



Parent Council Newsletter November 2023

South Morningside's Parent Council is a sociable group of volunteers who give a little of their 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

Currently, there are spaces for more voting members so if anyone is keen to have a say over how the Parent Council supports the School and funds activities then do think about joining. We are also looking for new co-chairs to take over from Louisa and Ange who are stepping down at the end of the school year in June.

As ever, we would also be delighted to welcome anyone who would like 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.

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| • 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 in newsletter

- **Thursday 23 November:** Just after school starts, **gardening group** at Comiston Road
- **Saturday 2 December:** 10am-1pm, **the Winter Fair** at Comiston Road
- **Thursday 7 December:** Just after school starts, **gardening group** at Comiston Road
- **Monday 22 January:** 7pm, **Parent Council meeting**, in person at Comiston Road



Chairs' Update

This year so far, our Chairs have been supporting other schools with new parent councils looking for advice, as well as investigating how our Parent Council could achieve charitable status. Whilst this would have some implications for how we operate, this would also enable us to claim gift aid on donations, potentially greatly increasing our fundraising, and also making us eligible for support from some grant giving bodies. More on this to come.

The Chairs have also been busy completing the Christmas orders or cards, mugs, coasters etc – many thanks to all those who have ordered. Especially exciting this year is the news that a South Morningside pupil's design has been chosen as local MSP Daniel Johnson's Christmas Card this year! Well done to Sophia Armstrong in P2!

Head Teachers Update

With the inspectors in this week, Mr Gillies passed on his thanks to all parents who have completed the online questionnaire, and particular thanks to the parent who baked some scones to welcome the inspectors!

The School have been working to streamline communications, to reduce how many emails are coming out to parents. All information is also on the website for reference. Hopefully this is working, but feedback always gratefully received! Two communications points being looked at just now –

- The P7 Student Leaders are working on creating a new newsletter of nice stories from around the School, which will be sent along with key dates.
- A parent asked how the School communicates when outdoor education is cancelled. There is not a system in place for this, but it was a great question and is now being looked at.

There will be more consultation coming on the school improvement plan, and please do engage as Mr Gillies is keen to hear from everyone on all aspects of the school. Feedback helps shape how he and the School work with us – for example, after feedback from the last strike days, the school work for the (now called off) strike on 8 November was shared the weekend before to help families who cannot complete it on the day.



There are also plenty of opportunities to get involved and help too, from supporting gardening and decorating at the School, to volunteering for the library – a key activity that the School would be delighted to have more people involved in.

Mr Gillies would also very much like to have some new parents reps – volunteers who can check in with families who join after P1 or even mid-term, to see that they know where things like the uniform boutique are, that they have a chance to join the right WhatsApp groups, and that they feel welcomed to the SMPS community. If you would be interested in finding out more about this, please contact the chairs on chair@sm-pc.org

Finance update

The finance group are continuing to improve their processes for smoother running of the finances, particularly with requests that come from the School for support.

Thanks again to the phenomenal job done by the fundraising team, and to the parent community in supporting fundraising activities, the Parent Council are in a position to provide money to help improve the School, such as upgrades to the dining room and playground. If you'd like to be part of the decision making behind this, there are spaces available for voting Parent Council members this year!

Fundraising Update

We have had two fantastic fundraising events so far this year -

- SMPC Parent Quiz, which was on Thursday 28 September, at the Merlin was a phenomenal night and raised just over £3,000! Huge thanks to Dougie Robertson from the As Seen on TV quiz and who generously ran the quiz itself for free, it was incredible fun! Thanks too to all those who donated prizes for the raffle and the auction, there were some fab things up for grabs! We would highly recommend using ASOTV's services for any events you have planned and its always great to support local businesses. More information can be found on their website www.asseenontv.events
- Hallowe'en Discos returned on Thursday 26 October, with discos for each age range, and raised just under £2,000.



Still to come this term, we have:

- **Save the Date** for **Saturday 2 December**, as **the Winter Fair** will be at Comiston Road from 10am – 1pm, and after feedback from the Summer Fair the Winter Fair will be primarily outside this year, weather dependant.

The fundraising group are recruiting volunteers for the Fair – if you have an hour to spare, it will be great fun, and many hands make light work. You can pick an activity and a timeslot that suits you best on Classlist:

https://app.classlist.com/parent/#/events/view/1042001919?s=750370858&utm_source=SCHOOL&utm_medium=SHARED_LINK

Or you can email the fundraising group on the address below. We're also really open to any suggestions for other stalls not listed – just drop us a line!

A huge thank you to everyone who gets involved in the fantastic events that the fundraising group organise for the school community. 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 thanks to all who buy tickets and take part. If you're able to help at all, including with prizes and donations, please get in touch with Fundraising via Classlist or by email.

fundraising@sm-pc.org

Accommodation Team Update

As highlighted in the last newsletter, the big areas of focus for the accommodation team over the coming year will be:

- Toilets
- Playground

We're delighted that there is currently some momentum on both!

Toilets

Mr Gillies has been working to engage the Council re the inadequacy of the toilets for the children but also from the perspective of SMPS being an accessible School – there are no suitable facilities. This has led to a visit from more senior Council staff



to review the toilets, and hopefully there will be a plan to address the toilets and the lack of accessibility soon. Thank you to Mr Gillies for his perseverance on this longstanding issue.

Playground

A services survey has taken place (you may have noticed the spray painted marks in the playground!) and the Parent Council has paid for the charity Learning Through Landscapes to visit the School, carry out an audit, and produce a report on options for making the playground greener and more fit for purpose. A key part of this work will be hearing from the pupils themselves on what they want and value in their playground – the School will be trying to ensure a range of children of all ages are able to feed into this, and the visit will include observing the children at play to see how they use the existing playground. From this, combined with the services survey, we will hopefully have some advice and ideas to plan the path ahead for developing the playground.

In addition to this larger, ambitious piece of work, several parents have continued to improve the playground through a new gardening group. The group are meeting twice a month for a cup of tea and some light gardening – in the first session they did some weeding and planted daffodil bulbs ready for the spring. The next session will be on **Thursday 23 November**, meeting just after school starts, and there will be more bulbs to plant – this group is open to parents, carers, grandparents so please do consider joining in!

Dining Hall

In addition to the toilets and playground, there has been work happening to improve the dining hall. A group of parents are looking at the design and decoration of the dining hall to try and improve the space, and one has approached his workplace to ask for the company to support with a gift in kind to create a plan for a new lighting scheme to improve the atmosphere and feel of the basement rooms. Huge thanks to the parents involved in transforming a key space used by almost every child daily!

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 have all running smoothly this year, thanks again to the conveners. There has been some work in the last few weeks to shuffle rooms in order to accommodate Spring Oscars who wish to increase their capacity, but this is completed now.

Like the fundraising activities, the Parent Council can only offer clubs thanks to those who volunteer.

This year, the central club convenor has had to stand down and we are looking for someone to fill this role. This role has well-established processes, and support from others on the Parent Council, and enables hundreds of children to enjoy after school activities such as sports, music, and creative activities. It's hard to overstate what a difference this makes to the experience our children have at South Morningside!

If you feel you can support the overall clubs team, please get in touch as without this support, it won't be possible to continue to operate clubs.

clubs@sm-pc.org

Transport Update

Since the last Parent Council meeting, the Transport Group has shared details of the consultation on the Greenbank to Meadows quiet route that so many of us use to travel to Comiston Road and Canaan Lane.

Many thanks to all who completed this, and we await the outcome of the Council's process.

transport@sm-pc.org

Communications Update

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!



PARENT COUNCIL UPDATE

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!

comms@sm-pc.org

Next SMPC Meeting

The next meeting will be held **at Comiston Road on Monday 22 January 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 \(sm-pc.org\)](http://South Morningside Parent Council (sm-pc.org))