

MINUTES

Tower bank Parent Group

Thursday 12th September 2019

In attendance

Joanne Macaulay (Chair), Polly Clement (vice Chair) Lucy Anderson (Secretary), Alasdair Friend (Head Teacher), Sue Drury, Jenny Martin Nye, Steph Dodds, Morven Wraight, Onyeme Ibe, Sarah Thomas, Jenny Capon, Bridget Campbell, Deirdre Macleod, Sinead Fitzpatrick, Kyrsta MacDonald Scott, Rebecca Armstrong, Joanna Reid, Nick Williams

Others attended but did not sign in.

The DHTs Mrs Collier, Mr Rand and Mrs Chad also attended

Welcome and Chairs report

Joanne thanked everyone for their help and support this year.

She talked about what we have funded: the new library, theatre trip, Christmas show, Book Festival trip, Scottish Opera experience, Strips for various sports teams, ice cream for all children on sports day, the band for the all school ceilidh, secured funding for sensory equipment in the playground

We've been trying to improve comms and break down barriers.

Alison Payne took on the role of Communications Officer and Polly has done a great job of revamping the TPG website and we have also tried to be more visible in the playground.

LIBRARY – major achievement, thanks to the library team

SPORTS TEAMS – we now have football for P6 and 7 and hopefully P5 soon. We also helped equip the cricket team which is run through Active Schools

FUNDRAISING – Carah took on the role of fundraising lead

Other fund-raising routes: Justgiving, school lottery, easygiving system

We are not just about funding but are the voice of parents.

Going forward – mixing classes will happen more often – bit of discussion around this. Also IT facilities will be an important area of increase/improvement

The 3 office bearers were then nominated to say in post but new ones will be needed in a year when they all stand down

Head teacher's Report

Last Friday we started P7 sailing, rowing, kayaking, these are the community things we should try, and could we build this into the curriculum?

Mr Friend then presented a series of slides.

They showed:

1) The achievements of the P7s who left in the summer.

Teachers prediction for average band or above:

Maths 87%

Reading 93.5%

Writing 89.1%

Actual results from SNSAs P7 2019:

Maths Band 8-11 95%

Reading Band 8-11 93%

Writing Band 8-11 92%

Actual Results from Standardised Testing 2019:

P7 Maths testing – percentages in average band or above – 85%

P7 Reading NGRT – percentage SS in average band or above – 92.5%

Percentage at band 11 or above in P7 in summer 2019:

Maths 29%

Reading 42%

Writing 14%

2) Class re-organisation 2019/20

Mr Friend reflected on the changes to classes for the academic year starting August 2019 which affected 360 children. He explained because of the pressures on

numbers there had to be a P1/2 composite and P6/7 composite. Mr Friend held 35 meetings with parents who were concerned about this. Mr Friend explained the school had prepared activities such as a drama workshop to help the new classes bond. There were worries about the changes but Mr Friend said that there has been positive feedback since the start of term with the following comments from parents and carers:

...”.....X is loving the teacher and it looks like the class has been a really good thing for

...”..... Y has been coming home talking about school and it looks like is enjoying school throughout the day.”

“...Pleasantly happy, surprised and proud of Z

“B has said that it is good that is branching out and mixing with others”

“C feels that this class will be a good thing”

Class organisation 2020/21

Given the current role numbers it is likely that some classes will be affected by a reorganisation next year.

Current numbers:

P1 84 max 25

P2 98 max 30

P3 78 max 30

P4 84 max 33

P5 97 max 33

P6 99 max 33

P7 76

Predicted class organisation for 2020/21 based on current role:

P7 a b c

P6 a b c

P5 a b c

P4 a b comp?

P3 a b c comp?

P2 a b c

P1 ?

The class organisation for the school is based on the number of teachers allocated by the council. This dictates the number of classes per year.

A question asked about catchment areas. AF said school has a cap and have to ensure we don't go above.

AF reflected that he has to follow council policy and he has reflected on how he communicated the decisions around composite classes. He understands there are concerns but some parents said they don't see composite classes/change as a negative. One parent said her child with ADHD find change difficult.

3) Improvement plan

Attainment in literacy and numeracy is a priority.

Writer in residence Mike Nicholson is in place.

Reporting – parents would hear soon about the new system for learning about their children's progress.

ICT development – 33 laptops are soon to be ordered.

Reading books and spelling – the school will be looking at the quality of reading books and spelling will now be completed in school time not as homework.

4) Closing the Gap

Pupil Equity Fund – Towerbank continues to get some money which will be used to create a Nurture Class with some still going towards attainment in maths.

5) Health and Wellbeing

There is a new behaviour plan and the house system has started with pupils earning tokens for their house as a reward for good behaviour.

Plans are underway for a Nurture Class. Mrs Samson is leading this activity. Mr Friend hopes that the Nurture Class will be used to ease transition into school soon.

6) Other matters

Global citizenship – Mr Friend talked about the schools partnership with Tanzania.

Bikeability – p3 are now completing this. Parents have been trained up to lead the course.

Mr Friend said the School Travel Plan needs to be updated and he will be looking for parents to help with this in the future.

RSHP Relationships, Sexual health, Parenthood – new curriculum comes into force this year.

School is hoping to introduce Spanish in the near future.

Discussion afterwards - one person asked what class is getting Spanish? Need to get at timetable sorted as we will be having a new Spanish teacher soon

Treasurer's Update (Polly Clement on behalf of Graham Elliot, Treasurer)

Overall Summary

The TPG had another good year financially with spend slightly less than planned and fundraising slightly higher than planned.

This year: opening balance of **£30,945:63**.
 income, prior to expenditure, **£32,192:39**.
 total expenditure **£34028.18**.
 closing balance was **£29,108:84**.

The account balance is down by **£1835.79** for the year. This was in line with plan and largely due to expected spend in the playspace area.

These total amounts are arranged in a group of project funds including the general fund, playspace fund, library fund, uniforms and netball.

General Fund

The general fund is the money in the account that has not been allocated to a specific project area. This is where all our fundraising money is initially placed. These funds were used to support the school and pupils in a variety of ways including subsidising school trips (Lyceum, book festival) and activities (ceilidh band, Scottish Opera), sports strips, and to cover the costs of running fundraising events such as floats, hall hire etc.

This year: opening balance of **£3,669:08**
 income, prior to expenditure of, **£18,916:84***
 expenditure of **£9401:38**
 end of year balance of **£13.184:56**.

*£16547.94 fundraising income pre expenses + £2368.90 samba band re-allocation

Playspace Fund

Work completed included the sensory garden, painting of the playpod and mural, the purchase of “blue stuff” and sports lines on the playground. Income raised via You Decide vote.

This year: opening balance **£17,668:10**
 income of **£2,000** (You Decide)
 expenditure of **£11,073:30**
 end of year balance of **£8594:80**

Uniforms

Uniform orders have been popular. Please bear in mind that orders and invoices tend to overlap year-to-year.

This year: opening balance **£739:55**
 income of **£7483.05**
 expenditure of **£6331.90**
 end of year balance of **£1,890:70**

Library

The library fund has been used this year to buy books and soft furnishings.

This year: opening balance **£5,000:00**
 income of **£2,098:00** (You Decide) and spent
 expenditure of **£2,124:15**
 end of year balance of **£4973:85**.

We are waiting a further book and soft furnishing invoices from the school which will mean that the library pot will be ready for its next agreed allocation from the general fund.

Netball

The Netball team has been running for a year now. Even after the initial expense of setting the team up – posts and pitch markings to name two, the netball team account has a positive balance of **£465:93**.

Audit

Thanks to Trudy McPherson for auditing the accounts. This is something that is completed every year to ensure transparency.

Summary

This has been another incredibly successful year.

Graham has advised us that this will be his final year as treasurer for the TPG. We'd like to identify a new treasurer before Xmas which would allow Graham to handover and be around to complete the end of year audit if required. Please get in touch if you have an interest.

The treasurers full financial report can be found on the TPG website here:

<https://towerbankparentgroup.wordpress.com/about-us/minutes/>

The summary sheet below was available at the meeting and details the figures discussed:

Towerbank Parent Group Income and Expenditure Summary School Year: August 2018 - Aug 2019					
Opening Balance on 17/08/2018				£30,945.63	
	Income (£) (Aug 18- Jul 19)	Expenditure (£) (Aug 18- Jul 19)	Profit (£) (Aug 18- Jul 19)	Balance C/F (Aug 17- Jul 18)	EOY Balance
General Fundraising	£18,916.84	£9,401.36	£9,515.48	£3,669.08	£13,184.56
Playspace	£2,000.00	£11,073.30	-£9,073.30	£17,668.10	£8,594.80
Uniforms	£7,483.05	£6,331.90	£1,151.15	£739.55	£1,890.70
Library	£2,098.00	£2,124.15	-£26.15	£5,000.00	£4,973.85
Samba Band	£0.00	£3,868.90	-£3,868.90	£3,868.90	£0.00
Netball	£1,694.50	£1,228.57	£465.93	£0.00	£465.93
Total Income	£32,192.39				
Total Expenditure		£34,028.18			
Total Annual Profit			-£1,835.79		
Balance C/F Aug 17- Aug 18				£30,945.63	
End of year balance					£29,109.84

Fundraising update (Carah Johnson)

Towerbank Parent Group Fundraising Update
AGM 12 September 2019

2018/19 Fundraising

2019/20 Fundraising Target

Event	Profit
Halloween Discos	£1,374.10
Raffle	£1,565.66
Christmas Fair	£2,307.56
Calendar	£2,271.50
Spring Discos	£789.06
Bake Sales	£1,902.80
Lottery	£1,414.30
Easy Fundraising	£158.07
Bellfield Ceilidh	£830.00
Easy2Name	£16.11
Total	£13,650.07

School Funding Request	Amount	Comments
Ongoing library	£1,000	
Book Festival (P3 and P7) and author visits (P1-P2)	£2,000	£3.50 subsidy per child
Lyceum trip (P3-P7) and other theatre (P1-P2)	£4,000	£7 subsidy per child
Scottish Opera Workshop (P5)	£1,000	Whole cost
Ceilidh Band	£400	Whole cost for band at whole school ceilidh
Ad hoc	£1,500	
Total	£9,900	

2019/20 Fundraising Plans

Welcome new families, make fundraising activity inclusive and encourage the school community to get involved where able and willing.

The September Parent Group Monthly Update will focus on fundraising.

Q4 2019 survey of school community to inform fundraising activity and communication.

Continue with established fundraising activity and start family social events (quiz night on 20 September and other ideas being considered including family cinema, bacon roll Friday, ice pole sale).

Fundraising Plan to be created.

Broaden sponsorship to include all events and activities.

Areas being researched by parents:

- online ticketing and payment for events
- charity status for TPG, enabling access to funds, grants and awards
- new event and activity ideas

Library update (Jenny Capon)

Children have started to use and borrow books from the library. Parents are supporting this through weekly sessions.

The library has a weekly Friday Tidy where parents can help with barcoding, cataloguing and shelf tidying.

We received a Bookspeed donation of £1,200 worth of picture, chapter and Scottish books.

Author in residence Mike Nicholson started his residency themed around the sea.

Our current plans include opening the library at lunchtime for older children. The library team are looking for volunteers to help on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

There will be an opportunity to donate books during Book Week Scotland - 18th - 24th November.

Future plans include the acquisition of graphic novels, dyslexia friendly books, and books in other languages. Magazine subscriptions to start from this term e.g. Aquila and The Phoenix.

Food group update (Onyema Ibe on behalf of Andrea Barlow)

The Food focus group reconvened on Thursday 5th September to revive efforts to improve school lunches. Activity this term will focus on reconnecting with the catering team and pursuing a proposal to bring part-cooking on site, meeting with local councillors to make representation about the need for a pilot proposal and with the team at the school to make practical changes in the dining space.

The food group will continue to work with the school, council and parents to improve the dining experience.

Home baking for events. If you wish your home baking to be considered for children with allergies then you need to provide either a complete allergen check list or a full list of ingredients.

IT Group update (Sinead Fitzpatrick)

The IT Group are looking into various methods of funding IT equipment whilst still looking to challenge the constraints of the council terms and conditions.

The group is looking for any support parents can offer.

Netball update (Onyema Ibe)

The Netball sessions continue to thrive and are currently full. Tuesday sessions are delivered to P5 and P6 girls. This year additional places were offered to P5s based on taster sessions. Both year groups will have opportunities to participate in matches this year.

Issues with the gym hall floor have meant that sessions have been delivered at Bellfield.

All expenditure for Netball has been taken from the fees for the sessions.

General update from AF at this point

The problem with the gym floor is humidity so it was condemned. We will be getting a new one in Oct/Nov, possibly in the Autumn break

All windows, lighting and external fencing being replaced.

ASN Report (Alan Crosbie)

ASN reps are Alan & Sheena Crosbie and Julianna Capes Muir (Jules).

There are an increasing number of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools all over Edinburgh now because of the council's policy of the Presumption to mainstream for these children.

A fellow parent at the school has set up a Facebook page to help share information and provide support for families. It's called Towerbank ASN Parent Carer Group. Could this be shared by class reps to reach out to new P1 or newly diagnosed children further up the school.

1/ IT technology - raising funds for additional laptops through current provider to aid those children with specific learning difficulties. It would be good if one of the ASN reps could work with the TPG IT Group.

2/ Nurture room was discussed. The ASN group would be happy to provide input for the school in this area.

Sensory circuits were discussed. Mr Friend indicated that this area was complicated as the OT had said they were not suitable. Large floor stickers had been purchased to help facilitate movement breaks and would be laid as a trial.

Due consideration given to ASN when planning fundraising for new events, trips and even clubs. Small adaptations make a difference to allow ASN children to participate in these.

AOB

The issue of school streets and vehicles using the road at this time was raised. AF stated that he would be reviewing/creating a travel plan part of which would address the concerns raised. It was also discussed that people, including blue badge holders, residents, taxi drivers bringing children to school are entitled to drive during the restricted time and should not feel intimidated whilst doing so.

Aldi stickers? Could we use these? Mr Friend will look into this.

The playground could do with more loose parts. There is a small group of people interested in looking at playspace who are meeting next week. Please get in touch if you are interested.

Is school going to do an outdoor class in November?

Onyema Ibe stepping down as the TPG representative at the Community Council. We are looking for a nominee to take on this role.