

East Neighbourhood Group Meeting

Tuesday 25th November 2014

Portobello High School

6:30pm to 8:30pm

Chair: Moyra Wilson, Senior Education Officer

Minutes: Karen Mair, School Support Assistant, Portobello High School

In attendance:

Kevin Brack, DHT Duddingston

Ian Johnston, Parent Council Chair, Duddingston Primary School

David Robertson, Parent Council Rep, Duddingston Primary School

Anna Nieciecka St Ninians RC Primary School

Gordon Kaye, Royal High Primary School Chair

Lindsay Watt, Headteacher Castleview, Castlebrae S1-3

Kirsty McWilliam, Parent Council Chair, St John's RC Primary School

Donald McGregor, Portobello High School

Peigi McArthur, Head Teacher, Portobello High School

Ruth Wood, Parent Council member, Parsons Green Primary School

Apologies: None

Points

Action

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<p>1. Welcome and apologies</p> <p>Moyra Wilson welcomed the group to the meeting. There were no apologies.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Development Plan – documentation is available to all parents Traffic control measures – on this agenda Free school meals – on this agenda School websites – different schools were using different platforms for school websites. Change to Word Press came about as some platforms cannot be maintained or cannot perform as consistently as the council requires. In terms of access for those with visual difficulties, WordPress performs better than others. Duddingston Primary School charitable trusts status - Moyra asked Kevin Brack to outline process for others. Applied for charitable status with the assistance of EVOC (Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council) and got it. Opens doors to funding otherwise closed to schools, can access community grants etc. It is a charitable trust associated with the school; the school itself is not a charity. Requires a board of trustees of between 5-12 members – have to always ensure turnover of parents to keep trustees at this number. Slight concern is that parents may not want to make such a long-term commitment. Office bearers in trust can be school members. Audited by Charities Commission. Kevin offered to share knowledge and experience with others if requested. Moyra asked for volunteers for CCwP (Consultative Committee with Parents) 	<p>CCwP volunteer names to Moyra</p>

3. Director's Report

- Education, Children & Families Committee meeting is on 9th December. All papers will be available online from 2nd December.
- Online school payments. 5 schools piloted the WisePay system although none of those were in this area. The trial seemed to be successful, is easy to use and has many benefits. It is now part of a national procurement process and the rollout will hopefully be Spring 2015. There is no action schools need take. Kirsty McWilliam asked if it was worth holding off on committing to an alternative system and Moyra thought that this would be a good idea.
- Parking/traffic control – on agenda
- 1 plus 2 languages
- Budget process – Monday 1st December – all parent council members are invited to a meeting with the panel to ask questions. Parent council chairs were encouraged to feedback after looking at the budget planner and seeing how they would spend the budget. Very successful – had had 800 hits by the meeting and it is hoped there would be in the region of 1400 hits or more by closure. Large number of hits from under 25s which shows they are interested in council budgets and how they are spent. “Headroom” in the budget ring fenced for schools. This means cutting above the savings required (eg. need to save 20% but attempt to save 30% instead so there is a 10% “headroom”). Ian Johnston commented that this could be dangerous as 30% saving would be expected. Moyra commented that any savings made have to be spent on C&F. Feedback welcome up until 19th December. Important to note that half of the CEC budget is spent on C&F (including Social Work).
- Scottish Learning Festival. Peigi McArthur commented PHS were featured but not recorded on the briefing. “The school that went to war” was very positively received, Tweeted about a lot and gathered a lot of feedback from across the country.
- The Drop-In. Typo noted: age range should read “0-18”. The service was launched on 18th October is on every Saturday and we are lucky to have 3 sessions in close proximity – Jack Kane, Northfield and Willowbrae.
- Early Years. Moyra commented that the Scottish Government are putting a lot on money into early years.
- Improving school websites. There is training for school staff responsible for school websites. The officer in charge is now also willing to talk to parents but only for advice. Moyra requested e-mail addresses of anybody interested to pass on to officer in charge. Training is only for staff members. Several schools have had to change their platforms as were having problems with accessibility and compatibility – have changed to WordPress.
- Lindsay Watt reported on the success of the Achievement Awards
- Moyra highlighted the future meeting dates of the CCwP:
Thursday 4th December
Thursday 26th February 2015
Thursday 14th May 2015

Anybody interested to send e-mail address to MW

4. Free School Meals P1-P3

The Scottish Government has introduced free school meals for all P1 – P3s and it will be implemented on 6th January. Currently a logistical exercise - finding out how all schools will manage this. Changes have been made in certain schools (eg., to accommodation). 4 school still require a “build” to cope with the change and this will be done when they have the funds from the Scottish Government. The company that was awarded the contract for new tables etc will have everything in place for January. Schools were asked how they want to take meals forward eg. pre-ordering. This was a school decision, not centrally from council. It is up to each school if they go forward with and

<p>how they manage pre-ordering. Kirsty McWilliam commented that pre-ordering had been implemented at St Johns and noted an example of a child forgetting to hand over their money on the specified day and so unable to get hot meals the following week. Moyra commented that this again was up to individual schools on how they handle similar situations.</p> <p>Moyra commented there has traditionally not been hot meals available on Fridays. Where one has been available, this will not be taken away but the norm will be to provide packed lunches on Fridays and this applies council-wide. Discussion regarding expected benefits of free schools meals – healthy children, getting children into good eating habits, allow them to enjoy a variety of foods of good nutritional value etc. Nutritionally designed lunches. Ruth Wood asked if it was possible for parents to input into schools meals. Moyra responded that Peter Watten will come along to Feb CCwP meeting to look into issues such as these/answer parents questions. More information is expected in this area as there has been a change of management. Gordon Kaye expressed concern that his home-made packed lunches for his children were more nutritionally valuable than the meals on offer at school. Other concerns expressed: how are meals made, what is in each meal (ie a pizza), is nutritional balance across the whole menu of per meal? Moyra suggested collating ideas/feedback/comments from each individual school for next meeting</p>	<p>All parent council members to collate comments for next meeting</p>
<p>5. Better Relationships, Better Behaviour, Better Learning</p> <p>This is a Scottish/Edinburgh strategy and draft was available last September. The feed back is in and has now been sent out to parents. Look at it in parent councils and feedback to MW at 14 Dec meeting. ALL TO ACTION. Founded on the fact that good relationships = good behaviour and better learning. Restorative approach to learning - a whole new role at Education Scotland.</p>	
<p>6. Severe Weather</p> <p>Resilience officer asked for this to be put on the agenda. Since terrible weather of December 2010, contingencies have been in place and some schools have been doing their own scenario planning. The council has made a commitment to keep schools open as much as possible in severe weather conditions. Every teacher in the city has nominated their local 'snow school' - the school they will go to when the weather is too severe to travel to their usual place of work. Every headteacher has a list of who they can expect to come in as their 'snow school'. It is amazing what can be achieved when everybody joins in and aims to keep all schools open if possible. In the case of the winter vomiting bug, the aim is also to keep schools open. Public health would monitor the situation on a daily basis and send in deep cleaners. If numbers of those affected - pupils and staff - get too high, public health Amy decide to close the school. Advice is as always, do not return to school/work until 48 hours after last symptoms.</p>	
<p>7. Placements</p> <p>Procedures are in place for P1 & S1 placements and are just the same as before. Parents can sign up to the one citizen account if they want. Baptism certificates are required for placement in catholic schools</p>	
<p>8. Traffic Control Measures</p> <p>CCwP - have had 2 meetings about parking and traffic control measures. Kirsty McWilliam outlined the situation at St Johns - what they do/can do (standing with signs, handing out lists of dos & don't see, approaching parents, etc.) and what affect their measures have had. Gavin Brown wants to push through legislation allowing roving CCTV cameras which would spend 1 week at each school. This went to committee Councillor Godsik agreed to look into the use of CCTV cameras. In Oct 2014, the transport committee agreed to suspend traffic from outside certain schools during school start/end/ lunch times. This will be introduced in phases: 1st phase - Aug 2015 -</p>	

Duddingston, Abbeyhill, Colinton, Sciennes, Gracemount, St Johns. 2nd phase - Dec 2015 - Towerbank, St Peters, Clermiston, Bonaly, Buckstone. This started in East Lothian with 3 schools in Haddington - Knox Academy, it's infant & junior schools. This was monitored, deemed successful and decided to pilot in Edinburgh primary schools. The pilot will be evaluated in terms of safety, accidents, tickets issued, feedback from locals. Lindsay Watt commented that their school used junior road safety officers - parents tend to take notice if reminded of their actions by children. Anna asked what about disabled children getting access to schools if the roads are shut off to traffic? Kirsty McWilliam commented that you can buy a disabled parking space but you have to ensure you get the right kind - enforceable by a council traffic warden. Moyra commented that the safety of all children is taken into account and schools are bound by legislation, offering accessibility to all including those with a disability (requiring to be driven directly to school entrance). Gordon Kaye pointed out that these measures may just move the problem geographically elsewhere/further way and that parents who park unsafely may still continue to do so, just somewhere else. Moyra commented that phases 1 & 2 are pilots and we'll have to wait to see what happens.

9. AOCB

St Johns new build
 Kirsty McWilliam reported on the St Johns building issue. Consultation is now closed. Of the 3 options (complete rebuild on PHS site, refurbishment, and rebuild on current site), the 1st was selected. There will be no parking or drop-off zones with new build.

PHS new build
 Peigi McArthur reported that PHS new build has started on Milton Road/Park Avenue site

Supply Teachers
 Gordon Kaye brought up issue with supply teachers. Lots of teachers on short/long term sickness leave. Supply situation appears bad. Brought up with council whose general response was "we know it's bad; it's not just you". Lindsay Watt commented on the availability of teachers - numbers were wrong. There is a lack of supply teachers across Scotland. They're managed by Adecco who would send them out if they had them. It very much depends on the school - there are some areas supply teachers don't want to work in - some say yes but then call in sick. However, situation has changed. Supply teachers used to be able to pick and choose but now they have to go when they're called. The supply teachers situation is in crisis nationwide. Moyra: Karen Prophet is looking into the situation with Adecco & head teachers. It is a difficult situation and they are constantly recruiting. Some supply teachers have been removed from supply list because of behaviour such as mentioned above. There are lots of young teachers looking for work. The council interview for supply teachers & Adecco manage them. There is simply not the volume of appointments that there used to be which relates to permanent positions too. Kirsty McWilliam asked why is there not recruitment on a termly basis? LW responded that the situation is complex and that's maybe not the best way of doing it when temporary contracts only have to give 1 week notice. Peigi McArthur commented that the situation was not quite so bad at secondary level. In England, teachers can only leave at 2 points in an academic year and this may be worth exploring with the council. Lindsay Watt commented that

<p>recruitments across the city then allocated to particular schools didn't work either; 1 size doesn't fit all. Head teachers need to interview/appoint their own staff for their own particular schools needs. Moyra added that the council are trying to recruit permanent supply teachers - downsides are cost, tied up in 1 school covering long term sick etc. The Scottish government has reduced the pay for supply teachers. Number of reasons for situation but council is actively recruiting - there is a permanent advert out for supply teachers. However, in C&F in general, there is not a high level of absence.</p> <p>CCwP Consultative Committee with Parent, 6:30 - 8:30pm next Thurs, 4th December at the European Rooms in the City Chambers. MW asked for volunteer - Duncan Robertson - and noted that other neighbourhood groups do it on a rota and suggested East Neighbourhood might like to do the same</p>	
<p>Next meeting: Wednesday 11 February 2015</p>	