

SOUTH MORNINGSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

SOUTH MORNINGSIDE PARENT COUNCIL

Approved minutes of the SMPC meeting held on Monday March 3rd 2014 at 6.45pm in the staff room.

Total Attendees: 20

Parent Council Members (16)

Craig Hilton (Chair)	Susan Regnart
Jonathan Mundy (Secretary)	Nikki McNair
Liz Grierson (Head Teacher)*	Jamie Bookless
Kerry Simpson (Finance)	Yvonne Moore (staff)*
Peter Sibson (Finance Group)	Lauren Jack (Staff) *
Howard Kippax (Accommodation)	Miriam Jackson (Finance Group)
Stella Sinclair (Communication)	Stephen James
Graeme Drummond	Morag Macdonald (Staff) *

Parent council made up of 23 Parent Members plus 5* non-voting staff members

Guests (4)

Joanna Loxley (Parent)	Anna Cuthbert (Parent)
Cllr Melanie Main	Kieron O'Brien (Parent)

Apologies (8) received in advance of the meeting

Marion Bourbouze (Fundraising/Playground)	Kate Smith
Noelle O'Doherty (MCC)	Alison Dalrymple (Treasurer)
Elaine Jones (Fundraising)	Gillian Anderson (Gym Club)
Eileen Maclean (Comms)	Kate Hillier **

** resigned from PC February 2014

6.45pm Welcome, attendees and apologies - Craig Hilton (Chair)

The Chair welcomed the meeting attendees, in particular the guests, and the Chair confirmed the apologies that had been received by the Secretary prior to the meeting.

Review & approval of Minutes of January 27th meeting – Jonathan Mundy (Secretary)

The Minutes of the SMPC meeting held on January 27th were approved – 10 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions.

6.50pm Review of matters arising & actions from the last meeting – Jonathan Mundy (Secretary)

#11/13: Recruitment Training – Jamie Bookless will be attending a training session later this month. This action is now closed.

#01/14: Input into configuration of the school day – PC volunteers Susan Regnart and Miriam Jackson have arranged to meet with Mrs Grierson to discuss the necessary possible changes to the school day. They will return to the PC shortly with a couple of alternative models for discussion. This action is now closed.

#02/14: Setting up Clubs Group – a new group with six members has been set up. This action is now closed.

#03/14: Secretary vacancy – to be discussed at the meeting. This action will remain open.

#04/14: Clubs Management/PVG/Access – The new clubs group will now address these tasks. This action is now closed.

6.55pm Report: Chair paper submitted by Craig Hilton to the meeting.

- Craig Hilton wanted to thank all those who volunteered to join the new Clubs Group.
- The Council has issued a proposed draft for term dates covering the next three academic years. This will be discussed later in this meeting to establish a PC response to the proposals.
- The PC confirmed our commitment at the last meeting to fund phase 1 of the playground development project.
- Craig attended a pupil council meeting and was so impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of the members and their desire to help improve the school. The pupils also had lots of interesting fundraising ideas.
- The council report on rising school rolls in South Edinburgh has been produced. This will be discussed by representatives of the Accommodation Group later in this meeting.

7pm Report: Head Teacher paper submitted by Mrs Grierson to the meeting.

- Mrs Grierson expressed her dismay in the strongest possible terms at recent comments made on a PC Google groups discussion forum. Other PC staff members also felt inappropriate comments had been posted. Craig Hilton (Chair) apologised to Mrs Grierson on behalf of the PC. He would also try to get the inappropriate content removed from the website as soon as possible and would talk to the parent responsible. The issue of establishing a Code of Conduct for the use of Google Group discussion forums was raised. Cllr Melanie Main suggested advice might be sought from the Information Officer at the Council.

- Currently 108 catchment children have enrolled for August 2014.
- There will be quite major changes to class organisation for this August, which will be confirmed once pupil numbers have been established. Staff allocation and class organisation may not be finalised immediately and could change up until the October break.
- From August 2014 the statutory hours for nursery are to increase from 475 to 600 per year.
- Mrs Grierson will attend several meeting prior to May to discuss the Council's long term and interim plans to address rising school rolls and accommodation issues.
- The feedback from the Health and Safety Audit was very positive.

As a consequence of the discussion above, the Secretary asked Mrs Grierson after the meeting to provide further details of the situation regarding catchment areas, school rolls and the elements of influence that Mrs Grierson has as Head Teacher. The Secretary & Chair considered that it would be helpful to include this information in these minutes as a reference point for any future discussions regarding these matters.

Summary provided by Mrs Grierson

The City of Edinburgh Council has made a commitment to endeavour to place all new P1 entrants into their catchment school.

As P1 rolls have risen across the city this has given rise to additional composite P1/2 classes and to larger team taught classes in some areas, such as ours.

At SMPS as the P1 class limit was lowered through legislation to 25 children, we have had to form two classes of 25 and one larger team taught class over the past 4 to 5 years.

Most years our P1 intake has been capped at 90 by the local authority.

School is then allocated teaching staff to accommodate this number of children.

P1 numbers can and do change, as families move, take up places at other schools or opt for private schools.

If, once all catchment children have taken up their place there are places available, then, and only then, will the local authority offer the remaining places up to the capacity that they have allocated teaching staff for.

At SMPS, this has meant 2 or 3 places offered to families with siblings currently at our school.

There is an Admissions and Placement Policy that identifies the order of offering places to those who have made out of catchment placing requests.

To explain how teaching staff are allocated:

Once P1 registration is completed in November each year, Mrs Grierson sends in a Class Organisation Proposal to the local authority. This also includes a note of possible deferrals.

At the same time, Mrs Grierson looks at pupil numbers across the whole school and send in a class organisation proposal. This must take into account any possible composite classes that can be formed. Mrs Grierson must form classes up to their maximum limit for each stage.

The local authority then confirms the proposed class organisation and staffing. However, the local authority can and do change this as pupil numbers change and can do so up to the October break of the new session.

e.g. If after the summer break number in one year group were less than expected, the school could be asked to reform classes and create a composite class.

Class size Limits are also dictated by Scottish Government guidance and legislation.

School Roll:

Should a family seek a place for a child at stages after P1 then a place must be offered to a child if there is capacity or space to take them.

The capacity or class size limit is as follows;

P1	25
P2, P3	30
P4-P7	33

School Catchment:

Head teachers have no control over catchment areas. Catchment areas cannot change without a process of full consultation with all affected, and has to be approved by the Scottish Government.

7.10pm Report: Treasurer paper submitted by Alison Dalrymple to the meeting.

There was no discussion of any matters arising from Alison's paper.

7.15 Review of Funding Requests - paper submitted by Peter Sibson to the meeting.

There were no new funding requests. A budget for the year had been agreed in January. The PC has agreed to fund phase 1 of the playground project, which will mean we are operating a budgeted deficit this year and therefore our fund-raising activities; in particular the success of the summer fair will be even more important.

7.25 Standing Agenda items

a) Accommodation update - paper submitted to the meeting by Howard Kippax (moved to requested items).

b) Clubs Group update – Kerry Simpson provided a brief update on behalf of the new clubs group. The Group currently has no clubs convenor in post. The security access control procedures are working well and all controls over the clubs have improved. Only clubs operating between 3.15pm and 6pm will be financing the new door security measures. The costs will probably be between 30-50 pence per week. A new Code Club has been set up for P6 pupils. This club will operate after 6pm and is free. The Code Club is designed to teach pupils about computer coding.

c) Fundraising – No members of this group were present at the meeting. Jonathan Mundy wanted to remind everyone how easy it is to raise funds for the school using Easyfundraising when they do their on-line shopping through this site. A reminder will be sent out to all parents via parent mail, probably linked to a more general Fundraising communication. The date for the summer fair is set for Saturday June 7th and a first request for parent volunteers will be sent out very shortly.

d) Morningside Community Council Update – Noelle O’Doherty was not present at this meeting. No update at this meeting.

e) Transport Update – no update at this meeting.

f) Playground update – Mrs Grierson informed the PC that three contractors had been approached to price the works in phase 1 to the front of the school. The playground plans are on display outside the school office.

g) Communication update – no update at this meeting.

7.45 Requested items

a) School lunches – from 1st January 2015 all P1-P3 children will be offered free school lunches. Cllr Melanie Main said that she had now eaten lunch in nine primary schools. Everyone who tasted the lunches was surprised how good the food quality was. The issues were often around provision of sufficient cutlery and crockery and the very small dining spaces in some of the schools. There was felt to be a need to improve parental attitudes to school dinners. The issue of improved recycling was raised. Cllr Melanie Main said that since 1st January 2014 there has been a requirement for all organisations to separate their waste. The school is still awaiting new recycling bins for the kitchen/dining area. Mrs Grierson pointed out that lunch times will need to be extended and more tables provided to accommodate the projected increased numbers taking school dinners. There will be issues around provision of meals at the annex and if children have to be accommodated at the main school for lunch, what would happen in inclement weather.

b) Situations vacant (Chair) – There will be a vacancy for the role of Secretary from June 2014 when Jonathan Mundy steps down. Jonathan explained briefly some of the small tasks

that the Secretary has to perform. The work of Secretary is largely concentrated around the two weeks prior to each PC meeting. These tasks include:-

- communication of the date and time of the meeting to PC members, the parent body and invited guests.
- talking to the Chair about the agenda.
- gathering in papers and checking their format.
- collating and distributing the meeting pack.
- updating the PC meeting date on the website.
- checking the SMPC mailbox.
- completing the lottery license paperwork for the fair raffles.
- producing the meeting minutes (currently delegated to Joanna Loxley).
- collecting a list of attendees for each PC meeting.
- recording the results of all votes taken at the PC.

c) Session Dates – The PC was asked to vote on the main aspects of the council’s proposed session dates for the next three years, to establish a PC response to these proposals. Craig Hilton suggested also sending a link to parents who can then provide their own individual feedback.

- PC vote to suggest shortening the proposed 7 week summer holiday (7 in favour, 3 against and 3 abstained).

- PC vote to lengthen the proposed 12 day Christmas holiday to a fortnight (9 in favour and 1 abstention).

- PC vote on weekend-weekend Easter holidays as opposed to the proposed midweek to midweek break (5 in favour, 6 abstained).

d) School Security – Mrs Grierson summarized and clarified some of the school procedures. The main gates are always kept unlocked for emergency vehicles. The side gate opening onto Craiglea Drive is the evacuation route in the event that the school needs to be evacuated quickly to St Peter’s Primary. These gates cannot be locked. Mrs Grierson tries to meet monthly with the Learning Assistants and pupil representatives to discuss playground issues. Each Learning Assistant is assigned a zone in the playground with specific sight lines. It was proposed that these measures should be explained in the next newsletter to all parents/carers.

e) Accommodation update - The Council has produced a report on school accommodation and rising school rolls in Edinburgh. The paper covers both long-term and interim arrangements for South Edinburgh. The Council’s preferred long-term solution appears to be a new primary school on the NHS Astley Ainslie site feeding into Boroughmuir. A further

report will be taken to Committee on May 20th 2014 to identify the proposed interim solutions. These interim solutions will be finalised in the autumn. The current interim solution for South Morningside appears to be to replace one of our existing huts with a three classroom temporary unit for August 2015. Anna Cuthbert and Howard Kippax are to make a representation to the Education, Children and Families Committee on behalf of the PC on March 4th. Mrs Grierson clarified that the capacity figures the council quoted for the school are out of date. The school is now full in P1, P2, P3 and P7 and there are just 2 spaces available in P4. Howard Kippax said that the points he wanted to raise to support our accommodation case included: the unique difficulties faced by South Morningside operating on three sites, the fact the school is very full and our rolls are increasing. The age and condition of our existing huts, the lack of playground space and parental concerns over health and safety. Howard wants to express our support for a new school and to ask for consideration to be given for a double storey building, which reduces the footprint of the huts and thus preserves playground space.

8.15 AOB

No matters were discussed.

8.20 Close

As there was no further business the meeting was closed by the Chair.

Date of Next Meeting – Monday 12th May 2014.

Supporting Papers Supplied in Meeting Pack

- 1) Draft Minutes of the Parent Council meeting held on 27th January 2014 (Jonathan Mundy)
- 2) Matters Arising/Action Log (Jonathan Mundy)
- 3) Report: Chair (Craig Hilton)
- 4) Report: Head Teacher (Mrs Grierson)
- 5) Report: Treasurer (Alison Dalrymple)
- 6) Funding Requests (Peter Sibson)
- 7) Session Dates (Craig Hilton)
- 8) Accommodation Update (Howard Kippax)