**Parent****Council**

**Thursday 7th May 2015**

**7 pm, School Staff Room**

**Attendees:** Alec Reid (AR), Margaret Ferguson (MF), Nicola Cameron (NC), Carrie Heddle (CH), Alison Green (AG), Anna Conniff (AC)

**Apologies:** Robin Critchard, Annmarie Graham, Suzanne Rankin, Lesley Robertson, Heather Baxter

**Minutes and action points from last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

AR reported that he had emailed Aberdeenshire Council on behalf of the Parent Council expressing concerns regarding the new staff recruitment procedures, and had also approached Councillor Alison Evison, who had communicated that centralisation of resources is believed to be best way forward. AR asked whether MF had been contacted by Alison but MF said that she had not.

MF clarified that her major concern is the lack of involvement of head teachers in the recruitment process, although one positive is that Aberdeenshire Council have taken on board there needing to be a bit more information about a job’s location – now can at least find out if a job is in Portlethen.

CH asked whether there a forum where we can communicate with other PCs? If a group of PCs lobby together we might be in a stronger position to influence the council?

AR recommended a two-pronged approach – as a parent council and individuals. Alison Evison says they’re doing everything they can. Aberdeenshire needs incentives to pull people to this area. Affordable housing is a problem.

**Head Teacher’s report**

Most recent achievements are listed in the April newsletter.

* AR represented the Parent Council at the recent rezoning discussion, which was reported back as a really good discussion.
* As of this year there will not be a specific one week Health Week, rather a range of activities and events spread throughout the year e.g.
* Swimming lessons for P6s and P7s for 6 weeks this term
* Cycling proficiency
* Pink performance – about inclusion and bullying
* Livewire – internet safety for P4s and 5s coming up
* Absafe – PSA funded this for P6s and 7s
* Ecoscience coming up (P2s and 3s), first aid coming up
* Making a difference – Portlethen Community Learning and Development – subtle comments that go in playgrounds and afterschool clubs – how to build up resilience and self-esteem. Only part of it focuses on cyber bullying.
* A review of the playground zones has been conducted with classes. Feedback included that the rota for the agility trail is not needed anymore, and that the other zones are working well (with addition of signs to remind pupils about the Quiet Zone). Playground tidy up rota is going down well – everyone taking a part and keeping things tidy.
* Changes to lunch times have gone smoothly.
* The nursery soft play area tiles need to be replaced. Budget code has appeared – positive sign. Ideal if could be done in summer holiday. Ian Thomson is the link.
* Information on a consultation on safer routes to school on May 11th was emailed out to parents. P6 and 7 pupils will be attending the consultation – MF is liaising with Joanna Stewart re what format that will take.
* Staffing – Mrs Jackson retiring at the end of this year. SFL cluster vacancy. Contribution call will be made.
* Classes next session – plan is to go up to 12 classes (the school has room for 13 classes). There are currently 49 P1s due to join in August, although this figure is changing on a daily basis. Many are out of zone. 40 P7s will leave in July.

**Future of the Parent Council**

Acknowledging that because “we are blessed as parents here”(AR) enticing parents to join the Parent Council is difficult, the PC again discussed whether we should consider merging with the PSA.

MF asked whether AR had followed up on exploring how Friends of Newtonhill works, as a model of a combined Parent Council and PSA. It was agreed that MF would contact Lesley Tullock to see if some members of the Parent Council (AR, AC, CH) could attend the next meeting, possibly with someone from PSA too, to see how it work.

**Action:** MF to contact Lesley Tullock to see if members of the Parent Council can attend the next Friends of Newtonhill meeting.

Issues discussed included length of agenda if the groups merged, acknowledging that a longer agenda might in fact make us snappier. MF suggested that breakaway groups may be possible where people just attended for the start or end of meetings.

NC said she loved the tour of the school when she joined the Parent Council and had been stunned to hear about the lack of funding to the school. If all P1 parents could have that tour it might help recruit new members?

NC also felt that there should be a representative from the Parent Council at the P1 information evening.

AC suggested that perhaps the newsletter could refer to some of the problems that the Parent Council discusses so that problems become more apparent to the wider parent body.

**Funding requests**

* Sports day medals/pupil council medals will be funded by the Parent Council.
* There is £190 due to pay for the playground signs

**Action:** CH to transfer £190 to school

**Portlethen CSN update**

* AR reported that the opening of Hillside School has been delayed until October 2016. The transition period between August 2016 and then is the concern.

MF said the building won’t be ready but the school will be established – teachers and classes will be established. The identity of school will be put in place.

AR said that Maria Walker has been invited to the Community Council meeting on 26th May. A facebook campagn has resulted in 230 emails being sent asking for details what will happen during the first term of 2016, and it is hoped answers will be provided at that meeting.

**Action:** Parent Council members to attend meeting, if possible

* AR asked MF if there had been any word on free transport to Fishermoss from Hillside. MF said she had received no information on this.
* Banchory Devenick roll is increasing. They will have 3 teachers after the summer.

**School improvement plans**

* Proposed development of multi-use all weather zone where current football goals are.

**Action:** AR to get costs and funding applications.

* Internal walls/partitions are still on the school wishlist but there has been no progress on this front.
* Kitchen space in staff room is woefully inadequate.

**Action:** AC to draft letter on behalf of Parent Council to further these issues with Aberdeenshire Council.

**AOB**

* There will be a meeting of all community councils and community groups with Aberdeenshire Chief Executive Jim Savege on 21st May to see what he has to say on education, funding etc.
* Terry at Portlethen Golf Club runs kids golf club and provided positive feedback re Fishermoss pupils.
* Parking is a particular problem at the moment with construction of the new garden at the Bourtree Centre and extended hours for pre-school children.
* There will be a consultation at the bowling club over constructing bollards to prevent cars driving up the footpath.

**Date of next meeting**

Parent Council AGM 10th September, 7pm