

# Minutes of Meeting

## South Morningside Parent Council

25 November 2019

### Attendees

#### Parent Council Members

Brendan Paddy	Andrew Leiper
Shelagh Halford	John Cameron
Emily Hargreaves	Jeremy Balfour
Eilidh Stimpson	Chris Hebden
David Davies	Elisabeth Quinn
Fraser Walker	Alison Reeves
Ellie Trotter	Colin McRae
Clare Bowyer	Lizzie Kenrick
Michael Urquhart*	Karen Richmond*
Pam Ferguson*	Yvonne Moore*

\*non voting staff members

#### Guests

Sheri Wallace	Aimee Reid
Bobby Pathak	Tony Segall (Active Schools)
Louise Beaton	Charles Paterson
Helen New	Cllr Neil Ross

## **Welcome, attendees and apologies**

Brendan welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked all attendees to introduce themselves.

## **Review & Approval of Minutes of 7 October 2019 meeting**

The minutes of the 7 October 2019 meeting were approved (proposed by Eilidh and seconded by Andrew).

## **Headteacher's Update**

Covered under other agenda items.

## **Funding Requests**

The Parent Council considered the request to fund ski jackets (cost £272)

13 in favour, 3 abstentions, 0 against

## **Winter Fair**

Elisabeth confirmed Greenbank Church for the Winter Fair. The cost is £250 for the day for heating, lighting and the caretaker (a cleaner is also available). The minister will also be there on the day. Access has been granted on the Friday night to set things up. There are still a number of gaps on the sign up sheet. Eilidh asked everyone to encourage people on their class Whatsapp group to sign up. Elisabeth said there were lots of other ways to help on the day, e.g. on the door selling tickets. Elisabeth said there were sufficient stall owners but that many more volunteers are still required.

The scouts are helping out on Friday night to set up tables but after the fair, help will be needed to clear the hall and move the tables back (they are heavy). The other issue is that the main hall of the Church is being used for a children's party at 2pm so the hall is needed back for this. As a result, the draw for the raffle will happen in the Church. Help will be needed to clear the hall.

Hampers are the fair's main money maker. A number of businesses have donated but we are still looking for donations for hampers. Again, please use Whatsapp to encourage people to donate and to bake.

To protect the tables, Colin suggested identifying older tables for things like hammer and nails. Colin also said it would be good for the Parent Council and school to support some of the Greenbank Church events as the Church had been so helpful.

In terms of other fundraising, Eilidh said calendars organised by Alice were doing well. If everyone who put in a request buys a calendar, the Parent Council have made quite a bit of money. Calendars will be available to buy at the fair.

## **Afterschool Club Proposal**

Sheri introduced herself as Chair of Board of the Trustees ([trustees@smascc.org.uk](mailto:trustees@smascc.org.uk)) for the Afterschool club (SMASCC). She said they were increasingly having an issue with having a split site. SMASCC currently operates out of lower hall at the main

school and also takes 48 children down to Morningside Parish Church Monday to Thursday. Over the last year, requirements from the Care Inspectorate regarding how SMASCC operates and the service, policies, procedures, operating model have rightly become more demanding. However, this along with losing a manager towards the beginning of the year and a subsequent manager has meant the trustees getting closer to the day-to-day operations and it's become apparent the logistical juggling that is done. Overlaying that around care plans and clubs is quite a task and is getting more and more challenging. Recruitment and retention of quality staff across the childcare industry is difficult and is being experienced across Edinburgh. SMASCC are now looking for Parent Council support to help SMASCC operate to give a better experience for children and staff. At the main school 174 children are looked after every day. They want the Parent Council to consider SMASCC operating under 1 roof to help distribute staff more easily and give the younger children who go down to Morningside Parish access to outdoor play (no outdoor space at church). They want to be able to retain staff and it would be good for the younger children not to have to leave every day. SMASCC would like to take over the upper hall on Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday to give the best chance of a better service. They don't want to cut numbers but are looking at real possibility of having to reduce next year by about 20 children.

Fraser asked if the church charged. Aimee said it probably does. Fraser said if so could it be allocated to the SMPC budget.

Sheri clarified that the proposal would be to use the upper gym hall Tues/Wed/Thurs. She explained that there are less children on a Monday so asking for Tues/Wed/Thurs seemed like a good compromise. When asked whether it would impact on clubs, Sheri said it could potentially affect any clubs that were going to move back once the building work at Comiston Road is complete.

Sheri said that the current hall can accommodate 48 children but doesn't allow a lot of activity because of the space limitations. SMASCC could have 1 less on the staff team by reducing the numbers. Long-term SMASCC wants to stop operating out of Morningside Parish Church. Any reduction in numbers would be incremental over a number of years.

If SMASCC moves to the new hall, it would need to get Care Inspectorate out to see how many children it can operate with so potentially may be able to maintain the numbers or even increase – pending staff recruitment.

Andrew asked whether there were many applications for afterschool/breakfast club from parents. Sheri confirmed there is always a waiting list and they have to ballot children out of breakfast club every year and sometimes out of after school club when children move from Deanbank to main school (ballot across all members not just those moving in to primary 3).

Andrew asked whether SMASCC had considered tendering the contract to another organisation. Sheri confirmed this had been considered at Deanbank, which operates as a standalone site. However, for Comiston Road it hadn't been considered as it would more than certainly result in a reduction in numbers due to the multi-site issue.

Brendan asked if Clubs could quantify the impact on clubs.

Alison said they are not able to give an idea of the impact on clubs as Clubs would need to make an assessment on what clubs intend to run, what their space requirements are, whether the Council planning to charge the SMPC and if so, what the rate will be. They would also need to assess the risk of taking children off site and on what the experience of club convenors this year has been. Alison said Clubs had met Mrs Morgan regarding available rooms. A meeting of club convenors will take place on 10 January to discuss further. Alison said there would be challenges to overcome, e.g.. Gym club as they have equipment to they need to store. Alison concluded by saying that clubs offer children a number of benefits and Clubs provides a cash surplus to the Parent Council. Alison request that a decision from the Parent Council is deferred until Clubs can provide information requested by the Parent Council. Brendan asked if Clubs could provide a sense of the impact based on the number of clubs/children who previously used the main hall prior to the start of the Comiston Road building works.

Andrew asked whether clubs pick up children and take them to afterschool club afterwards. SMASCC will sign children over to the club (if it operates within the school) if they are in SMASCC but if not, the parent must do this.

Tony gave some input regarding Active Schools. Tony said that Active Schools is a nation-wide programme which aims to get more children more active more often and for this to be a low/no cost option to children. Tony said he is the Active School co-ordinator for our school. He runs a programme of clubs and activities. At SMPC there are 3 morning ones, 3 at lunchtime and prior to the building work there were 2 on Tuesday afterschool and 2 on Thursday after school. Tony said they are trying to make clubs/activities as accessible as possible (cost is £2 per session). The charge is waived for children where the cost would prove to be an issue. As a consequence of the building work at Comiston Road, the afterschool active school clubs have stopped. There were approximately 85 children over two days. Active Schools also run clubs and activities off site, e.g. cluster hockey for local schools. There has been some effort to replace clubs which haven't been able to run this year but numbers are low. There is also the potential to use community facilities. Tony said they could maybe look at more Friday afternoons for some clubs. He said they would ideally like to go back to what was in place before but can look at other opportunities. Tony said some classes could potentially run outdoors.

Fraser said the impact of new school was also a consideration in relation to the proposal from SMASCC.

When asked whether SMASCC needs a big hall and whether classrooms could be used for quieter activities, Sheri explained that a few classrooms would be needed and that would mean additional staffing needs (3 people). She added that part of the challenge currently is staffing.

It was explained that currently the children based at Morningside Parish Church have no access to outdoor space at all from October – Easter as the neighbouring park is in the dark. She said it was very difficult for the staff to try to keep the children entertained.

It was suggested that SMASCC could consider moving all children to a different site. However, Sheri explained that this would mean taking 174 children off site, which would not be possible.

Brendan said it would be difficult to make a decision because some key information needed.

Sheri said she wanted to present a case to try to find a solution that feels like it's a compromise to meet some of the goals from clubs and some of the goals from SMASCC.

Jeremy said there would be views from the wider parents which should be taken into consideration, He suggested communicating with the wider parent grouping sooner rather than later and suggested a survey as the Parent Council has a responsibility to consult with the wider community by explaining the facts.

Eilidh said she would include an update in the Parent Council update.

It was suggested that Active Schools/Clubs get together to think about what could be run offsite. Alison said that some clubs have had to start from scratch because they are off site and potentially some clubs are working better off site anyway.

Brendan said the intention is to consult the wider parent community but that there may be some flexibility to reduce the impact on clubs and it would be worth exploring this first.

Clubs were asked to provide information to the Parent Council in advance of the 13 January meeting so that a decision could be made then. In advance of that, Olly and Brendan will look at issuing a survey to parents to seek views.

Sheri said they were looking to accommodate everyone as much as possible – clubs, active schools and afterschool club.

Sheri confirmed people can contact the SMASCC Trustees for information.

### **New School and Impact of Delays**

Accommodation updated that work has commenced with tree felling at the new school site. Canaan Lane is to be closed to parents/children after the new year with a new route from St Peters School.

It was agreed that the Parent Council needs to push for a monthly update/meeting with the Council to involve the Parent Council and school management as we are not getting information currently.

Mrs Richmond said they are proposing to take away 1/3 of the playground (the newly laid surface) which is a key part of the playground as the grass tends to be out of bounds in the winter. This means they will only be left with the centre of the playground for more than 200 children. The space is to be used for the services. Loss of the playground was not in the plan.

Jeremy said it was probably now past the planning stage and with the estates team to get the building done. These were the best people to speak to. Mrs Richmond said the Project Manager didn't know about the playground. Mrs Richmond has suggested making the grass functional so that it can be used as a playground.

John said that meeting is an option for raising things with the Council. Accommodation and Chairs will get together to write to the Project Manager (Peter

Wharton) and copy in the 4 Councillors. The letter should include concerns about the playground, request a copy of the schedule and monthly meetings. Jeremy suggested copying in Andy Gray, who is the Council's Head of Children and Families.

Mr Urquhart said that it would be a good idea for the Chairs/Accommodation and himself to meet to go through the consultation document. He explained that as enrolment will begin in November, concerns would need to be raised by then.

Mrs Richmond also said that today there was falling debris from the Deanbank building. Their biggest concern is taking 200 children outside. A contractor was out visiting today and the front elevation is to be secured tomorrow for an inspection.

### **Comiston Road Works**

Mr Urquhart said the impact hasn't been as large/hard as previously thought. The school now has some windows which open and the colour scheme is fresh. Disruption has been minimal. The big work is the fitting of fire alarm systems, which has been delayed. Scaffolding is needed to replace windows on the side walls and so currently they are only working on parts of the building where they can get access.

### **Subgroup Leads**

Brendan said he was looking to have an identified lead for each subgroup to act as principal contact for comms. All to consider this.

### **AOB**

1. Brendan reminded everyone about the Morningside Christmas Lights Switch On, which will take place on 6 December 5.15 – 6pm, Morningside Parish Church

2. Childminder list

Following an email from Alice, the Parent Council agreed that it does not want to publicise details of childcare providers on its website as this is not the Parent Council's role. Instead, comms will continue to divert people to existing sources of information.

3. Comiston Road site as a polling station

A proposal was made to put a request to the Council to stop using Comiston Road as a polling station.

*South Morningside Primary School Parent Council has long opposed the use of Comiston Road as a polling station. This is because of the disruption that arises for teachers, pupils and parents from unscheduled day closures in order to hold elections.*

*The Parent Council calls on City of Edinburgh Council to stop the use of South Morningside Primary School as a polling place in time for the 2021 Scottish Parliament, 2022 local government elections and any currently unscheduled referendums taking place before then. It is our view that General Election 2019*

*should be the final occasion on which Comiston Road is used for voting. We call on all our local elected representatives to support this position when responding to planned consultations on this subject.*

Jeremy said it affects 4 schools in Edinburgh now. He said that a motion had been passed and that there was some enthusiasm to consider this at Council.

Jeremy said he has spoken to the Deputy Officer, who is willing to answer questions directly from the Parent Council. He said they have been looking at every possible option but that there are legal issues regarding the size of space, accessibility etc that need to be considered.

Brendan said that the Parent Council can reiterate that it would like them to stop using the school and would also like to look at the possibility of other options. The Parent Council voted on whether to ask the Council to stop using the school as a polling station.

13 in favour. No objections. 2 abstentions.

#### 4. Morningside Community Council update

David attended the last meeting, which he said the Police also attended. He said issues of people driving the wrong way up Canaan Lane, speed control, breathalysers had been raised along with issues of bad parking along Craighouse.

David said the MCC had appointed a new Chairman, Willie Black, who was voted in last week.

The planning consent for a Headstart nursery had been withdrawn.

David said the Council are consulting on changing the bus lane times to 7am– 7pm.

David said that Melanie Main is organising a woodland walk. Melanie would like a section of Greenbank Drive to be tidied up a bit as schools used it for nature activities.

**Date of next meeting:** 13 January 2020 (at Comiston Road TBC)