



Troqueer Parents and Friends Council



TPFC MEETING WEDNESDAY 20th Jan 2021

Via Microsoft Teams 6.00pm

Minute

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Kirsteen Macintyre, Martin Armstrong, Nancy Torbet, Gillian Walker, Lynn Wilson, Lisa Muirhead (chair), Ian Blake, Itziar Goireina, Lesley Stevenson, Lisa Crosbie, Lyn Gordon, Elspeth Scade, Jenny Law, Nikki Cameron

Apologies: Lili Irving, Joanne Russell, Davie Stitt, Lisa Ashton, Alistair Bloxham

2. Matters arising from last minute

(a) Feedback re Hamper Raffle. Lisa Muirhead passed on her thanks to all involved in organising the raffle and all who donated prizes and bought tickets. The total sum made was £1,577.00. There is still a sum of around £100 for ticket printing and a small sum for envelopes and Sellotape to be deducted, but the final total will be available soon.

(b) Note of monetary donation received by TPFC. Lisa wanted to thank everyone who had made donations of money or other items such as compost/ bulbs. In particular, TPFC are very grateful to Kirkcudbright Dental Practice for a donation of £150 to TPFC funds.

(c) Trim trail/MUGA repairs (standing item on agenda)

Councillor Blake received the following email update from Dumfries and Galloway Council regarding the MUGA shortly after the meeting on the 20/1/2021 and asked for this to be shared

“I’ve had a chance to speak with colleagues within PEP, and unfortunately they have not yet had the opportunity to assign any personnel to this piece of work, due to existing commitments and demands and Covid-19 pressures. I would confirm again for reassurance that when personnel and time allow, the funding will/is in place to allow the works to happen as quickly as possible.”

This will be retained as a standing item on the agenda meantime.

(d) Dyslexia Month (October) This item was on the agenda to consider how we wish to take this forward. It was agreed that it could be deferred to the next meeting.

3. Partnership with school and local community to create welcoming inclusive school

(a) Headteacher’s Report – Martin Armstrong

Martin advised that at the end of last term, he had not been expecting that another lockdown would be needed. He confirmed that he and his staff have found this lockdown difficult. The emphasis has to be on day to day running of services, and his top priority is ensuring children have access to adequate devices such as tablets/laptops

He confirmed that the usual enrolment processes for nursery and P1 together with transition to secondary are proceeding as usual. However, it is not clear from the applications so far that everyone is aware of this and an there may be a communication issue with this.

Child Care in school

Initial applications for this service were very high namely 80+. However, it has now been whittled down and there are currently 45 children of key workers and vulnerable children receiving this service between the nursery and the school. There are three bubbles within school plus the nursery. The bubbles are organised by sibling group rather than age to avoid unnecessary household mixing. The child care is mostly learning assistant led with some teacher input – for example, Mrs Law, Mrs Riddick and Mr McCall are available on some days as per their usual contracted hours. Mr McCall spends part of his time at Laurieknowe school and will only be at Troqueer on alternate weeks. Any work undertaken in school re the home learning provision will be taken home to be submitted via Teams from home.

Online Learning

Martin emphasised that there is a change in expectation in respect of home learning this time around. Last time, the provision was optional, but this time the Scottish Government has emphasised its mandatory nature. The Council have been assisting in providing appropriate devices, but this has been slow to put in place and there remains inequity in learning as a result. A lot of people are still using mobile phones to access learning which is not ideal.

There were issues in the first week. For example, around 100 password resets were requested. This was a big undertaking for the clerical staff. The vast majority of children now have some access to online learning.

The “assignments” part of Teams will be used from next week. This will allow tasks to be set at the correct level of ability for each child and will allow for more specific feedback to be given. The work displayed and the feedback on “assignments” will only be seen by the pupil and the teacher and not the whole class. The teacher can also build up a profile of the child’s work using “assignments.”

Parental question: Is the school were making the best use of technology? Martin advised that during a crisis was not the time to assess the best apps/technology to use. The school would continue with Teams for now and at some point in the future, when the crisis is over, there would be a time to assess technology use going forward. The top priority is to ensure access to a useable devices.

Several parents added comments that they were grateful for all the hard work being done by Martin and the school and teaching staff during this difficult time.

Martin confirmed that live chats will be starting this week which will allow children who have access to a device with a camera and a microphone to see and hear each other.

A survey form will be sent out later this week which will ask about the quality and quantity of work being set for children. Martin is keen to get as much feedback as possible.

Currently, the emphasis is on daily literacy and numeracy tasks with other tasks being in addition to these daily tasks.

Martin advised that evaluation/assessment cannot be carried out as usual during this period as teachers cannot be sure of how much of the work is the child's own and how much support they have been given. Martin emphasised that the school would not be judging parents on the work produced as he is well aware of the difficulties many families are facing – which is the same for teachers, many of whom will be working from home and trying to home educate their own children.

Martin confirmed that he would consider providing video update clips as he did during the last lockdown as these were well received. He also referred to a recent video message from Dr Gillian Brydson, Director of Education, Dumfries and Galloway Council on Facebook regarding home schooling which parents may wish to view. Dr Brydson was emphasising that the Council were aware of the difficulties faced by parents and that people should try to do what they can and not become too worried about how many tasks their children are managing to complete.

4. Promote partnership with school, pupils, Parent Forum and community

(a)Feedback re home schooling.

Question from Kirsteen Macintyre. Please advise re the level of expectation about completion of daily and weekly tasks?

Parents who are trying to work from home as well as provide home schooling support for their children are going to find this period very difficult.

Noted that this had been largely answered by Martin in his report. The expectation this time is different and daily tasks are being set with an expectation that these are completed, however, the school and the Education Authority are aware of the difficulties parents face, especially if they are working from home. People are being asked to do what they can.

5. Develop and engage in activities which support education and welfare of pupils and represent parents' views on education and welfare

(a) Parental Questionnaire in relation to the first lockdown which was given out before Christmas– feedback from Martin:

59 responses overall, amounting to a third of all school families. Martin was pleased with the response rate as he can take this to be a reasonable representation of the views of the school as a whole.

Summary:

'During lockdown how did you rate our communication?'

Score 4.41 / 5 (88.2%)

'During lockdown how did you rate the quality of the tasks?' Score 4.18 (83.6%)

'How did you rate the balance of communication?'

Score 4.42 (88.4%)

Common positive themes in the comments were the use of the School App, the use of Class Dojo and the tone of communications from the School .

Themes and emphasis as we move forward were literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing. Supporting local communities. Outdoor and digital learning. Positivity and kindness. Life skills.

Most of the comments were positive and any concerns raised by parents have been dealt with individually.

- (b) Anti-bullying policy. The policy has been circulated and some feedback has been received which has all been positive. It is important that families know that there is a policy in place and how such issues will be dealt with.**

6. Fundraising.

(a) Feedback Tea Towel/ Christmas Card Fundraising Group

The artwork has been prepared re the tea towel. A Proof of a tea towel has been provided. This requires a few changes, but the business is closed due to lockdown at present. This will proceed in due course and most of the work has been done. It will be easier to take orders/distribute once the schools return.

Work on Christmas Cards for Christmas '21 will need to start in June/July to leave enough time for printing. This will be taken forward later this year.

(b) Recipe Book - postponed for the time being.

(c) Fun Run – likely to take place in the summer term if access to Park Farm available and schools have returned.

(d) Troqueer's Got Talent – Likely to go ahead in some form in due course. TPFC can consider re sponsoring prizes at future meeting.

7. AOCB

There was some discussion re TPFC sponsoring an Easter/Spring art competition similar to the Halloween one. Carried forward as item to next meeting.

- 8. Date of the next meeting – scheduled for 17 March 2021 at 6pm. An additional meeting has been pencilled in for the 10th February at 6pm. At that point, future Government plans will be known and it may be useful to hold an update meeting at that point.**

Ends

