

ARROCHAR PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Alison Palmer	Head Teacher	Joan Hodgkiss	Parent Representative
Jane McAloon	P7 Teacher	Andrea Murray	Parent Representative
Tim Kinvig	Chair	Shauna Wright	Parent Representative
Jean Mustarde	Clerk/C.C.	Vacant	Doctor's Surgery

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 13 September 2018 in Arrochar Primary School

Present:

Alison Palmer	Head Teacher	Jean Mustarde	Clerk
Jane McAloon	P7 Teacher	Joan Hodgkiss	Parent Representative
Tim Kinvig	Chair		

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Andrea Murray and Shauna Wright.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3. School Business

a. **Holidays.** Argyll and Bute Council are considering another realignment of school holidays as those currently in use has raised problems across Helensburgh schools with parents who work in West Dunbartonshire or have older children at schools in Dumbarton. It is proposed that dates will be put out for consultation again. The Parent Council is tasked with contacting parents to seek their views. The Chairman will draft a short questionnaire proposing the current dates and those dates aligning with West Dunbartonshire to seek a preference from all parents.

b. **Behaviour Management Policy – Better Behaviour, Better Learning.** The current school policy was slightly out of date and has been updated to reflect the school's values and aims. The policy was reviewed and agreed by the Parent Council. The policy will be given to all staff to continue the consistency in handling any poor behaviour across the school and will be held with the other school policy documents for reference when required. Luckily the school does not suffer from a large amount of behavioural problems. The question of parent buy-in to the policy is covered by the contract parents sign when their child enters P1. If a sanction is required for any poor behaviour, this will be discussed after any occurrence with the parent(s) concerned. It was agreed to add to the sanctions list within the policy to add a note in the pupil's diary of any poor behaviour and to also add that parents will be asked to attend the school to discuss any instance of poor behaviour. A central SEEMIS system across all schools collects and collates all the data on these issues.

c. **Parent Council Parent Leaflet.** This has been discussed previously and Mrs Hodgkiss has completed some preliminary work on the leaflet. She kindly agreed to take this forward

looking also at the Hermitage Primary example and produce a draft for the Parent Council and School to review.

d. **Budget/School Update.** The Parent Council were extremely dismayed to hear how meagre the budget is for the school. The budget allocated for education equipment is only £4,146.00 which means an unbelievable **35p per pupil per day**, equating to £1.73 per pupil per week or £69.10 per pupil per year. This is shocking and put in simple terms means each pupil has the same budget as the price of a packet of crisps! The total the Scottish Government states it gives per pupil uses all available education budget lines including school maintenance, meals, staff wages etc, which completely skew the amount per day to a total that appears much healthier. Both the Head Teacher and the Parent Council expressed their concern over the lack of funding for the school budget and the potential threat of further cuts looming in the future.

With education due to suffer more cuts to its budget across Argyll and Bute, more discussion will be forthcoming on budgets over the next year. Ideas currently being debated include a 4 or 4½ day week which would reduce the transport, catering and wage costs by approximately £1M. This is at odds with new Scottish Government initiatives that plan to have all nurseries open all day for pre-school children and free school lunches for all school children which would increase the pressure on the budget. Hopefully this would be fully funded by the Scottish Government.

The Parent Council discussed the possible impact on the schools swimming and music activities. The school has a ringfenced budget of £896 to cover transport to Helensburgh Pool and the set of 8-week lessons for P5, P6 and P7 children. Music lessons will continue at one session a week paid for by a central council budget and supplemented by funding from parents.

An issue that is facing the school at the moment is the Pupil Equity Funding which covers funding for each pupil. The census for the school is taken at the end of September each year with the payment for this funding being given the following school year. With the prospect of at least three new children joining the school in October having moved to the new houses in Succoth, they will miss this year's census and not be eligible to be accounted for within the funding, yet the pupils will have to be funded from the current school budget. One bonus is these extra children do not put any pressure on class sizes.

Luckily the school has an excellent PTA which continually raise an amazing amount of money to almost match-fund the meagre £4K budget the school receives. Without their fundraising activities the children would not be able to participate in a number of activities such as school trips, the annual pantomime etc or fund improvements to the school such as new equipment in the playground etc. The Parent Council expressed their heartfelt thanks to the PTA for their continual help and commitment to raising an incredible amount of money enabling the children to be involved in a wider range of activities.

As mentioned above, the Scottish Government are looking at making nursery facilities available for the entire school day with our school being included in the trial. This is bringing with it another set of budget and staffing problems which have yet to be resolved. The two current nursery staff fulfil duties within the school with other classes at present once the nursery closes at lunchtime. If the nursery is to be open matching normal school hours, these two staff will be full time, five days a week in the nursery, leaving staffing gaps in the remainder of the classes. If at the end of the trial the project is not successful how it affects those staff in the nursery to return to helping in other classes if subsequent extra staff have been utilised is not clear. It is also not clear yet if extra funding to complete this trial will be given thus potentially putting another burden of cuts onto the school. The Parent Council found this extremely worrying and

would watch further developments on this initiative carefully to ensure the school was not unfairly treated.

4. **Any Other Business**

The Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) has been widely reported in the news over the summer due to the concern from parents across the country to assessments for P1s. The Scottish Government has stated the assessment only takes 20 mins per pupil, which is wide of the mark. For our school the assessments have not produced any surprises. All P1, P4 and P7 pupils will be assessed during the year.

The proposed new walkway from Tarbet Car Park to the back of the school remains under discussion. Cllr Paterson is now liaising directly with the landowner to progress the project.

Argyll and Bute Council will fill in the missing piece of pavement close to the school gates to provide a continuous pavement along the road to the school gates during the October holidays.

The school sign that had been removed from the school gates during the repainting three years ago will be reinstalled at the entrance to the staff car park.

The new Arrochar Minister, Mr Louis Bezuidenhout, will visit the school tomorrow to speak to the P7s, with follow up visits planned. The Minister is keen to be involved in the school and wider community.

The Parent Council agreed to raise the Pupil Equity Funding issue and the concern at the current school budget at the September Community Council to raise the awareness and seek the help of the area Councillors.

5. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next Parent Council meeting will take place, in the school, on Thursday 6 December at 6.30pm.