

West Linton Primary School Parents Council and PTA

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of Meeting held 15 November 2010

Present: Steven Whalley (PC Chairperson and meeting Chair), Hilary Elliott (Head Teacher), Alison Graham (PTA Chairperson), Margaret Hogg (PC Treasurer), Christine Berthelson (PTA Treasurer), Mirren McLeod (Minute Taker), Neil Clunie, Una Cooper, Tommy Davidson, Lorna Doran, Stephanie Downie, Colin Gambles, Gail Jackson, Julie Jackson, Jennie Jones, Chris Knight, Fiona Longworth, Lindsay Mann, Morna Morrison, Debbie Moroney, Martin Moroney, Monica Shaw, Sheila Warren, Estelle Weipers, Kate Whalley, Emma Wood

1. Apologies: Ben O'Brien, Mary Gunn and Gill Gracie

2. Minutes of the last AGM held on 3rd November 2009

The minutes were agreed.

3. Review of the Year – Parent Council

Steven Whalley reported that it has been another busy year for the Parents' Council with a total of seven meetings held. Two of these meetings were 'non standard meetings', one with the local councillors to discuss efficiency savings and the new school and one entirely dedicated to the then latest plans on the new school.

In terms of the more regular operation of the Parents Council, it was felt that setting up a number of sub-committees helped the Council to cover more topics and led to a more effective management meeting time.

One of the sub-committees undertook a significant piece of consultation work with the whole of the Parents Forum. This was to better understand how the forum felt about the Parents Council and to identify broader topics of interest. This became a great exercise in helping the Forum to understand what the Parents Council did. It also led, after further consultation, to a number of initiatives such as lunchtime clubs and playground painting.

Better communication by the Parents Council was a further theme from this consultation and Steven was pleased to report there have been important developments in this area including establishing an e-mail group, a Google group and a Parents Council website.

There were a number of initiatives taken by the school that parents were happy to support such as a review of the homework policy and a review of the School Aims and Ethos.

Another joint initiative between the school and the Parents Council was the evening on Curriculum for Excellence. The SBC set up a ½ day workshop for Parent Councils on CfE which included a presentation by Lawrence Alexander, the SBC CfE Manager. It was so good the Parent Council arranged for him to make the presentation to interested parents here at West Linton. This took place on 14th September.

The evening included an excellent presentation from the children and we were very fortunate to have the Scottish Government Minister for Education, Mike Russell, in attendance and he gave his perspective on the Curriculum for Excellence.

The two key topics for the Parent Council are the new school and budget cuts. In terms of the former, the Parent Council did ask Councillors not to make further cuts in the budget controlled by the school and that proved to be the case. The signs for next year, given the wider financial environment, are much more worrying. There is, however, an opportunity for parental views as the SBC has a parents group looking at the situation. Steven and Michael Pryor both contribute.

The new school remains a major topic for next year. We are now awaiting the third design. SBC should be commended for responding to concerns over previous plans. The Parents Council must make sure they stay very involved in the whole process.

Steven thanked all the members of the Parents Council. He also thanked the office holders, Tommy Davidson (a brief Deputy chair), Colin Gambles and Margaret Hogg. Steven thanked Hilary Elliot for her help and encouragement.

4. Review of the Year – PTA

Alison Graham reported that the PTA have had another busy year fundraising. The Beetle Drive was a purely social event which was an enjoyable evening and raised £100. The PTA weren't able to organise the popular Bacon Butties at the Saturday morning football training due to weather conditions.

The PTA had a sponsored walk last November to celebrate the School's centenary where every child got to plant a tree. This was well attended and raised £885. However had this event not been organised the PTA would have been struggling to contribute to the many activities the PTA support. The PTA contribute 50% of the transport costs of all school trips. There is now a need for more people to attend fundraising events and the PTA would like new ideas from parents on what they would like to do or attend. There is a lot of competition for fundraising in the village and the PTA are looking for feedback. They would like to know that the expense and time spent organising an event will be both enjoyable and productive.

The main fundraiser every year is the Christmas Bazaar. However this has been bringing in less and less funds. Alison encourages everyone at the AGM to encourage other families to support the PTA in coming years, especially on 4th December, the date of this year's Christmas Bazaar. The PTA is aiming to use the Parents Council website more for delivering future fundraising information.

Alison thanked all the PTA members for their hard work and support over the past two years. Alison found it a pleasure and an honour to have been able to contribute something to the school.

5. Head Teacher's Report

Hilary Elliott reported that the past year has been busy and eventful. Throughout the year pupils have had the opportunity to participate in a variety of sporting opportunities – hockey, football, netball,

basketball, rugby, badminton, tennis, gymnastics, athletics and school sports day. Pupils have also had the opportunity to participate in Cycling Proficiency Training, the Tweeddale Dance Festival and educational visits to a variety of venues. Many of these opportunities have been organised to take place during the school day. All have been dependent on the goodwill and time commitment of those adults organising or leading the event whether school staff, parents, SBC personnel or members of the wider community.

The school has supported a number of charities throughout the past year - "Wear a Hat for Haiti", Starlight Foundation, Lake Victoria Disability Centre, Children in Need, Comic Relief and Sports Relief. Currently the Pupil Council is working with staff to prepare for the "Children in Need" fun day and they are planning to have a "Wear Tinsel to School" day in December to support one of the families in raising funds for Glasgow's Yorkhill Hospital.

Last May, the school underwent a local authority School Review. This was a very positive experience with an equally positive and encouraging outcome. The school self-evaluation was found to be accurate with the authority endorsing identified strengths/ areas for development.

The recent Curriculum for Excellence Information Evening for parents provided an opportunity for the school to share its good work, not only with parents but also with Glenn Rodger, Director of Education; Councillor George Turnbull, Chair of the Education Executive Committee; and Mike Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education. The contribution made by the pupils was appreciated by all attending and Mike Russell has since given two very public endorsements of the school's good practice.

The school recently had further endorsement of the committed staff and good practice when the Nursery received its annual, unannounced, Care Commission Inspection. West Linton Primary School was given a low-intensity inspection on this occasion as all previous Care Commission Inspections of the service had been very positive. On this occasion they were inspected on only one Care Standard "Quality of Care and Support". They were found to be "Very Good" and "Excellent" in relation to the two Quality Themes within this Standard. The report can be viewed in full on-line via Care Commission Inspection Reports and a copy will be displayed in the Nursery.

This month sees the enrolment of children for Nursery & P1 in August 2011. Next month there will be a range of Christmas activities: PTA Christmas Bazaar, school Christmas lunch, Early Years Performances and Christmas parties.

The biggest and most exciting initiative over the past year and continuing into the next is SBCs commitment to delivering a new school by the end of 2012. Although things may appear on the surface to have been a little quiet since October, Hilary reported that authority personnel have been working very hard to resolve these challenges and that significant progress is being made in developing the plans. Hilary attended a new build meeting this morning which took place at Lauder Primary School, one of the authority's recent new schools and had opportunity to walk around it again and note all the fantastic facilities – classrooms, GP room, meeting room, visiting services room, medical room, resources room, staffroom... – all of which we hope will be incorporated into our new school.

Despite our current school building which is not quite ideal for our purposes, we are very fortunate at West Linton to have such a committed and caring staff and school community. Staff and parents share the goal to educate and nurture children to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Activities and events over the past year illustrate how well we have achieved this goal. We have pupils and children of whom the school are justifiably proud.

By continuing to work collaboratively the staff, pupils, parents and the community of West Linton together with Scottish Borders Council, will ensure that despite the challenges we may face in the current financial climate, the pupils experiences at West Linton Primary School are positive.

Hilary thanked all the staff at West Linton Primary School for the very high level of commitment they give, which is often well over and above their contractual duties. Hilary also thanked the parents for the support they give to the school and to the children. Hilary is grateful to the PTA Committee and Parent Council for their valuable contribution.

Hilary thanked Alison Graham in her role as Chair of the PTA and Steven Whalley as Chair of the Parent Council for their significant contribution.

Hilary is looking forward to working collaboratively in the year ahead with new committee members of both Parent Council and PTA.

6. Treasurers' Reports

Margaret Hogg - the Parents Council Treasurers report (full report attached)

The only expenditure the Parents Council has had over the past year is for Clerks Expenses, a gift for Denise Halcrow and Hall Rent. After the accounts were finalised two other expenses were put through: one for School Admin expenses, and another for **Curriculum for Excellence** - entertaining expenses which the Parents Council had agreed to pay for.

Christine Berthelson – the PTA Treasurers report (full report attached)

The biggest fundraiser for the PTA is the Christmas Bazaar. The biggest expenditure is paying for transport for school trips. The PTA is keeping a healthy balance in anticipation of providing equipment for the new school.

7. Appointment of Parent Council Office Holders for 2010-2012

The following were appointed:

Chair – Colin Gambles

Deputy Chair – Estelle Weipers

Secretary – Monica Shaw

Treasurer – Margaret Hogg

Staff Reps – Mary Gunn, Sheila Warren and Moira Brown

8. Appointment of PTA Office Holders for 2010-2011

Chair – Kate Whalley

Staff Reps – will be Louise Rogers and Sandra Cameron

The following parents are to join the PTA – Una Cooper, Ben O'Brien, Fiona Longworth

Stepping Down from the PTA are – Christine Berthelson, Julie Jackson, Gerry McLachlan and Alison Graham

9. Parents Council and PTA Plans for 2010/2011

Parents Council - Steven announced that subject to endorsement by the new Parent Council it is likely that there will be a focus on the following key issues: the new school, lobbying the budget and efficiency savings, defining the class rep role and better communication between the Parents Council and Parent Forum.

PTA – fundraising for more money for the new school and transport for school trips.

10. Date of Parents Council and PTA Meetings

Parents Council – 8th December 2010 (provisional date)

PTA – TBA

11. Appreciation of Office Bearers

Colin Gambles thanked Steven Whalley for all his hard work whilst Chairperson for the Parents Council. Estelle Weipers thanked Colin Gambles and Margaret Hogg for their work on the Parents Council. Tommy Davidson thanked Alison Graham for her hard work as Chairperson for the PTA.

The meeting finished at 8.30pm.