

AGM FRIENDS OF CULTERCULLEN SCHOOL MINUTES

Tuesday 14th September 2021

Online Teams Meeting

7:00pm to 8:15pm

Present: Jane Brebner (Chair), Mrs MacArthur (Head Teacher), Mrs Gagne (Head Teacher), Cllr Andrew Hassan, Cllr Jim Gifford, Cllr Sheila Powell, Cllr Paul Johnston, Joy Davies (Treasurer), Allison Hume, Amber Sinclair, Amber Reaper, Vikki Jannetta (Secretary), Gemma Laing, Kirsty Kemp, Lynsey Ayton, Sarah Aiken, Mike Whyment, Katie Barnes, Shona Gray, Helen MacPherson, Laura Barron, Erin Dickson, Megan Hicks, Emma Garrow, Rhona Marr & Charlotte Johnston

Apologies: Annie Grant, Gayle McCombie, Linzy Sherriffs, Jenny Fyall & Sam McGregor

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

- Jane Brebner welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested all mics be muted and to use the hand icon or the chat function to contribute. Apologies were received.
- Jane Brebner thanked Joy Davies for stepping in as Chair for the last meeting.

2. Minutes of Meeting - 15 June 2021

- Jane Brebner thanked Vikki Jannetta for typing the minutes of the last meeting. It was noted that Rhona Marr name appears both as 'present' and under 'apologies' - **Vikki Jannetta to amend the Minute**. Minutes were approved.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

- Udney Paths Update – Cllr Johnson confirmed that he now had a full list of volunteers, however he is struggling to get in contact with Kenny from Cultercullen to confirm his involvement. As soon as contact has been made with Kenny a date will be set for the first meeting. Mike Whyment offered to pass on contact details for Kenny and Mrs MacArthur offered to send an email to Kenny from Cllr Johnson.
- Committee roles - to be discussed later in the meeting. Jane Brebner advised that this is her last year at the school, no volunteers had come forward for the Chair role and asked if people could have a think about possibly doing a joint chair role and confirmed she would be happy to shadow if anyone wanted to volunteer.
- Rag Bag - continuing to remain popular. Vikki Jannetta had previously requested an uplift on 24/08, still waiting for the bin to be emptied and requested the uplift again.
- Ink Bin - Vikki Jannetta to order the Ink Bin for the school.
- School Lunch – Mrs Gagne advised that after the last meeting she spoke to all the children for feedback, P1/2 and P3/4 had all positive comments apart from P3/P4 felt that fish and chips was on the menu too often. However P5-P7 had the most gripes. Mrs Gagne collated all the feedback and forwarded Lawrence Finlay. Mrs Gagne also met with Pat Dawson from Catering and passed on the feedback. Pat Dawson confirmed that some of the feedback received was common, hearing the same complaints from lots of schools especially the lack of puddings. Cllr Hassen advised that the Education Children's Committee had reviewed the menu and had given approval for custard and equivalent healthy ice cream to be put back on the menu

from October. However, the ice cream does come in polystyrene which is not in line with eco schools, this is being looked into. Mike Whyment felt that since the last meeting the quality issues are still there and also felt there was an issue with the P1's getting the same portion size as P7's. Mrs Gagne advised that this had been included in the feedback to Lawrence Finlay and the school is awaiting his response.

4. Chairperson Report

- Jane Brebner thanked all the parents who have supported FOCS over the last year. Everyone is trying hard and doing their best which is all that can be done given the year we've all had. Despite that, fundraising over the year has been excellent, it was surprising to learn that since Aug 2020 £4900 has been raised which is a fantastic amount. It appears doing small things here and there and with the big fundraiser during xmas, the hamper raised £1500, has worked well. Money continues to trickle in from Easyfundraising, Rag Bag and FOCS Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Facebook. Tea towels, all my own work and uniforms also contributed to the funds. For new parents you will see the link to Easyfundraising on the bottom of Focs emails sent out, when you sign up for Easyfundraising FOCS receive a percentage of what you buy. Our facebook page Reduce, reuse, recycle is available to all parents for swapping items such as clothing, toys etc, all that's asked is a small contribution is made to school fundraising if you use the page. The fundraising had enabled the school to purchase happy self journals, contributed towards new ipads, paid for the flag pole and other bits and pieces as well. Jane Brebner asked that the Headteachers let the committee know of any funding they may need going forward.

5. Treasurer Report

- Joy Davies advised the accounts summary covers the period April 2020 to April 2021. The Balance is £4829, around £3k is to be withdrawn for ipads, flag pole, happy self journals, accelerated reader and school trip. Fundraising with an initial cost outlay included all my own work and tea towels. The Xmas hamper was the main fundraiser (in place of fayre and raffle). Other fundraising taking place where there was no cost attached included FOCS Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Facebook page, Rag Bag collection, Easy fundraising and individual family fundraising.
- Joy Davies politely requested that when parents do bank transfers into the FOCS account could they please reference their name and what the payment is for e.g. Hamper, Facebook, Uniform etc as this will enable accurate records to be kept. Mike Whyment requested an electronic copy of the Yearly Finance Summary, **Vikki Jannetta to forward it onto all parents.**
- Jane Brebner advised that a report also needs to be compiled and sent to the council detailing what council funds were spent on. **Jane Brebner to submit a report.**
- Joy Davies provided an update regarding internet banking. A signature is required from Judith McKenzie in order to set this up. Jane Brebner advised to place this action on hold for the time being.

6. Adoption of Accounts

- Jane Brebner thanked Joy Davies for all her hard work looking after the accounts and asked if everyone was happy with the accounts summary. There were no objections and Jane Brebner concluded that the accounts are now adopted.

7. Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner

- Joy Davies advised that the accounts would normally be audited (reviewed and signed off) by Lindsey Mackenzie, but Lindsey is ill at the moment. Joy Davies asked if there is anyone else that could be approached to audit the accounts in the meantime? **Joy Davies will contact Lindsey again.**

8. Head Teachers Report

Mrs Gagne advised the following:

- Staff update - Mrs Wardle has settled in really well, feels like she has been with the school for much longer. Mrs MacKee has been welcomed back from maternity leave and decided to come back to her previous post of 2 days per week. Children may have mentioned Miss Croft, she is with the school every Tuesday as part of the covid education recovery budget plan. Joy Davies asked what Miss Croft job role is? Mrs Gagne advised a bit of everything depending on what class teachers need. Currently it is writing in P5-P7, spending time in p1 – p2 to release Mrs Dow to work with some small groups and individuals and also to work with some P3's to help with transition. The teachers are identifying gaps that have come about since last year and Miss Croft is helping fill the gaps.
- Eco Group Update - in the process of purchasing some items for the school. Mrs Gagne is liaising with the landscaping team at council in the hope that the flag pole will be installed by end September, Eco group will pick the location. Some pupils were recently involved in a speeding awareness campaign. Local police are currently doing a campaign to raise awareness. Local Police attended the road outside the school for an hour one morning and 1 person was caught speeding. Pupils did really well. When a driver was caught speeding, police spoke to the driver, and then the children spoke with the driver, asking the driver questions e.g. did you know there is a school, how would you feel, do you have children. Driver gave the kids some good answers. The flashing 20 sign lights are not working udney station side which will be getting fixed soon. Mrs Gagne suggested to police officers the middle of the day would be a better time to catch people speeding.
- Staff Training - staff are doing many courses behind the scenes. All staff today did read to write training course. The Head Teachers completed a mental health awareness for managers course. Mrs Gagne is half way through the course to become a moderation officer for the school. Mrs MacArthur completed safer schools.

Mrs MacArthur advised the following:

- The staff were so appreciative of the messages and kind words from parents at the sad news of Mrs Austin's passing and condolences were sent to Mrs Austin's family.
- Regarding PE kits, during covid the policy changed from storing in school to wearing too school. Now children come in ready for PE. The general feeling from staff and pupils is this is really working well and is cutting down on time wasting. Do parents feel this is something the school can continue with even when we come out of covid? General feeling was yes parents are happy with this set up. Joy Davies stated there was a little confusion at the start of term as folk didn't know what days are PE days, perhaps clarifying as soon as possible would be helpful to parents. Mrs MacArthur advised that confusion came from the fact that Mrs Smith happened to say in passing she was doing physical activity the following day, but she hadn't meant PE kit, it had grown from there. In future information regarding PE days will be circulated asap.

- The calendar of events for this year is about to be distributed. One item is the possibility of going to a pantomime, Mrs MacArthur asked how parents felt about a school trip to the Panto, possibly HMT? Joy Davies thought it may be difficult to organise without knowing what impact covid may have come winter. Mrs MacArthur advised that they are looking into the HMT cancellation policy in the event that Covid impacts on the trip. Helen MacPherson strongly felt the children should have the opportunity to attend and Vikki Jannetta also agreed, commenting on the fact that children are already back attending out of school activities etc. Mrs MacArthur advised there would be no parent helpers this year and suggested she send out a questionnaire to all parents, it could only be booked if the majority of parents were happy with it. Jane Brebner felt that getting an opinion and doing as whole school would be the best way forward. The panto has been previously funded by asking for a recommended donation of £5 p/p and the parent council topped up the difference and paid for transport.

9. Fundraising Events & Ideas

- Jane Brebner asked parents if they had any fundraising ideas to help bring in some funds to the parent council and to help fund any resources for school going forward. Jane reminded members that a family challenge sponsored event had been previously talked about. Jane Brebner is happy for people to try and take something forward. It was generally felt that fundraising initiatives should be agreed before the next meeting. Jane Brebner encouraged parents to use the FOCS Whats App Group to communicate ideas and to start coming forward with fundraising ideas.
- Joy Davies suggested that perhaps a way forward for fundraising would be for each individual family to raise funds for the school.

Post Meeting Note: *parents have been discussing fundraising on Whats App and it has been agreed that families will progress with individual family fundraising challenges, lots of fantastic ideas have been put forward. A Halloween House Hunt will be set up too.*

- Vikki Jannetta advised that a 3rd request was made on 24/08 to empty the Rag Bag container and on 14/09 Vikki Jannetta chased the request up as the container had not been emptied. So far no response has been received. It was thought there may be an issue with drivers.
- The Ink Bin collection scheme (theinkbin.co.uk) had been set up by a teacher of 20 years. The focus is on reducing plastic pollution and creating a circular economy for plastic ink cartridges by installing a central community collection point for used printer cartridges. The cartridges are sent away to Ink Bin and are sorted. HP and Canon cartridges will earn the school money and the others are refilled and recycled. The school can earn anywhere between £25 up to £300 a year depending on how many cartridges are collected. One school had actually raised £400 in 5 months saving 2157 ink cartridges going to landfill. In order to join the scheme FOCS would have to purchase an Ink Bin costing £25.00, after that the bin would be replaced free of charge. The bin is a cardboard bin with the school logo on it, the size is roughly waist height (313x303x742mm). When it is full the cartridges are to be placed in a used cardboard box, lined with used plastic bags / packaging, taped up then the Ink Bin should be contacted and they organise a courier. Joy Davies felt it would be ok to pay for the initial cost and to trial this out if the school felt they could accommodate the bin. Mrs Gagne confirmed that would be fine. Through theinkbin.co.uk there are

lots of free educational resources to help the school with eco learning, there is a Eco Kids Page and Schools tab, the focus is working with young people on issues of recycling, sustainability and climate change in a productive and positive way. It was agreed FOCS would go ahead and purchase an ink bin and trail this fundraising initiative. Joy Davies advised It will have to be reviewed in the future who will carry on the role of looking after the Rag Bag and the Ink Bin. **Vikki Jannetta to order an Ink Bin for the school.**

- Kirsty Kemp advised that Nicky Strachan's name is being used on the raffle licence which is up for renewal. There are currently no plans on doing a formal raffle but it would cost more to scrap the licence then reapply later. Jane Brebner confirmed the raffle license would be renewed and queried if Joy Davies would be happy to put her name on the renewal. **Joy Davies confirmed this would be fine and she would organise the renewal which is due for payment mid November (£450).**

10. Committee Roles to Appoint

- Jane Brebner advised that the whole committee would step down and members would vote again.
- Jane Brebner queried if everyone was happy to appoint Joy Davies as Treasurer, everyone was in agreement and Joy Davies was voted back in as Treasurer.
- Jane Brebner queried if everyone was happy to appoint Vikki Jannetta as Secretary, everyone was in agreement and Vikki Jannetta was voted back in as Secretary.
- Jane Brebner queried if anyone wanted to take on the role of Chair? There were no volunteers. Jane Brebner was voted back in as Chair. Shona Gray felt strongly that another parent needed to step up to this role and thought it best to set a date of when Jane would hand over the role. Kirsty Kemp strongly agreed with Shona Gray and felt that a very blunt email needed to be sent out to parents highlighting the fact there is no Chair beyond Christmas. It was agreed Jane would be doing this role until Christmas (as this is her last year with the school) at which point a new Chair will need to be appointed.
- Kirsty Kemp queried what the constitution stated about P1 parents taking on a committee role? Jane Brebner confirmed that P1 parents needed to be with the school for a year before taking on any officer bearer roles and that the AGM was moved from June to September so P1 parents could get involved in the committee.
- Joy Davies asked Jane Brebner to give everyone a flavour of what the Chair role involves. Jane Brebner advised that due to work commitments she had been doing a minimal role. The main tasks are to check the email inbox and respond to any messages, Vikki Jannetta also helps with this. Make sure Agenda is set for each meeting, keep an eye on funds. At the moment we have the various funding streams coming in here and there, it's the big fundraiser we need to give thought to. There is also communication with the council through Christine Mclennan, she keeps us right with how to run the committee. It's the fundraising bit people can help to push forward, there are lots on the committee that have kids on P5-P7 really need parents of younger kids to step up and take on the committee roles.

11. Election of Committee Members

- Jane Brebner thanked all committee members for their help and input over the past year and advised all attendees to either email FOCS or put a note in the chat to

confirm if you still want to be on the committee. Jane Brebner advised that there is generally between 12-15 on the committee including office bearers.

- Jane Brebner will collate all the responses, so far Emma Garrow, Vikki Jannetta, Shona Gray, Mike Whyment and Helen MacPherson said yes to being committee members.
- Kirsty Kemp advised that she will be stepping down as a committee member in order that someone else may step up. Kirsty Kemp advised that she felt disappointed at the lack of people coming forward to take on the chairperson role and the lack of fundraising ideas. Perhaps drip feeding the funding is the way forward and any ideas are always welcome.

12. Any Other Business

- Football accounts - Shona Gray advised no incoming funds as no subs charged. Outgoings, new footballs x20. Subs will probably be requested when the football moves indoors after the October holidays and perhaps additional football tops may be purchased. The account balance is about £300.
- School parking - Vikki Jannetta raised the issue, stating the area around the school gate is consistently very busy with parked traffic and other traffic including large lorries and tractors attempting to get through the village at pick up time. In particular there was a near miss incident on 9/9 at school pick up. It was very very busy and difficult to find a safe parking space and there was yet another traffic jam involving cars, a massive lorry and the school bus. The traffic came to a complete standstill outside the school due to a large lorry trying to get past the school bus and parked cars (which has happened a few times over past weeks) resulting in the school bus reversing to give the lorry space to pass. This was highly dangerous, the bus mounted the pavement, children had to stop walking and line up against the wall while the bus reversed, it was very busy with many other parents and children at the school gate at the same time. The reality is we are attempting to pick up our kids at a very busy school gate that does not feel safe with the amount of parked cars, no safe parking area and at the same time large vehicles are struggling to get through the village and also add to that the new housing development! Vikki Jannetta strongly felt there was an accident waiting to happen.
- Mrs MacArthur reminded parents that children can be picked up from school between 1505 and 1515. Mrs MacArthur suspects that many parents are collecting children at the same time rather than a gradual pick up. A gradual pick up would mean less traffic in the village. There would be a note in the next school newsletter regarding school pick up. Mrs MacArthur advised that a delay of lorries travelling through the village for approximately 10 min would have meant the situation would have been avoided, there is no space for parked cars, parked school bus and lorries. Mrs MacArthur felt the problem has been amplified since the layby was lost at the new housing development.
- Helen MacPherson queried if a lollipop person or a playground attendant could help, stopping traffic to assist kids crossing safely (similar to Oldmeldrum and Pitmedden)? Cllr Johnson stated that that would be possible but would need to be assessed first. Cllr Johnson also advised that the committee could request for a review of road markings and safety at the school, markings and signage could be reviewed.

- Mrs Gagne advised that the Police said they would be happy to come back to the school at known busy times to assess the impact of traffic on the school. Jane Brebner requested that **Mrs Gagne contact the police to put this in place.**
- Amber Sinclair wondered if the children might be able to write to local businesses in the area highlighting the problems with traffic at school pick up and drop off to encourage less traffic at these times. Mrs MacArthur asked if parents will let the school know of local businesses utilising the road Mrs Dow could instruct the Eco Group to write to businesses. Mrs MacArthur also advised that the learning council could also be involved and write letters to local businesses to let them know generally there is an issue with more children being picked up. Helen MacPherson advised that there are many local businesses who are big supporters of the school and with a nice letter written they will help if they can.
- Amber Reaper queried whether some children could leave school via the gate through to the community park, parents could then safely park in the community car park. Vikki Jannetta stated she would be delighted if that gate was unlocked and she could walk her children safely through the community park to the car park. Allison Hume currently parks in the community car park and requested that if the back gate to the school is open it would be handy, however exiting the car park is a problem due to the speed of cars coming in and out of the village and suggested if there was parking at either end of the village it may help.
- **Amber Sinclair advised that her background is in traffic and road safety she would be happy to come to the school and do a walkthrough and help come up with solutions.** Mrs MacArthur stated she would very much welcome that. Amber Sinclair advised she parks closer to the gate as she has a little one. Other parents are in the same position, perhaps spaces could be allocated?
- Mrs MacArthur asked if Councillors could provide feedback regarding parking allocation within schools, should schools have a staff car park? Cllr Johnson stated there is a plan that all schools should have staff parking but they don't due to availability, for example Pitmedden leases the car park from the community, Tarves has a small bit put aside and Oldmeldrun has lots of space. Cll Johnson advised that the council could carry out an audit on existing arrangements to find safest parking spaces. Cllr Johnson advised that pupil role is not set to increase as fast as expected, in rural areas still dropping, and parking would be an area council would be cautious to alleviate if the problem might not exist for very long. Shona Gray stated that the school is really struggling with parking, which has always been a problem and will continue to be. The layby being taken away has further limited the parking availability, something needed to be done as the issue remains unresolved, from a safety point of view it needs to be investigated and wondered if it is worth the school meeting with the council and roads department and if there should be a separate committee dedicated to look at this, this also ties in with the Udney Paths project, if we can get children walking and cycling this would also help alleviate parking issues. Cllr Johnson stated that certainly travel safety should be reviewed, the first step would be getting police to the school at a particular time, next step would be roads team from the council to assess road markings.
- Helen MacPherson enquired if the land for sale could be used for parking? Mike Whyment suspected not due to the purchasing figure!
- Cllr Hassan suggested parking problems and concerns be sent to councillors and road officers would be asked to consider the issue.

- Mike Whyment queried when the next Hill of Fiddes Windfarm meeting was taking place and if the school had a bid. Mrs MacArthur confirmed 7 November and yes we have a bid.
- Shona Gray asked if there would be work set for kids that are off due to COVID? Mrs Gagne advised Miss Smith is going to use See Saw and post some open-ended tasks, signposting to resources regarding topic work. Big Maths and Accelerated Reader can also be set for home. Key elements will be taught in school with individuals when they return.
- Shona Gray was concerned regarding the high proportion of covid cases at the school and queried if at any point would a class be isolated? Mrs Gagne confirmed there are no plans to isolate a class in line with the guidelines. Shona Gray stated that contact tracers are not interested in anything apart from sleeping overnight in someone's house, don't want to know about kids sitting beside each other on the bus etc. Mrs Gagne advised she is on NHS calls every week and the school have to stick to the rules. There is currently no mention of whole class isolation or bubbles. If rules change we will get in touch. Currently 10% of the school is positive. Mrs MacArthur asked the Councillors what is happening in other schools over the shire? Cllr Gifford advised that everyday at least one school is reporting a child or member of staff has covid, at one point in Meldrum it was up to 12 a day. There is a senior leadership mtg scheduled and the issue will be raised.

13. Next Meeting (Virtual Meeting)

- Jane Brebner advised that she would look at possibilities for the next meeting after October holidays. Jane Brebner also advised parents to please focus on fundraising ideas and to use the whats app group to take any ideas forward.

Minutes Issued: 15 November 2021