm shop 'What's for Tea Tonight'. Kirsty suggested checking with Natures Garden in Montrose if they would be willing to take a stall or make a donation. Kerry further suggested contacting Beechwood garden centre as they had recently expanded. There will be no stalls selling alcohol this year either, however Kirsty suggested contacting Arbikie Gin to see if they would be interested in taking a stall.

Mairi Stark asked if the school would be running their clothes stall again this year. The school will once again require donations for the stall and will put out requests in a future newsletter. Frances asked if the stall was successful last year in terms of reaching those families most in need. Mrs Mann reported that it was and 3 families who they had hoped would benefit from the stall did attend and take away items. Mrs McWhinnie also mentioned that selling the stall from a climate change approach that we should be re-using items and not just throwing them away.

Susan will advertise the fair as usual via posters etc. Claire will add a post to the council Facebook.

The school will have the children set up the classrooms on Friday, all that will be left to do is the dining room.

## **9. Election of Committee**

Claire will continue to run as chair for another year. Fay is now appointed to the position of treasurer. However, Frances will be standing down after

her 2 year stint as council secretary. Claire asked the council for any volunteers to replace Frances. Mairi Stark volunteered to cover the role if there were no other council members willing to take the role on.

## **10.AOCB**

### **Report Cards**

Frances asked if it would be possible for the school to provide a guide for parents in regard to the reported levels on the school report cards. Mrs Mann also mentioned that there was a link included previously on the report cards to Education Scotland where parents could access information on the various levels and what they mean. However, Mrs Mann invited any parent who had questions in regard to the report to contact the school and they would be happy to discuss their concerns or questions. Additionally, Mrs Mann said that the school would look into providing a guide to accompany the report cards when they go out in the future.

### **School Christmas Show**

Claire asked if the school would be having a Christmas show again this year. The school are having a show which will run on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> of December in the evening at 6pm and includes nursery. Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> in the evening at 6pm, but this will not include the nursery, and again on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon which will include nursery.

Claire asked about utilising the staging equipment in the future and the possibility of using it for hosting music concerts or choir concerts. Mrs Mann felt that there could be a use in this capacity in the future, but children are already afforded an opportunity to perform at weekly assemblies.

There was recognition among the council and from Mrs Mann that historically the school hasn't been great in show casing the talents of pupils in regard to musical instruments. The school are now trying to work more collaboratively with the church to run a service at the end of every term. In time it is hoped that this will be able to provide a platform for children to perform going forward.

### **Photo Session**

Snowdrop photography are running a mini photo session at the Scout Hall on September 29<sup>th</sup> with the proceeds being split between the parent council and the Scout Hall. The council will earn 20% of the profit from the day and the £5 non-refundable booking deposits.

### **Date And Time Of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> of November at 7pm in St Cyrus School.