



### Parent Council Newsletter September 2023

The first meeting of the year was also the AGM, and a great opportunity to revisit the purpose of the Parent Council to:

- create an inclusive and welcoming school;
- identify, seek and represent the views of parents and families;
- organise clubs and social events which raise funds and promote links between school, pupils, parents and the wider Morningside community; and
- oversee and account for all funds raised.

In practice, the 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.

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 were delighted to welcome a new Secretary at the AGM, thank you to Sarah Whitty for stepping up to take on this role! This year, we will also be looking for new co-chairs as the brilliant Louisa and Ange will be stepping down at the end of the year.

As ever, we would also be delighted to welcoming 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.

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

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

### Head Teachers Update



The main focus of Mr Gillies update was to say *“look what we can achieve together”!*

Mr Gillies thanked the Parent Council for the support to make changes that are not possible within the school’s budget but which make a difference to the children’s experience. An example of this is support to buy an MP3 player and speakers for the dining hall in response to the Pupil Parliament and wider pupil requests for music during lunchtime. This is a change that is part of the School’s consultative ethos, listening to the children and giving them some ownership over their school.

Following on from the success of the work the Scouts did painting the outside of the toilet blocks and playground areas, Mr Gillies also shared some ways he would like to work with the parent community to improve other aspects of the school, including:

- Gardening in the playground
- Larger upgrades to the playground
- Designing a refreshed Dining Hall
- Parent reps and buddies
- Drop off (ee) and coffee for all year groups (has been done for P1 so far)
- Volunteers!

Improvements to the toilets were also discussed at length, in particular how we as parents can help the School to effect change by engaging with the Council. There will be more coming soon on how we can most effectively add our voices to raise this with the Council as an issue that needs to be addressed. If you would like to get more involved in this, please let the accommodation committee know – they would be delighted to hear from you!

The other issue that Mr Gillies addressed in response to parent feedback is the drop off and Friday hours at Canaan Lane. Mr Gillies and Mrs McCarlie both thanked parents for their feedback, which has been incredibly valuable to allow them to adapt both the drop off process as of Tuesday 19 September, and hopefully the Friday finish time to ten minutes later (date TBC) – this was communicated to all P1 and P2 families by email on 8 September. These amendments have required changes to contacts to ensure staff are in place. Mr Gillies emphasised that this is the way the School wants to work with parents – responding to feedback and working with families to be able to create the best environment they can for the children.

### Finance update



The budget for 2023-24 was agreed, with the caveat that there may be some amendments made in the coming months to better align this to the needs of the school, as detailed in the meeting pack.

Thanks to the phenomenal job done by the fundraising team, and to the parent community in supporting fundraising activities, the Parent Council made a surplus last year and so will be looking at what we can provide 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, there are spaces available for voting Parent Council members this year!

### Accommodation Team Update

The big areas of focus for the accommodation team over the coming year will be:

- Toilets
- Playground

We will be asking the parent community for help in both of these areas in order to enable us to make significant changes to these key aspects of the School – if you'd like to get involved then do let us know!

The accommodation group are also keen to support Mr Gillies as he works with the Council to ensure that South Morningside is ready for P1 and P2 pupils when they return from Canaan Lane – for which we don't have a date yet. Both of the two issues above will also affect how welcoming the School is for these younger children.

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

There are several planned fundraising activities coming up this term!

- **SMPC Parent Quiz, on Thursday 28 September**, at the Merlin promises to be a lot of fun, with a raffle and silent auction too. Tickets available on Classlist, and you can buy raffle tickets even if you are not attending! The fundraising group would be very grateful if you have anything you would like to donate to the raffle or auction, and can offer great recognition for any local businesses happy to donate prizes.



- **Hallowe'en Discos** are returning on **Thursday 26 October**, this time in Comiston Road and with greater capacity for each session. Tickets still available via Classlist but nearly sold out!
- Save the Date for **Saturday 2 December**, as the **Winter Fair** will be at Comiston Road, and may even be outside this year!

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 who support by attending. If you're able to help at all, including with raffle and auction prizes, please get in touch with Fundraising via Classlist or by email.

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

### Clubs

Firstly, an enormous thank you to all the new club convenors who have started this year – thanks to you, all our clubs are still running for 23-24! All clubs have started back with things in good order, and the treasurer has updated processes to make it easier to keep track of fees paid into clubs.

There is room to accommodate more clubs, and if anyone has an idea for a club they would like to set up then do get in touch! This could be a club led by a parent, or with a tutor who comes to deliver the activity.

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

### Transport Team update



Despite the best efforts of the Transport Team things are moving slowly. They have been informed that it likely be at least two years until a School Streets Scheme can be advanced on Canaan Lane due to legal hurdles with the ETRO process. The Transport team are continuing to ask the Council to return the road layout to the previous setup to stop people driving the wrong way along the street.

The big news is that the consultation on the Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route is now open. This is an important route to school for many children at SMPS and Canaan Lane PS and beyond, as well as commuting parents. Our counterparts at Gillespies have written an excellent summary at:

<https://blackfordsaferoutes.co.uk/braid-estate-and-whitehouse-loan/>

We would encourage everyone to read this before submitting their responses as this is a very helpful overview.

One key thing that the Council have confirmed is that **responses from children are perfectly valid** – and we know many of them have strong opinions about ensuring they have safe routes to get to school too! – so please do feel free to encourage your children to have their say as well as you doing so.

You can complete the consultation online at

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/greenbank-to-meadows/>

Paper copies are available at <https://blackfordsaferoutes.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/travelling-safely-greenbank-to-meadows-engagement-questionnaire-print-copy.pdf> and can be handed into Morningside Library.

We recognise that this is a contentious scheme but please do take into consideration our children's safety when walking and wheeling to school when filling out the survey.

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

### Communications Team

The new WhatsApp groups for the years have all been set up, and you may also have noticed that there is now a WhatsApp community for South Morningside!

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 **online** on **Monday 6 November 2023**.

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](mailto: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)