



Towerbank Parent Group meeting
31 Jan 2020, 9am

Attendees: Mr Friend, Joanne Macaulay (chair), Polly Clement (vice-chair), Rebecca Armstrong, Corinne Morrison-Gilles, Carla Bichan, Stephanie Dodds, Jenny Jane, Morven Wraight, Clare Polson, Heidi Proven, Ros Hughes, Lesley Laurie, Xana Marwick, Fi Bailey, Jo MacDonald, Jo Wishart, James Lewis, Jo Reid

Minutes: Corinne Morrison-Gilles

Headmasters Update- Alasdair Friend

Review of 2019 / Highlights

Mr Friend provided an update / a run through of key highlights in 2019..

- Sporting Activities. Improved or more popular in 2019: Netball and Cricket.
- School won 1st Lego League regional competition – now in National Final End Feb 2020.
- Won most improved in Ski League at Hillend 2019. 120 children benefited from skiing in 2019
- School Sports Day took place on the Beach
- P5 attended Scottish Opera workshop funded by the group
- Continuing with Rights Respecting Schools
- Nearly 300 children attended an outdoor residential in 2019 with some children being supported to attend.
- New for 2019 : Diversity Day – the parade on the prom; Amazing launch of our new library in partnership with the TPG; Sailing club (considering as part of curriculum from 2021); New behaviour policy launched - we are Ready, Respectful, Safe at Towerbank; House structure introduced with pupils able to earn 'house tokens'

Class Structure and Consultation

- Mr Friend attended a meeting on 30th January as a member of Edinburgh City Council working part on the consultation for class reorganisation and criteria for making up composite classes. Discussion is ongoing but in the recent survey Towerbank top school to respond with over 200 responses – 6% of the total responses. There is likely to be a policy change going forward with wider criteria used. Interestingly consultation with pupil parliament showed a split in views. Those who had not experienced a class reorganisation had friendships as their top criteria. Those that have experienced a reorganisation were positive about it feeling it had actually increased their friendship circle.
- What is pertinent is likely to another reorganisation at Towerbank given current numbers with a P3/4 composite being likely for 2020.

Literacy & Numeracy achievements

Mr Friend provided stats and graphs highlighting literacy and numeracy achievements of last years P4 & P7 groups in terms of demography based on teacher assessment. Towerbank showed good results for numeracy compared to other schools with a similar demographic make up. The Towerbank literacy results were very good especially in last years P4 results.

Involved Inclusion - Fiona Bailey

Fiona spoke on the issue of more involved inclusion for parents in Towerbank and discussion was had including:

- We have started conversations about affinity groups – Fi is looking to lead a focus group for Parent and Carer Accessibility to look at how we make the school more accessible to all parents. It would also explore increasing ways parents and carers could participate in school life — if they wanted to.
- Discussed P1 new parents; Buddy system; Saturday session with current P1 parents; informal; not intimidating; coffee and chat; show how to set up parent pay etc.; newsletter
- Positive this year – soft opening for school fair to make it more inclusive both for children to attend and parents to help in a quieter time.

Fi also spoke about ways she would be interested in working with the school to develop activities for children with additional needs.

- Creative groups with an inclusion focus
- A group for those with ASN but open to all who would benefit
- The school is supportive if we can find space

Cost of a School Day for Parents / Carers – Rebecca Spillane

Rebecca provided an informed presentation regarding 1 in 5 children experiencing poverty and reducing the burden on parents and children and poverty proofing the school and the barriers and negative experiences those that are experiencing poverty can have and the impact on a child's education.

The availability of a £250 best start grant for children starting P1 was highlighted.

School Streets Update – Joanne Macaulay

- Challenges continue re bin lorries ignoring the hours that they are allowed to drive past school. Mr Friend highlighted that a photo with the registration number of the vehicle could be taken and sent to him then the Council have assured disciplinary action will be taken against any driver ignoring the regulations.
- Details of the hours school streets is applicable is on the school website.
- Things do seem to have calmed down a bit.
- Bracket installed by council – re flashing lights however not visible until cars have started to turn. Signage and more signs in particular was discussed. The problems seems to have moved or is also prevalent in terms of cars driving at speed around the Kilns area.

Fundraising Update – Polly Clement

- A memorial for Sol Barrie has been agreed and will take the form of outdoor musical instruments (Sol loved music) approx. overall cost as a minimum is £4.5 k – school have already donated 2k. It was agreed that the TPG will donate the funds raised at the next bake sale (50p Friday) and the school raised around £500 on non-uniform day which will also go towards the target so we are almost there! The council need to approve where it

will be installed. The school are keen for it to be installed ASAP but before current P7's leave.

- Potential funding for sailing activities has been identified via a Coasts and Waters community fund. Mr Friend said this could give potential for sailing to be incorporated into the P6 or P7 curriculum – using for examples Maths / angels etc.
- Hibs – Funding. Approached by Hibs and have offered an opportunity for percentage of ticket sales from their website to go to the school. Parent group agreed and it was noted that Hibs had approached us and not the other way around.
- Polly advised we were ahead of target this year for fundraising with around 3k being raised by Christmas fair, Thanks all those who helped and supported.
- Clothes Swap 21st Feb. at Bellfield

Finances - / Treasurers Update – Polly Clement

- Steph Dodd's was voted in as new treasurer and will take over from Graham in due course
- Books looking healthy.

Food Group – Polly Clement on behalf of Andrea Barlow

- Huge amount of work been done on this – thank you.
- School food now being cooked at St Johns primary so at least being cooked by staff who are aware of primary school needs.
- Council have agreed in principle for some cooking to be done on site but 50k needs to be budgeted for in 2021. Andrea & Onyema will continue to work with local councillors to make sure this happens.
- Any ideas about food the email parent group

Library Update – Jenny Capon

- Thanks to all volunteers and for Tidy Fridays
- Nearly 4,500 books now! Around 370 books borrowed at present
- Mr Rand liaising with volunteers

Play Space Update – Polly Clement

- Looking at more loose parts for the playground
- We have budget for sensory garden plants but need a volunteer to do this
- Looking for volunteers

AOB

Bike ability Update – James Lewis

- Level 2 for P5 s at start of summer term
- Safe routes to schools – new practice appraisal – workshops
- Pedal on Parliament plan to do a route around Towerbank and cluster schools and video and sent to Council!
- We need more volunteers please!

ASN – Polly Clement

- Parent group met with Mr Friend to discuss specific issues

- Linking in with IT group - aim to get funding for specific IT software. Also liaising with Active schools to get relevant groups; Feedback re Lyceum trip for those pupils with additional support needs

Non sporting Activities – younger Kids

- Issue of lack of non sports based activities for younger kids. Suggestions to come from Big Ideas in March (26th) evening session but email ideas if you can't attend.

School Photos – Feedback

- Polly thanked all those who had provided feedback. Mr Friend will review the school photos provision for next year.