

# Meeting Minutes

## South Morningside Parent Council Meeting

Monday 4 March 2024 on Microsoft Teams

### Attendees

#### Parent Council Members

Ange Robinson	Louisa Dall
Jack Bruck	Bobby Pathak
Thom Kenrick	Andrew Leiper
Dan Farthing	Helena Castro
Sarah Whitty	Ellie Maizels
Elisabeth Quinn	Lizzi Kenrick
Neale Dutton	
Grant Gillies*	Elaine Jones*
Maureen Murray*	Pam Ferguson*

*The SMPS Parent Council is made up of the above parent voting members in attendance (with one apology for today's meeting - see below- and four who did not attend) plus four non-voting staff members\*.*

#### Councillors

Cllr Daniel D Johnson	
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#### Parents/Carers, Teachers & Guests attendees

Vivien Beyer	Abigail Cabrelli
Neale Dutton	Marc Vendrell
Eva Fraser	Kate Liversidge
Hannah Law	F Ford
Joana	

### Welcome, attendees and apologies - Louisa Dall (Co-chair)

- Louisa Dall introduced the meeting and read out the apologies: Clare Forsman.

### Review/approval of previous meeting notes - Sarah Whitty (Secretary)

- The meeting minutes from January 22nd were approved.

### Chairs update - Ange Robinson (Co-chair)

- Leaf and Bean pop-up:** We have been speaking to Jo and Daniel at Leaf and Bean café about the prospect of setting up a pop-up from the janitor's house to provide coffees etc on a Friday at the school. This is an opportunity to further develop the centre of community around the school (e.g. it will keep people chatting rather than rushing off with children). This is in the early stages - they are going off to do a bit of work (e.g. they will need environmental health approval) and will be likely to run a

trial to see that it works for them and the school. Will keep everyone updated. We are quite excited and it could be really positive.

- **SCIO proposition:** We've had a few more discussions since our last meeting. We won't take anything forward until we have a new chair or chairs proposed (note: Louisa and Ange only have two more meetings to go). Once we do, it would be really good to take this forward particularly when we are talking about all the planning around the playground and accessing funds. We talked previously about having the SCIO separate from the Parent Council for the funding. Someone has since advised that this may just create double the amount of work. All of this can be taken forward once we have an idea of new chairs.

## Clubs update - Louisa Dall (Co-chair)

- **Duke of Edinburgh:** We've been asked by Tony Segal/the Wider Schools Team to sponsor/support a former pupil who is doing the Duke of Edinburgh Award and is looking to do some volunteering with the clubs. This is not something we've done previously. We are proposing we do a trial run (e.g. gymnastics) and see if it is a success. Ange suggested Louisa could speak to Lucy Reddish as she is involved in achievement with secondary schools.

## Headteacher's update - Grant Gillies (Headteacher)

- **Spending:** Grant highlighted that the school has spent about £90,000 in total - this includes IT hardware, refurb, plants, etc. This was achieved by saving money from various budgets. Grant anticipates that next year the budget will be tight so they have bought 28 laptops for all staff so that every member of staff got a new one and a docking station - these complement the smart boards. Every PSA will get the older (yet still in good condition) laptops.
- The next big IT project that Grant wants to look at are iPads for P5s, but that's a bigger project and quite a lot of money.
- In terms of budget across the school site, the school is permitted to carry forward 1.5% of the school budget. So, Grant has saved as much as he can to carry forward to the next year. Going forward the school is in really good shape.
- **Staff updates:** Peter Kiln (P7) is moving on to a job at Buckstone Primary School and Rhona Beattie is coming back early from her year around the world. Julia Guyan will be going on maternity leave a couple of weeks before Easter and has been moved out of her P2 post/job share. Three probationers (newly qualified teachers) are able to go full time in class after Easter which frees up other staff time.
- **Summer fair:** Grant had a question about the summer fair: We've identified the date, however if there anything we should talk about now?
- **Parent volunteers:** Grant noted that they had received lots of offers to help, including Michelle McCloud/Jordan helping provide new footballs (and possibly nets). Elisabeth Quinn has been great with the Granny and Grandads' Gardening. And Vivien with trimming all the trees, as well as getting four tons of topsoil. Grant was very grateful. Elaine will ask for help for outdoor learning as often the school is short on volunteers on this. Louisa asked if we could help put out a call for volunteers and Grant agreed that they could create a timetable of opportunities.
- **Building work:** Grant is optimistic the work to the toilets will be completed. He clarified that the Council had suggested there would be up to £250K to complete the

toilets and the work to get the classrooms ready for the younger children (outdoor access and free flow between classes). The work will impact when children can move up from Canaan Lane.

**Action: Louisa and Ange suggested the PC write to the Council to understand timescales and a breakdown of the anticipated work.**

- **After School Club:** Question raised by Neale Dutton in regards to the P1 after school club. There have been mixed messages from them and the school. Does Grant have an alignment with the ASC? Grant noted that there had been a lot of questions about this at the P1 and P2 open morning. The position was clear that staffing will be adjusted accordingly depending on numbers at the site and there is likely to be a need to extend provision to Greenbank anyway in the future. Grant also noted that he was meeting with Spring Oscars and would ensure messages were clear and consistent.

## School Bids - Grant Gillies (Headteacher)

- Grant had a really good conversation with Jack Bruck and the longevity of PC funding. There were four bids that the school was looking for PC funding: netball, football, strings & yoga. Grant spoke to each.
  - **Netball:**
    - The school is seeking funding to have some generic netball kit that kids who are chosen each week can wear at competitions. They went to one match recently where the opposing team had a uniform and ours did not. It would be lovely to have the synergy here of everyone wearing the same kit.
    - There was some discussion / clarification from the Parent Council about whether this would be something that parents should pay for or the Parent Council. Grant noted that it is free netball after school run by Beth Arbuckle and that the current kit is 12 years old and owned by the school. It was also noted that anything to promote sport to girls was helpful
    - A quorum of voting members was established and people voted yes or no by raising hands on the Microsoft Teams chat
    - **Outcome:** yes - funding approved.
  - **Football:**
    - **Question from Ange Robinson:** Is Harris' dad supplying football nets, or are we buying them and he's putting them up? Could it be on hold for now as we find out?
    - The PC agreed to put the football approval on hold until more information is sought.
  - **Strings:**
    - Strings are looking for new bows, spare strings, one 1/3 viola and one full size violin.
    - There was some discussion on the strings request. Andrew suggested that there will be a number of families that have string instruments that they could donate. There was also a discussion about whether this is something the PC normally funds. Louisa noted the cost was £730. Elaine explained that the school has always paid for a number of

instruments, so that children can trial these in P4 and they only need to be bought once the children are committed to continuing. It was agreed that the PC would vote, but that donations would also be sought.

- PC voting members voted yes or no by raising hands on the Microsoft Teams chat.
- **Outcome:** yes - funding approved.

**Action: request for donation of violas and violins to be put out on Classlist and WhatsApp**

- **Yoga:**
  - We discussed the request for 35 new yoga mats at a cost of £350 and storage of £150. These would be used in the gym hall or moveable as required. Having yoga mats makes it much more convivial in mindfulness.
  - PC voting members voted yes or no by raising hands on the Microsoft Teams chat.
  - **Outcome:** yes - funding approved.

## Playground and accommodation update - Andrew Leiper

The playground group has met twice since the last PC meeting. There has been some exciting progress - trim trail, climbing wall, game shed. There are two main focuses in the group: botanical and active. Andrew noted that the group were also working with teachers who were consulting the children.

- **Gardening & possible allotment:**
  - The playground group had a really interesting presentation by Vivien Beyer. He's staked out some trees with willows, working on info packs on how to develop the gardening from seeds to harvest and more.
  - He has secured the possibility of allotment for the school gardening club in Sighthill. There was a discussion about whether we could ask for a closer plot at Midmar which would make it sustainable (although the long waiting list was mentioned)
  - Elisabeth Quinn is looking at other areas - for example, how we repurpose apple trees & create quiet spaces.
- **Dining hall:**
  - Andrew noted that there was a keen parent group assembled, but that progress had been a bit slow (understandably given the playground had been taking time).

## Subgroups updates

### Transport - Thom Kenrick

- Thom noted there was no massive significant update but there were a few points to note:
  - The main works on Comiston road should come to an end in the next ten days. It definitely took longer than four weeks.
  - Next up will be the Braidburn Terrace/Hermitage junction. We will need to wait and see if this is for local access only.

- The consultation regarding the quiet route is back. The transport group preferred option is option one, but they recognised there was a variety of views across the parent body. It was also noted that if anyone has a strong view they should let their local councillors know before Thursday's meeting.

### Comms – Ellie Maizels

- Ellie noted that there were no updates, aside from the fact that we sent out a newsletter after the last meeting and will do so again after this meeting.
- There was a discussion about the inspection report where it noted whether people knew how to access information about the parent council. Ellie noted that Shelagh and her had a discussion with the aim of a recruitment drive of P1 parents at the start of term. Everyone agreed this was a good idea. There was also a discussion about people normally being asked by someone they knew to get involved. Ellie suggested that people could be encouraged to bring a friend to meetings. Grant suggested we could have some kind of children's performance before the AGM which might drive traffic.

### Fundraising - Elisabeth Quinn

- **Summer Fair:** Elizabeth noted the Summer Fair is coming up on 8th June and everyone's support is appreciated. Also that they are open to any new ideas.
- **Granny and Grandads Gardening:** Looking for compost for the big planter. Any donations would be great.

### Finance - Jack Bruck

- No update.

### AOB

- Kate Liversidge asked if there was a plan in place for new Chairs when Louisa and Ange step down. Ange noted that they are actively speaking with people and that they were happy to speak to anyone else if they wanted to know any more. Andrew Leiper noted that it was something he was considering and that he'd like someone to co-chair with. This was met with lots of approval and excitement by the group.
- **Playground/compost:**
  - The playground team will need to organise a let for the weekend/Day of Action so Vivien can get his four massive bags of compost in and a time for everyone to get them distributed. In the most recent Playground meeting, Iain had said he could help galvanise people.
  - The next playground meeting is on March 15th in the Janitor's room after drop off.
- **Louisa closed the meeting at 20:18**