

FRIENDS OF CULTERCULLEN SCHOOL MEETING

Online Meeting via Google Meet
Thursday 2nd July - 6:30pm to 7:45pm

Present: Susan Watt (Chairperson), Jane Brebner (Secretary), Alison Gagne (Head Teacher), Nicole Scott (Acting Head Teacher), Laura MacArthur (Head Teacher) Kirsty Kemp, Mike Whyment, Shona Gray, Nicky Strachan, Jenny Fyall, Helen MacPherson, Gayle McCombie & Cllr Andrew Hassan.

Apologies: Rhonda Robson, Judith McKenzie (Treasurer) & Councillor Jim Gifford

1. Welcome and apologies:

Susan Watt welcomed everyone to the first on-line meeting. Apologies were received.

2. Minutes of meeting on 10th February 2020

Minutes were approved. Susan Watt thanked Jane Brebner for the minutes.

3. Matters Arising:

Alison Gagne confirmed the following:

- Update on the Skype Phones used at School – Additional handsets have been provided. There were teething problems when they were implemented but all linked to laptops with no further issues. However, this will be monitored at the start of the new school term in August 2020.

4. Chairperson's Report:

Susan Watt confirmed the following:

- Mrs Watt Thanked all parents, carers, pupils and teachers for their time and effort undertaking blending learning since lockdown started in March, highlighting the difficult challenges raised for all families and teachers as they deal with their family life. She confirmed that meetings have been held with Mrs Gagne and Mrs Scott throughout this period for updates and discuss any queries raised.
- A Q & A sheet from the Chair Parent Council virtual meeting was attached with meeting agenda that Mrs Watt attended. This was held with the Director of Education and Children Services on 16th June 2020 hopefully will answer some of your queries. This was based on blending learning (Plan B), and was held prior to the announcement by John Swinney (Scottish Education Secretary) on 23rd June for schools returning on 12th August 2020 as near "normal", with Blending Learning as the default depending on Covid-19 levels.
- Parents were Thanked for completing the bus survey issued through the school, which is currently being assessed by the Passenger Transport Unit (Aberdeenshire Council) for Blended Learning. It was highlighted that the Government guidelines for school transport has not been updated and currently states the 2m social distancing on the bus. However, this would be extremely difficult to undertake due to the high percentage of children travelling to school by bus in Aberdeenshire, but parents will be informed as guidelines are updated through the summer holidays.
- Thanked Mrs Gagne and Mrs Scott for arranging the P7 outside evening to allow the children to undertake their final farewell as they embark on their transition to Secondary School and wished all the children the very best.
- On behalf of parents and children, she expressed her warm thanks to Mrs Scott for all her work commitment to the school, with the P5-7 classroom, where she will be very much missed. She wished her all the best as she moves on to her next post. Mrs Scott thanked everyone for their kind wishes and the children for their lovely cards, letters, and pictures she received.
- It was that Aberdeenshire Council had advised Parent Councils to delay holding AGMs until the new school term, to ensure fair and transparent voting of office bearers and

ensure that parents can attend and a protocol will be issued for this meeting. A new date will be set as soon as possible to allow the new FOCS to be enrolled and move forward.

- Stepping down as Chairperson once the AGM has taken place, this will now be August/September due to lockdown. Looking for volunteers, please either speak to herself or email if anyone wishes to discuss the role. It is crucial that we get someone new in the role as the committee is currently made up of parents of children in P4 to P7.
- All parents should consider election as a FOCS member, include Mrs Watt's role as Chair.

5. Treasurer's Report:

Susan Watt confirmed the balance of the following account:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Opening Balance | £331.77 |
| Income | + £4,367.36 |
| Balance | £4,699.13 |
| Expenditure | <u>-£2,369.55</u> |
| Closing Balance | <u>£2,129.58</u> |

- Playground paint and stencil has now been purchased following the Hill of Fiddes Wind Turbine bid being successful. Mrs Scott said she hoped to return to help with the playground painting.
- Funding discussed:
 - Accelerated Reader of £783.63 is due September 2020, which is an increase of £153. Following discussion, it was asked for the school to make further contact with the company to enquire about additional reduction in cost, as it was felt this was a huge increase and the system has not been used since the lockdown. Mrs Gagne confirmed that there was an increase in pupils' numbers using the system **ACTION:** Mrs Gagne to ask Clair Bell to contact the company and liaise with Mrs Watt in the new school year.
 - £150 for Board Games and 3 x £30 of vouchers was still to be funded as previously agreed.
 - Sumdog and Education City to be considered for annual funding in February 2021.
- **Susan Watt** confirmed that the balance of the following account: Cultercullen Football Team of **£900.19** has not altered since February 2020 with the club currently suspended due to COVID 19.
- **Susan Watt** thanked Judith McKenzie and Marie Gilpin for their account update and confirmed accounts are currently put forward to Lindsay McKenzie for auditing and will be presented at the AGM.

6. Head Teacher Report:

Mrs Gagne confirmed the following:

- Teacher for P1/P2: Mrs Dow; P3/4: Miss Daisy Provan (Probation teacher); P5-7: Miss Sarah Smith; Mrs Blaney: Science and French teacher (2 days). Mrs Gagne and Mrs Macarthur will cover teachers non-contact time and Miss Provan's entitlement of 1 day per week professional development time required for all new teachers.
- The Eco-Group have been awarded the Green Flag, which is a fantastic achievement, thank you to Mrs Scott, Mrs Dow, the Eco-Group, and the parents involved.
- School lunches will initially be held in the classrooms, with option of a hot or cold meal. Pack lunches will also be allowed. Free school meals will continue for P1-3.
- The new P1 will be phased in on ½ days for the first 2 weeks, with lunches being issued in the second week.
- School reports have not been issued during Term 4 as it was felt that it would be difficult to assess the children whilst undertaking blended learning. However, she appreciated that some schools had issued reports, which were written up prior to lock-

down. She confirmed that the issuing of reports would be discussed further in the next school year.

- The school are planning a “near normal” return to school on Wednesday 12th August 2020. 10th and 11th August (in-service day brought forward from November) will be in-service days, following the Scottish Government announcement on 23 June 2020, with the default to Plan B of Blended Learning depending on the situation with COVID 19. Letters have been issued to all parents on Plan B, detailing the attendance days, children bubbles etc but a decision on the opening of schools is not expected by the Scottish Government till 30 July 2020. She also highlighted the difficulty due to constant updating of guidelines.

Following discussions, the following was raised:

- Query as to how Plan B was established regarding children attendance. Mrs Gagne emphasised the difficulty in planning around changing guidelines, highlighting pupil learning as priority, and noted parents working. Siblings will be in the same bubble, limiting the number of different households that staff and pupils are in contact with, listing P1 as priority, then siblings, then valuable pupils. This allows pupils in for 50% of the week (2 days) rather than 1/3. The school will be deep cleaned one day each week. Each bubble is a mixture of age groups, with class teachers preparing the classwork for their own pupils, then sharing it with other staff members who will have those pupils in their classroom. All P1s will remain with Mrs Dow in the P1/2 classroom to ease their transition. Transport was also considered, with a lower capacity allowed on the bus due to social distancing.
- It was raised that some parents and children may be anxious on returning to school and queried what facilities would be available regarding Mental Health. Mrs Gagne confirmed that there are various sources available within the sector once children have been assessed by the school, including linking into Meldrum Academy full-time Mental Health worker. Parents should contact herself at any time with any concerns.
- Queried as to how teaching will be undertaken in the new school term, highlighting, outdoor classroom activities as a possible alternative. Mrs Gagne confirmed that she was unable to confirm until further guidelines have been received, which as are due on 30 July 2020.
- Concerns regarding pupils in P3/4 not having prior interaction with Mrs Provan due to COVID 19, especially in the classroom before the new school term. Mrs Gagne acknowledged that new teachers would normally undertake school visits prior to starting teaching. However, she confirmed Mrs Provan is a keen postgraduate, who has previously worked with children and would be mentored daily by the Head Teachers.
- It was raised that parents may be anxious regarding their children’s level of learning undertaking through blended learning on their return to school, highlighting this will have affected families under difficult circumstances. Mrs Gagne acknowledged the difficulties and confirmed that all pupils will be assessed on their return to school in August and the appropriate level of work provided.
- Query as to whether the previous hand sanitiser could be provided again, which was not so harsh on the children hands despite the increase in washing of hands. Mrs Gagne confirmed that there were still bottles left and she will email parents in the new school term asking if they wish to grant permissions for their children to use the gel.

7. Fundraising

- **Susan Watt** confirmed the following at the meeting:
 - Spring Fayre had to be cancelled, which usually raises around £2000.
 - The Council has asked that Parent Councils be creative and consider other options for raising funds, such as grants, windmill funding etc, in the next school year with families affected by COVID 19.

- All FOCS events must be put forward to “Connect” for agreement that the event is sufficiently covered by insurance. Aberdeenshire Council annually pay “Connect” for insurance purposes to allow Parent Council events to be undertaken.

8. AOB

- Susan Watt thanked Marie Gilpin and Mae Campbell for all their huge contribution to the FOCS and the school. They are now stepping down due to children moving onto the Academy.
- Query as to whether the building of the should had been assessed.
Mrs Gagne confirmed that there were currently no issues with the building.

9. Date of Next Meeting:

- The AGM will take place in August/September, date, and time to be confirmed in the new school term.