



### Parent Council Newsletter April 2023

It was a pleasure to welcome Mr Gillies to the April Parent Council meeting, and to hear from him about his first few weeks in the school – a huge welcome from us all!

The meeting covered a huge range of areas that the Parent Council are working on to improve the experience all our children have at South Morningside. Almost £7,000 of funding have been secured by Clubs and the football club – amazing work(!), the accommodation committee led a discussion about possible upgrades to the playground, the transport committee updated on the plans for Canaan Lane road closure, and the fundraising committee shared plans for upcoming events.

These activities are only possible thanks to the input and involvement of all those who volunteer to be on the Parent Council or to support one of the subgroups. No matter how much or how little time you can give, if you'd like to get involved then we'd be delighted to welcome you! There are also a number of Parent Council members due to stand down this year, including the Secretary – roles that need to be filled to enable the Parent Council to continue to make a difference for our school community.

There are more details of each group in the updates below, or the Chairs and Secretary would also love to hear from you!

[secretary@sm-pc.org](mailto:secretary@sm-pc.org)

[chair@sm-pc.org](mailto:chair@sm-pc.org)

### Head Teachers Update

It was fantastic to welcome Mr Gillies to his first Parent Council meeting, to hear about his first few weeks and his short, medium, and longer term plans. Mr Gillies told us how he is getting to know the school, the students, as well as the extra-curricular activities such as clubs that pupils are benefited from and experiencing so much success.

Mr Gillies said he had a clear goal, after a period of instability with staff changes, to pull the school community closer together and to prioritise activities that do that – for



example, sports day is logistically complex, but worth the effort for the impact it has for the school community.

He let us know that at the moment he is working with Mrs Jones and Miss Wright to prepare a school improvement plan, before consulting with all school staff to develop the plan. This will then come to parents, with an opportunity for us to give feedback, over the coming months. This plan, which will focus on areas such as teaching and learning, assessment and the constructive use of assessment results, and the student voice, is then the roadmap the school will follow.

In addition to getting to know the school, staff, and students, Mr Gillies has also already been getting to know the Parent Council and some of our projects, and has already been involved in discussions with the Council regarding the playground at Comiston Road and preparing the school building for the return of the P1s and P2s in due course.

#### Canaan Lane play equipment

Miss Wright came and gave an update on play equipment that the P1 and P2 team are keen to acquire for the children at Canaan Lane. This is a range of materials and toys which enable imaginative play and which will belong to South Morningside. These will be shared with Canaan Lane while we share a building, but will come with the P1 and P2 team when they move to Comiston Road.

Miss Wright explained the safety requirements around procurement which can make some items more costly to acquire, and will be sharing with the PC a summary of what equipment would make the difference for the SMPS children at Canaan Lane and asked the Parent Council to fund these new resources.

#### Finance update

The Chairs updated on behalf of the Treasurer that the Parent Council accounts are completed to the end of March 2023.

#### Accommodation Team Update

The accommodation team gave a presentation on the recent conversations with the Council around the playground at Comiston Road. This has long been an area that



the Parent Council have been very keen to see improvements, and this need is even more pressing with the P1s and P2s due to return to the school at some point.

The accommodation group, PC chair, and Mr Gillies met with the Council to discuss what the Parent Council is able to do in this matter, and was reassured that whilst there is no budget for playground upgrades there is scope for the Parent Council to work with the school and council in order to plan, arrange and pay for work to be done.

There are a few key milestones to make any significant changes – firstly a site plan to understand the underground utilities and the impact they may have. The accommodation group have also reached out to landscape architects who have experience in designing school playgrounds to find out what a project like this might involve and the costs.

Ideally, the ambition would be to develop a masterplan that we could fundraise for and then implement (at least in part) in Summer 2024. The intention would be for a plan that is developed with the kids' involvement and that could be a phased programme of works, depending on the scale of ambition and the cost. This would hopefully also connect to the other ongoing accommodation questions and issues such as the preparations for P1 and P2, and the toilets.

We also discussed short term measures to make the playground nicer, such as painting external walls that are looking a little run down or refreshing the planting – possibly as an activity for the school community to come together and make a noticeable difference quickly.

If you are keen to get involved in these ideas and activities, or any other accommodation matters, then please do drop us a line on:

[accommodation@sm-pc.org](mailto:accommodation@sm-pc.org)

### Fundraising

Unfortunately, the parents Quiz Night planned for 28 April has had to be postponed – a new date will be confirmed soon, hopefully in late September/ early October. Anyone who bought a ticket and have this transferred to the new date, or please contact the fundraising committee via Classlist if you would like a refund.



Planning is underway for the Summer Fair, after a very successful Winter Fair. The provisional date for this is Saturday 3 June, and the fundraising team will soon be looking for volunteers for a range of jobs, some small and some large, but all lots of fun!

All of these activities can only happen thanks to those who volunteer, even if it's only to do something as a one off, and who support by attending. If you're able to help at all, please get in touch with Fundraising via Classlist or by email.

[fundraising@sm-pc.org](mailto:fundraising@sm-pc.org)

### Clubs

Clubs have had some fantastic success recently, securing a community grant for a new Friday music activity for P5, P6 and P7 pupils, for £3742 to provide tuition as well as buying the instruments that we can use if subsequent years.

The music club is open to up to 60 pupils, and has been tremendously well received already. Huge well done to all involved in securing this money!

Like the fundraising activities, the Parent Council can only offer clubs thanks to those who volunteer. There are a few Convenors standing down soon, so if you would be interested in being a Club Convenor then please do get in touch!

[clubs@sm-pc.org](mailto:clubs@sm-pc.org)

South Morningside Football Club, with support from the Parent Council, were also successful in obtaining a £3000 grant towards a new storage container at Meadowspot for the football club.

### Transport Team update

The transport committee updated that now that Mr Gillies is in post they are looking forward to working with him on the Safe Routes to School day and the banners about safe parking for Canaan Lane that have been mentioned in previous newsletters.

A key concern for the transport committee recently was the reopening of Canaan Lane at the junction with Morningside Road. This group contacted local councillors to get an emergency motion put forward at the City Council's Transport Committee



meeting to close the road again, and this motion passed unanimously though we have not had a date for when the closure will happen. Canaan Lane will be closed at least until the Council have completed a school travel plan for Canaan Lane – thanks again to all who completed the recent survey on this.

The other issue that the transport committee are working on is to influence the design of the upcoming changes to the Comiston Rd / Greenbank Crescent junction. This work has gone to tender, so it may be too late to alter the plans, however the group will continue to try to engage with the Council and ultimately the contractor on this.

[transport@sm-pc.org](mailto:transport@sm-pc.org)

### Communications Team

The Communications Team use the Parent Council website, newsletter, Classlist and Facebook to keep everyone up to date with Parent Council activity. If you notice anything out of date or think more information is needed about anything in particular, please get in touch!

[comms@sm-pc.org](mailto:comms@sm-pc.org)

### Next SMPC Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023, and will be in person at Comiston Road.

The Parent Council makes a real difference to the experience that our children have at school, and if only able to do so thanks to those who get involved. We are always looking for more volunteers to come forward and help in some way with the PC including with clubs, fundraising, accommodation, communications and much more. If you are able to design a poster, to write a Facebook post, to co-ordinate a club, or would like to take part in the discussions about our school and its future then we would love to hear from you!

You can volunteer for as much or as little as you like, many hands do make light work!

Please do come along to the PC meeting to find out more, or email our chairs at [chair@sm-pc.org](mailto:chair@sm-pc.org).



**“you’ve got to create what you want to be a part of”**

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Website <https://sm-pc.org>.