



Parent Council Newsletter March 2024

South Morningside's Parent Council is a sociable group of volunteers who give a little time to improve the experience for all children at South Morningside. We run clubs, raise money, support the School and liaise with the City Council on behalf of the children and their families at South Morningside

At this month's meeting we were able to award over £1,400 to support a range of activities to enhance pupils' experiences, including sports kits, musical instruments and equipment to support wellbeing. We are able to do this thanks to all who support our fundraising activities and who volunteer – thank you! It is a real pleasure to know the difference we make for the kids at SMPS, and if you'd like to play a more active part in this then we'd love to hear from you!

In addition to supporting activities, there has been progress on the playground developments and planning for the younger years to join Comiston Road which was great to hear about.

We also heard from Mr Gillies and Mrs Jones about how they are continuing to nurture the wider school community, and there are many other ways that people can volunteer and get involved if the parent council isn't for you – more information will be coming from Mrs Jones on this!

If you are interested in getting involved with the parent council, however, we'd be delighted to hear from you as a voting member or to join one of the Parent Council Subgroups listed below. You don't need to join the Parent Council or attend Parent Council meetings to be part of a subgroup, but you will be making a real difference to the experience that all of our children have at South Morningside.

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Office bearers and PC voting members | • Clubs subgroup and clubs convenors |
| • Finance | • Accommodation and Playground |
| • Fundraising | • Transport |
| • Communications | • Ad hoc event and activity help |

Do get in touch if you'd like to find out more about taking part and joining in!

secretary@sm-pc.org

chair@sm-pc.org

Dates for the Diary – more details below!



- **Friday 15 March:** 9:15-ish (TBC), **Playground Group** at Comiston Road
- **Monday 29 April:** 7pm, **Parent Council meeting**, online via Teams link
- **Saturday 8 June: Summer Fair**, times TBC, at Comiston Road

Chairs' Update

The Chairs have been talking to Leaf and Bean about running a trial to have coffee etc available from the Janitor's House in the playground, probably around pick up and drop off on a Friday, with the intention of creating more opportunities for social mixing at School and to make it feel more of a social space.

The Chairs are also continuing to look into the potential benefits and drawbacks of the Parent Council becoming a registered charity but this decision will not be made until the new chair/ co-chairs are in role in the next academic year.

Recruitment of new co-chairs is ongoing – there is one person who has noted interest, so we are keen to hear from anyone who may be interested in joining them in a co-chair role. Louisa and Ange spoke about how they have enjoyed the role, and working together it has been a manageable and fun experience. They'd both be very happy to chat with anyone interested to see whether it might suit you!

chair@sm-pc.org

Head Teachers Update

After some careful savings from the School budget, Mr Gillies has been able to spend almost £90,000 on upgrading infrastructure around the School including new IT and laptops for all teachers which connect to the smart screens (28 laptops in total), laptops for PSAs, as well as some refurbishments around the School and playground such as the new solar powered lights in the trees at the front of the School. Because of this, he has spent most of his budget and will be able to transfer the maximum of 1.5% into next year without much being returned to the Council.

He would very much like to extend the IT improvements to iPads for the P5s, but that is a larger project.

Mr Gillies also thanked parents who have been volunteering to support school activities. There are lots of great ways to support the school community through



volunteering a little of your time and Mrs Jones will soon be sending a message out to all parents to ask for more parents to get involved. Some of the ways you could make a difference are:

- Helping with outdoor learning trips
- Gardening in the playground
- Reading with children

Mr Gillies also updated on his conversations with the Council to confirm the £200,000 - £250,000 committed to improving the toilets, as well as the classrooms and playground areas for P1 and P2 pupils to be at Comiston Road in the future. This is an ongoing discussion, but Mr Gillies did confirm again that after school club will be provided at the school children attend (ie if you are at Comiston Road then your ASC is at Comiston Road). To support this, Spring Oscars are looking into whether they need to/ can extend the club into Greenbank Church as has been done in the past to increase capacity.

Finance update

We received several requests from the school for funding, which we voted on. We were delighted to be able to support:

- New kit for the girls netball team to be able to compete in matching SMPS kit
- New instruments and equipment for strings (strings, bows, a viola, a violin)
- New yoga mats for yoga and mindfulness activities to be started up by Miss Goodchild

We're really pleased to be able to help the School with these activities, to enrich to educational experiences offered. Thank you to all who have given and supported fundraising activities to make this possible!

Fundraising Update

The funding requests were a great reminder of the difference that our fundraising activities make.

Still to come this year, we have:



- **Save the Date** for **Saturday 8 June**, for the **Summer Fair** at Comiston Road – more details to come in due course!

Thank you again to everyone who gets involved in the fundraising activities and please do look out for details in due course of how to get involved in the Summer Fair!

fundraising@sm-pc.org

Accommodation Team Update

Playground

Following on from the LTP survey, there is now an active playground group who are pulling together more ideas and will be creating a plan to develop the playground.

Currently, this has two main strands – gardening and green spaces, and sports activities – with some fantastic support from parents to create more opportunities to involve kids in growing and caring for plants. The next stage is to bring these ideas together along with input from the children.

This is a really exciting project, which has the potential to transform the day to day experience of all at South Morningside. If you're interested in helping out, please do drop us a line or come along to the next **playground group meeting on FRIDAY 15 MARCH** to join in over a coffee after drop off, meeting at the Janitor's House in the playground.

Dining Hall

There are a few parents working to redecorate the dining hall to create a more pleasant environment for the kids. This has slowed a little with so much focus on the playground, but will be picking up again soon. Again, please get in touch if you'd like to know more!

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

Clubs Update



The clubs are all running smoothly this year, thanks to all who volunteer to make these possible. Like the fundraising activities, the Parent Council can only offer clubs thanks to those who volunteer.

In addition to the parent volunteers, Clubs are also looking into how they might be able to accommodate High School pupils to volunteer as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award.

clubs@sm-pc.org

Transport Update

The transport group updated on current roadworks – the roadworks on Comiston Road are due to end very soon.

There was some comment on the junction at the end of Braidburn Terrace by the Hermitage, which we believe is meant for local access only. Potentially this may need to be reviewed if that is not how it is being used, but there is precedent in the city for better signage to be added to junctions like this.

It was also noted that the Council are deciding the future for the Greenbank to Meadows quiet route, and we are keen to hear the outcome of that decision. Thanks to all who took part in the consultation, you can see the report on the Council's website: <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s67770/Item%207.3%20-%20Travelling%20Safely%20Greenbank%20to%20Meadows%20QC.pdf>

transport@sm-pc.org

Communications Update

The Communications Team use the Parent Council website, newsletter, Classlist, WhatsApp 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! If you'd like to be added to any WhatsApp groups then do let us know too.

We're also keen to engage with and hear from more parents, so will be looking at more ways to keep in touch. If you have any thoughts in this then to let us know ☺

We'd also love to hear from you if you might have time to help with these different comms activities – just drop us a line!



PARENT COUNCIL UPDATE

comms@sm-pc.org

Next SMPC Meeting

The next meeting will be held **on Teams** on **Monday 29 April 2024**.

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 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.

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

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/southmorningsidepc>

Website [South Morningside Parent Council \(sm-pc.org\)](https://sm-pc.org)