



# PARENT COUNCIL MINUTES

**Date:** Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019  
**Location:** Lenzie Meadow Primary School  
**Time:** 6.30pm  
**Subject:** Parent Council Meeting

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## In attendance:

**Staff:** Sheona Allen (HT)                      Lorraine Donnelly (DHT)                      Hilary Roddick (Acting Principal)  
Jill Donald (Principal)                      Lesley Reid (Nursery)

**Parents:** Nina Teasdale (Chair)                      David North (Vice-Chair)                      Jennifer Schofield (Vice-Chair)  
Lynn Pike (Clerk)                      Fiona Wright                      Kirstie Wilkes  
Karen McBride                      Alison Campbell                      Gerry Morrison  
Heather Murray                      Lindsay Hood                      Susan Tate  
Sarah-Jane McArthur                      Maureen Matheson                      Justine Currie  
Joslyn Currie                      Emma Donaldson                      Jill Penman  
Joyce Thomson                      Laura Henderson                      Liz Farnell  
Angie D'Andrea                      Clare Reid                      Mark McDiarmid  
Diane Hodge                      Stephen Lonsdale                      William Bell

**Apologies:** Gillian Cay                      Louise Thompson

## 1. Welcome and apologies

Nina opened with a welcome and thanks to all attendees, good to see such a full house and welcome to new faces. Apologies were noted.

## 2. Minutes and Matters Arising

**Minutes** – The January Minutes were approved.

### **Matters Arising -**

Chair succession plan: it would be good to put a succession plan in place for a new Chair, Nina has been in the role for 5 years now and her daughter will be in P7 in August, so it's time for someone new to take on the position. NT can then support the new Chair. It would also be good to have a fresh perspective. If you're interested in putting yourself forward, please get in touch and/or have a chat with Nina and the Parent Council – [lenziemeadowparentcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:lenziemeadowparentcouncil@gmail.com)

Clear communications: attendees asked that the school please ensure communications to parents and carers is clear when issued as wording can cause concern and/or confusion (re: break in/incident feedback/raising awareness)

Woodland: is the woodland supervised during play and lunch times? A pupil was injured when a nail went into their foot. There was a request for checks to be made to ensure the area is clear of hazards. Mrs Allen assured us there is a member of staff supervising the area. She also advised if the weather is very wet the children don't go into the woodland.



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## 3. Parent Voice

The focus of this meeting was on parent matters, several topics having been raised for discussion and circulated on the agenda.

**Gates** – can a policy be given to the P1-P3 parents regarding gates and access to the playground? Can we co-ordinate an approach? Teachers make sure every pupil has a parent there before pupils are released. Consider re-introducing no parent access for older year groups? SA feels the playground seems to be clearing well. In the morning, SMT members are going to each gate at 8.45 – this is an ‘extra’ task, so when things happen, it doesn’t always go to plan. The ‘top’ (main) gate is a concern, especially if there is no-one manning it. The children are still concerned about the number of adults in their playground. There is an ongoing policy the gates will remain shut until 3pm. SA feels this is working well and helps reduce stress for the pupils and teachers. It can be difficult to see what’s happening in the playground – open to discussion? Change policy? Consider closing main gate if there is no one available to man?

Very little detail in the communications regarding the P1 incident. A pupil ran out of class to find their parent and then out the back gate without locating them. There is a lot of confusion and a large volume of people around the gates just before school is let out. The Janitor had been opening the gate early so they could go and do crossing duties on Myrtle. Measures have now been put in place to prevent a recurrence of the incident.

**Ice in car park** – Mrs Allen has spoken to the Facilities Management boss and will put spreaders on purchase order. Council policy is that only ONE entrance is required to have access maintained. A volunteer usually does the pavement into the school, and the playground is managed on a ‘risk assessment’ basis. Janitor may do back gate and playground as an additional service but is not required to. Pupils go through the school if the playground is very icy.

**P7 trip** – for two years Lenzie Meadow have used Lockerbie Manor, and before that Ardentiny for the P7 residential trips. There are limited places that can take larger numbers. At Lockerbie the children stay in pods and there is no place for them to all come together, there are even separate sittings for meals and the whole stay is on a rota of switching round groups to manage the numbers. Rain on this year’s P7 trip created issues – the children returned from one activity, got cleaned up and ate, then went back out into the wet and mud again for another activity, with limited space for their stuff to be hung out to dry. The children still had a lot of fun and enjoyed their trip, but it would be better to have more common space for them to enjoy whole group activities. The change of venue to Abernethy would give this. Abernethy has facilities that other places haven’t offered, like a swimming pool and theatre room. The fact the children can eat together at Abernethy is a priority and one of the reasons the change of venue has been made. The staff know all about running activities and are fully up to date with all risk assessments and qualifications. Mrs Allen confirmed she holds a (voluntary) position on the board there, she grew up in the area and loves the place, so is very happy to be involved.

**P1 intake** – it’s a big move for children going from Early Years to Primary 1, and now they are being asked to go full time from the start of term. The Council say they are working with the parent body and responding to identified needs – but the feeling is that the consultation had limited reach, only through Facebook and online, so many argue this is not a fair representation and some parents were not aware. Through the Freedom of Information Act results were obtained that suggest 0% of teachers (in Bishopbriggs and Lenzie) are in support of this move with 45% of Kirkintilloch teachers who are, and of the parents and carers, 58% were in favour of the full day being introduced from the start of term, with 42% preferring to keep the status quo. What is the consideration of the school? How will this impact on preparation, large class sizes, and pupils? There is no settling-in time.



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It is proving hard for EDC to balance differing opinions and find a resolution that suits all parents. A few parents have met with Greg Bremner, who was open to a proposal for parents to 'opt out', however Anne Dazeil is saying the opposite, so the position is unclear. It's not a question of transitioning into school, more a question of timing and expectation – going full time after a long summer holiday can be difficult for some children to adapt to.

Our SMT are not concerned by the change. They want to apply the 'play to learn' model anyway and are already putting that in place. The Nursery identify children who are not familiar and/or experience difficulties with longer hours and offer an enhanced transition for those individuals. East Renfrewshire Council have been doing this for some time and seem happy with the set up. It gives extra hours for educating, which is what the staff are here for. Staff usually spend the first two weeks trying to cram everything into a shortened day, moving to full days gives more time to do the same amount of teaching in a more relaxed manner. This is less exhausting for the teachers and for the children. If a child is struggling with the transition, then the school will be in touch with the family and will remain approachable for discussions of any concerns raised.

It was suggested those concerned could consider forming a parent group to approach the Council independently?

**Catchment** – there is concern from some parents that some pupils are not in the school catchment, for varying reasons. PC were told numbers would be capped at 560 and it would be a 20-stream school, not 21!

SA and NT confirmed 660 is the official 'working capacity' figure, but we wouldn't expect to ever reach this level. ST reassured the meeting that when a family move out of the area but continue to put their children to the school, the new catchment children will be found places, if not instantly, then as soon as these become available. No schools in the Lenzie catchment are sitting at under capacity. Do large class sizes put extra pressure on staff members? The situation is the same across the country. The Council have a process to avoid people gaining a place without good cause. It is not an issue for this school. Checks are carried out and placing requests are rejected if there are no places available.

**School meals** – some pupils are regularly not getting the meal they ordered at lunchtime. Mrs Allen confirmed all children place their order in the morning and are given a coloured ticket (wristbands were problematic) to indicate their choice. She also acknowledged that when staff carried out a 'spot check' last week they found the infants were changing their mind on reaching the dinner hall. This can result in a shortage for the upper year groups. There is a rotation of P5-P7 pupils and staff are trying to find a workable solution to prevent last minute changes. We also discussed EDC have appointed a new catering manager and chef who are currently reviewing the menu. SA is representing the school, and pupils are involved too. Parents asked if children can see pictures of what they are ordering, as they feel this would really help when making a choice, particularly with the younger pupils.

**Rugby Path** – the Rugby Club President advised that the contractor has been in touch to say the project is currently 'on hold'. This is due to some stipulations from Sustrans, who were funding the project. Sustrans are insisting the path be 2.5m wide and laid in concrete with lights, and they will only fund if those criteria are met. The parent body were surprised to hear this as it was understood a path in keeping with those already laid throughout the Moss would be more appropriate. Friends of Lenzie Moss and Lenzie Rugby Football Club are not in favour of such an industrial solution. Samantha Burke, at EDC, has put David North in touch with the contractor re: the design. Now moving back and forth between the parties. DN agreed to request a copy of the results from the survey already conducted.



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A query was then raised about connecting the back path with Blackthorn Grove, as there is already some hardcore there although it needs more to make it easier to navigate. Could parent volunteers carry out the work? This led to a discussion about what do we have to do to make path improvements that will help alleviate footfall on the main routes? Anyone unhappy with the current pathways and slow progress are advised to please get in touch with the Council, copy emails to the Head of Education, and share views on Facebook. Let EDC know we want to see action.

**Permission Slips** – most are sent out electronically now for printing at home, but this doesn't suit everyone. It was agreed hard copies will be made available from the office and the school is also considering the possibility of allowing e-responses.

**Afterschool Clubs** – what can parents do to help with afterschool clubs? When is a good time to approach the school? SA advised it is better if parents can come with a 'here's what I/we can offer' proposal and already have parent volunteers to support. Managing each group can be challenging. The staff would definitely welcome people who can help and want them to approach the school with their ideas. Lesley Gordon manages, but has limited time due to teaching responsibilities.

**Parent Pay** – can we set up a system that allows parents to pay online for school activities and trips rather than the children carrying cash?

## 4. Nursery Report

The nursery is fortunate there will not be a big impact on the service when the additional hours are introduced as the service already adopts an extended model. There will be some re-structuring in August to accommodate. The nursery currently has vacancies (afternoon posts available) and is growing the staff team. Staff are trying to keep a level of consistency for the sake of the children.

## 5. Head Teacher Report

**Pupil Equity Fund** – Pupil Equity Funds are awarded to 'close the gap' in learning attainment. Lenzie Meadow have 46 children within the category identified. The money has already funded an additional 2 classroom assistants, one in literacy and one in maths, and the added interventions are having a positive impact. Resources have also been expanded, with the purchase of x20 laptops. All the children are loving 'Digital Literacy' learning, delivered by Miss Tani. Maths, Talk for Writing, and Reading resources have also been bought in. Of the x46 pupils identified, x26 were on track or above, and x8 were not on track, but are now. The others have specific needs they need addressed before learning can improve – some don't have English as their first language and need help to complete their work. Next year we will continue with the x2 classroom assistants and add a teacher, for 2 days a week. This will mean less resources will be bought, but we made a good investment this year. Looking at further developing the x26 on track and maintaining their achievements. The PEF improvements benefit other children too and releases staff to work with other pupils. There was unanimous support from all attendees to accept the proposal for additional teaching time. A query was raised regarding what will happen to the additional teaching time in a year? This is really an HR issue and SA is confident she can add on the extra two days as part of the staffing model.

Want Maths, Literacy and Play on the School Improvement Plan, confident have secured good resources this year, so let's use what we have and maximise the potential of our teaching staff.



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**Parental Involvement** – please see links on Education Scotland, which shows the latest view on ‘Engaging parents and families’. A toolkit has been developed to help practitioners through practical resources, including topics such as “Involving All Parents”, “Learning At Home”, and “Parental Representation” among others. Please visit the website for more information:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/engaging-parents-and-families-a-toolkit-for-practitioners>

There are a lot of things we already do at Lenzie Meadow. The web site will give you a chance to see what Education Scotland is expecting from parents. Big question for us is, how do we engage with less active parents?

**How Good Is Your School** – an email will be issued soon containing a link to the latest HGIYS questionnaire, please give this your consideration. An electronic access link will be sent to P4-P7 parents.

**Vision and Values** – the school have been looking at the confusion that was created between the Charter and the Vision and Values statements. A decision has been taken to concentrate on pushing the Values again. Everybody adopting: Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Responsible as their mantra.

**Gallery** – Toni McVey in P5 has been working on an ‘art corridor’ – please take a look at the gallery on your way out.

## 6. Close and Date of Next Meeting

Nina asked that we all encourage parents to start making a move out of the playground. She then indicated the ASN Group is to be restarted. An email will go out to arrange an informal gathering. Please mention to parents this group will reform going forward. The meeting was brought to a close and thanks given to all for attending.

**DoNM: Tuesday 21<sup>th</sup> May 2019.**