

Parent Forum Minutes – Meeting held on 27 May 2016

Present

Simon Barnard, Jane Heenan, Verity Roberts, Katherine Higgins, Samantha Packer, Nicola Castle, Katie Bett, Shelley Williams-Farr, Miranda Seldon, Tandy Titmus, Tracy Harris

Apologies

Henny Salinger, Jo Copestake

Minutes from last meeting

Approved via email following last meeting

Matters Arising from Last Meeting

Email notifications – Andrew Morris (AM) advised that Jean and Janette would put all letter attachments together in one email at the end of each week so that the volume of emails would be cut down. Verity Roberts (VR) came back with feedback that parents have expressed a preference for going back to the previous way of sending out letters as they come in. AM agreed that he would see what was easiest for Jean and Janette and work that way. The consensus was that the old way would be acceptable.

Healthy Eating School

Concern about mixed messages to do with Potten End being a healthy school but a rising incidence of sweets coming out of the classrooms and school for birthdays/end of term gifts/ FOS sweet sales.

AM stated that he wasn't aware of sweets being handed out for birthdays. He will advise staff that no sweets should be handed out and also ask them to be aware of what might be handed out by children and/or their parents. AM noted that it was preferred by parents that at end of term sweets are not handed out. Miranda Seldon (MS) stated that it takes the control away from the parents if sweets are given out. Tandy Titmus (TT) stated that the Friends of School sweet sales take place three times per year and that in those instances it is the parents' choice whether to buy them or not. At Christmas, the sweets given out by FOS were done so because of the cost issue involved as opposed to buying toys for the whole school.

Agenda

Netball Team – Is there a Netball Team for Girls?

AM stated that a Netball Team did exist last year but did not play in any tournaments. The plan is to have a team and the kits will be supplied by Friends of School. AM did stress that the school is trying to promote sport.

Quality of PE lessons and sports involvement/competitions entered

A parent feels that the current PE provision needs to be improved and extended and that there don't seem to be as many competitions entered or the children are being challenged enough.

VR suggested that any sporting involvement should be reported on, such as Tag Rugby games, so that the parents in general do not have the assumption that no sport is taking place in the school. Jane Heenan (JH) stated that there is great support amongst parents whose children are involved in team sports but that for those not involved, parents might not be aware that events or competitions are taking place. AM did state that as a school that is getting used to having Years 5 and 6, it is a work in progress and there are now more years to be catered for. Years 5 and 6 are doing a production of Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat which will take place at Ashlyns School. He is

trying to move the expectations of what the school can offer and provide and open up opportunities for Potten End School. The parent had made reference to Mrs Batchelder's involvement and AM stated that Mrs Batchelder had gone beyond the call of duty in many of her activities because of her enthusiasm and dedication and that it is very difficult to replace someone like that easily. Current PE activities involve teachers taking the lead and they are assisted by coaches. Tracy Harris (TH) reported that the children do enjoy this approach.

Simon Barnard (SB) suggested improving links in the village, such as with the Potten End Magazine, so that communication between school and village could be improved and the school celebrated more as part of the community.

As regards Sports Day, TT suggested that some parents miss having individual competitive events. AM reported that with those sorts of events, there is a lot of practice and it doesn't usually end up being very much fun, especially with smaller children. AM did state that sports day would be slightly different this year.

Children's University

A parent has suggested that the Head and Governors find out more how the school could benefit from being involved in Children's University.

TH started by saying that Education City has been very popular with the children (this was discussed in previous Parent Forum meetings).

Children's University is for 5-14 years and encourages activity outside school hours. AM will look into the details and research what they mean from the point of view of a parent, reporting back to the Governors. He is keen to avoid any organisations that tie parents into a financial commitment.

Climbing on Rails

The climbing bars are frequently climbed upon after school has finished. It was suggested that parents be reminded that there are insurance and supervision issues and that is why the children must keep off the bars.

AM stated that it would be included in the Newsletter to go out for half term and that parents need to be made aware of their responsibilities.

Katie Bett (KB) also stated that it happens in the smaller playground in the Foundation Area.

Parking

VR reported that for Nursery pickup at 12pm, people are parking on corners, double yellow lines. AM stated that the police can't issue tickets for these offenders but only traffic wardens are allowed to do this so they would need to be present at that time to do anything about it.

Cost of Trips

The cost of some trips is quite high and the current Year 4 have had Hudnall, a museum trip, dinner money and swimming to pay this term.

TT advised that some consideration needs to be given about trips and the costs and suggested more notice be given (especially for residential trips) well in advance.

Food Choices on trips away

Some concern over the lack of food choices at Hudnall for the trip away.

AM stated that the catering there is simple because the school has to choose what to eat. It is owned by Herts County Council and for a cheaper local trip, there's nowhere else. PGL trips offer more food choices but are very expensive by comparison (you also pay for high quality activities). KH asked if a request could be made for more food choices but MS suggested that it might be good for the children to learn to be more independent and 'get on with it' for a couple of days.

E-Safety

AM stated that he has been made aware that older pupils in the school have accounts on Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, You Tube – all social media where the minimum age is 13. He stressed that there is inappropriate material on there, some of the children have public profiles and he will be raising the profile of e-safety this term. SB also advised that a huge numbers of issues with bullying come via social media and that there is an e-safety policy on the school website.

Term Dates

Hard copies of term dates has been requested. More notice for events for those parents who need to book time off work to attend.

TT stated that she had received a hard copy but couldn't see them on the website. AM stated that details can be found on Google Calendar which parents can sync to their phones. This should give scheduled event details well enough in advance for parents to plan their time. The website should show Term Dates.

Any other Business

VR asked if there could be photos of staff either in the entrance to school or on the website so that parents can see who teaches other classes. AM said that photos would not be put on the website as not all staff wish to be on there. It is HCC policy that staff can choose whether to be on a website or not. New staff photos will be done and put on the new noticeboard.

VR asked when the new scooter park will be advertised. AM stated that it will be in the half term newsletter. TT stated that it should be stressed that it is parent-policed and not the school's responsibility.

VR stated that the children love the school trips such as the recent visit to Berkhamsted Castle and parents have asked for more trips like this. AM said that there is usually a cost issue with these trips if transport needs to be paid for. A balance between providing trips of this nature and being aware of asking parents for further contributions needs to be considered. SB echoed VR's point and said that a recent trip to Pizza Express was a great success.

TT thanked the school for allowing the children time off to go to Berkhamsted to meet the Queen.

TH stated that this was the last meeting until the autumn and the next would take place in October.