



Parent Forum Meeting Minutes

Meeting: **Tuesday 21 March '23** (via zoom)

The key aims of the parent forum are:

- ✓ To discuss parent feedback related to what is working well and areas causing concern, and where possible, to address any issues.
- ✓ To allow parents the opportunity to discuss new ideas that will bring benefit to the children or the wider school community.

Representation	Present	Apologies
Head	Denise Kennedy	
Governors	Valerie Gunn	
Chair & Coordinator	Kate Ashton	
Reception	Helena Farrington	Katie Luke
Year 1	Karen Cardoso & Eliza Barlow	
Year 2	Priscilla Wulandari	Zoe Taylor
Year 3		Caroline Briffett
Year 4	Lisa Hale & Alice Harrap	
Year 5	Meg Cripps & Gemma Woodman	
Year 6	Tracey King & Verity Roberts	

Agenda

1	Welcome & matters arising from previous meetings
2	Feedback and quick questions to share with the teaching & support teams
3	Parental Contributions to Enrichment Activities
4	Consistency in Communication Channels
5	Follow ups on discussions cut short on last parent forum
	AOB

Matters arising from previous meetings

1. All **feedback arising from the last forum**, shared with the teaching and support staff
2. **New parent forum class representatives** recruited to fill vacancies
3. After **after school club provision** announced to start after Easter, with communications across parents and externally to recruit someone to run the after-school club from September 2023
4. The Amazon wish list for books has been set up to help parents to know **which books are needed for the library**, and will come out to parents once Mrs Deacon is back from maternity leave.
5. The summer menu and the **new approach for ordering school meals** was communicated and positively received.
6. The office continue to request that external providers take **childcare vouchers** where possible, and this has increased recently i.e., Choir, Recorder Club, School Residentials, Breakfast Club, After School Club.
7. Photos to be taken of children in **correct examples of the school uniform** will be added to the website shortly.

8. The office has provided detailed **feedback to Pret-a-Portrait** re: school photography
9. A cake sale fundraiser was hosted by the school council, in aid of **the Turkey & Syria earthquake appeal**, raising £282

Summary of Discussion & Actions Taken

1. Welcome & matters arising from last meeting		Rolling agenda item
Theme	Agenda & welcomes	

Summary of Discussion: Nadia Dewhurst-Richman (Y1) has stepped down from the parent forum, as she has recently become a new Parent Governor. The forum thanked Nadia for her commitment to the forum and for her constructive questions and feedback, and wish her well for her role on the school governing body. A warm welcome was made to Karen Cardoso and Eliza Barlow (Year 1).

A note has also gone out in the newsletter to secure another Chair / Coordinator to replace Kate Ashton when her daughter leaves Potten End in the summer. This can be 2 separate roles or combined.

Actions 1. *Anyone who is interested in learning more about being the Parent Forum Rep for their class or the Coordinator role, then please message the parent forum on parentforum@pottenend.herts.sch.uk*

2. Feedback & questions for the teachers & support team		Rolling agenda item
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Theme: Review of feedback and questions provided from parents to the parent forum

Summary of Discussion: **Thank you to the teachers for the rich curriculum they are providing.** For year 6, a special mention to Mrs Sharpling for all of her effort and work outside of school hours with SAT's preparation and the dedication to the sports teams

The recent **wins for the school sports teams**; football, netball, dodgeball have really instilled a sense of pride in the school for both the children and parents

The children (both girls and boys) loved the **skateboarding and scooter workshops**, which were a real confidence boost especially for those who are not into other more traditional sports e.g., football, netball etc. Some Parents have reported that their children have come home with an enthusiasm for a new sport and all the equipment which goes with it (will the next Tony Hawk or Tanner Fox come out of Potten End ?!)

Tudor day was fantastic – thank you to all those involved in organising these additional activities.

The **mothering service** was fantastic, and heavily attended. It was such a pity that it couldn't continue outdoors due to the weather as the reduction in numbers prevented a wider range of significant adults from the child's life being included as was the schools intention. It was very difficult to hear the children due to a lot of background noise from younger children, however the school are not able to provide a creche as they have done in years gone by when the school had the nursery facility and additional staff. The school will explore getting new microphones which the children could use where budget allows.

Actions 1. *Mrs Kennedy to share the feedback with the SLT, teaching and support teams*

3. Parent contributions to enrichment activities	Last discussed: new item
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Theme The school asked the parents for their feedback on parental contributions for the cost of trips/ enrichment for children. In 2023/24, some of the funding from the Friends of School for enrichment activities will need to be directed elsewhere. Children are generally provided with three opportunities per class plus extra themed days as a whole school

Summary of Discussion The discussion focussed on 4 main themes;

1. Overall positive response to parents contributing to enrich the curriculum

Parents love the range of guests which come into school and the school trips which take place. They are happy to pay contributions for trips or activities that enrich the curriculum, and thank the school for making the effort because the kids love it and learn new things from the trips, it also breaks up the normal school week and gives the children something to look forward to.

Generally, parents were in agreement that with a little more planning, the expectation of more parent contributions is fine, and whilst money is stretched for many, they would rather the activities go ahead than be cut back. It was suggested that a little more scrutiny over how many workshops / activities are delivered should be considered;

- Ensuring that each enrichment activities are distinctly different from each other and have clear learning outcomes i.e., did the children need both a skateboard and a scooter workshop?
- Reviewing additional costs like the Young Writers competition which is a money-making exercise where the parent feels obliged to buy the book (the money raised does not go to the school)

2. The need for parents to be aware of an estimated cost for workshops so they can budget ahead, even if final details are not known

Despite the school aiming to have a clear schedule and estimated overall cost for the year to enable parents to plan their financials, it does seem that requests continue to come in sometimes with very little notice. Parents need to know in plenty of time so that they can save up, especially when there are multiple children to pay for as well as costs for activities outside of school.

Mrs Kennedy confirmed that in the summer term, the office will communicate the top 3 likely costs for the school year ahead, plus year specific events like swimming, cycling proficiency, young voices, residential etc. It was highlighted that parents can also review their 'payment history' for the past year through ParentMail which would also show the hidden costs of small contributions throughout the year, and give a reflection of what to expect for the months ahead.

A request was made that the office send out a 'hold the date & estimated cost' even if the details are not fully known or the payment on ParentMail is not open yet e.g., the cycling proficiency is already booked in for year 6 however the parents are unaware of this and therefore have not budgeted for this cost or have not started planning to have a bike available. This cost will be coming at the same time as the PGL residential cost.

3. Discussion on how Friends of School funding is spent

In 2022/23 school year, the FoS have contributed £2000 towards enrichment activity e.g., Professor Bubbleworks, Pantomime, Anti Bullying workshops.

Typically to run an enrichment activity for the whole school the cost is in the range of £1000. If an activity is sports related e.g., the dance workshops, then the sports premium can also be used.

Most requests for money to parents are communicated as 'a voluntary contribution' and all children are included in the enrichment activities regardless of if their parent has contributed. Typically events run at a loss as some parents do not to contribute despite reminders. The forum reps suggested that parents may be unaware of the impact of them not contributing.

4. Ideas for further fundraising for Friends of School (FoS)

The recent school fair was successful in replenishing some funds, however the FoS hope that the fair will return to the larger scale community event it was in previous years where it raised upwards of £8,000

Helena (Treasurer for FoS) discussed that the FoS are planning a lot of events this year and hope to continue to help school with some enrichment activities, however it has been agreed that the majority of FoS contribution will be towards the playground improvements in 2023/24. Further detail will be communicated about this project, which includes tarmacking the grass areas, and replacing the rotting wooden play equipment.

The discussion moved on to how the community could be engaged for larger fundraising campaigns such as the playground funding. Examples were given of engaging the church congregation, putting flyers in Cedars village shop, contacting local business leaders who can sponsor FoS as a charity, and using the skills of the parents who crowd funded for the play equipment in the Potten End Park.

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| Actions | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The office to review their communication of expected costs for the year ahead, and a 'hold the date / expected cost' communications2. FoS review the feedback from the forum re: fundraising |
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3. Consistency in Expected Communication Channels	Last discussed:
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Theme	Communication is a regular feature on the forum agenda, and there have been significant improvements over the past few years, especially with the introduction of ParentMail. Recently however there is a lack of consistency on the types of communications using which mediums.
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Summary of Discussion	The forum shared recent examples where parents needed to look in different places. Mrs Kennedy confirmed that ParentMail is the official communication method from school and teachers will be reminded of that.
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An observation was shared that the title of ParentMail communications needs to be more specific where possible eg. include the date of the sporting fixture cancelled. When only the title is viewed in a text or email notification, it can cause confusion if the whole message is not immediately read.

The discussion briefly returned to the need to send out 'Hold the Date' communications where possible, as discussed in the previous item.

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| Actions | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mrs Kennedy to feedback to the school office |
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4. Further discussion from the last forum	
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Theme	A few items were followed up from the last forum
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Summary of Discussion	The maths workshop – Ms Ford continues to review the ideas of how parents can feel more confident to support their child in their maths learning. • The workshop was well received so this will be run again in the future in addition to the information already shared in each year curriculum meeting
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- The school also have materials on the website to support parents and will look to provide other useful resources in line with the specific curriculum taught at Potten End
 - Ms Ford is looking at parents being invited in to the classroom to take part in a maths workshop, much like the maths open mornings used to be run pre-covid where children work on practical maths problems alongside their child

School photography – Some ideas to mitigate some of the dissatisfactions were revisited for an update;

- Pret-a-Portrait will continue as the supplier for the school photographs; however, feedback has been given so the office and the parent forum will continue to monitor satisfaction
- The forum discussed the role which Parent volunteers could play in ensuring that children are presentable before their photo session, however it was deemed that this could bring with it more dissatisfaction if the volunteer didn't brush the hair the right way or asked a child to button up clothes where this doesn't represent what the child looks like in their school day. This idea will therefore not be taken forward, and parents should discuss with their child their expectations for keeping tidy before the photos. Of course, the teachers will also give a verbal reminder too.
- The school could be opened on a Sunday for family photographs which could be a fund raiser for FoS, and gives more scope to individual families to dictate the style they would like. This could make use of the parents who have a photography skill set which had been suggested previously

Parking at drop off / pick up – update on actions since last meeting

- **1 way system at drop off / pick up** Parents had talked about congestion through the main gate at drop off and pick up, and suggested that a one-way system be implemented, facilitated by opening another gate. Unfortunately, the service gate in the small layby opens direct onto the road without any pavement and therefore is deemed unsafe. Opening up the reception gate is also not feasible due to the impact on the set up of outdoor learning for those early years.
- **The police** have been seen at the school reviewing parking, however did not appear to speak to anyone parked directly outside school on double or single yellows so had limited impact.
- **The traffic cones and parking buddy signs** have been located in the school store, however the resource to put these out at drop off and pick up is not available through the school, so the forum will review whether this is something which parents could go on a rota for

Parental Involvement – the forum reiterated the feedback that with more before and after school provision, the demographic of the school may change in the future and therefore Potten End may attract more working parents who may not be able to attend the plethora of different events. The number of events which parents can be involved in really showcases the school and a child's work, it can equally expose those children who do not have a parent who is able / willing to attend. A few suggestions were made;

- It was acknowledged that the school have arranged the calendar so that the events are not always held on the same day of the week to enable a parent who works part time to attend on their non-working day. It was also suggested that the same type of event is not always held on the same day too e.g., the reading morning should rotate what day it is held so that if a parent works on a specific day of the week, they at least have the opportunity once in the year to read with their child in school. The school are making an effort to do this; however, it is appreciated that all of this is a quite a logistics feat for the office.
- The forum asked if significant meetings could be held via zoom / google classrooms e.g., the maths workshop could have had a laptop showing the presentation and watching Ms Ford

present. Parents could then login in between meetings or other parental commitments. Where safeguarding is not a factor, could things be recorded and recorded and loaded onto google classrooms. These suggestions mean that a parent does not need to frequently take time off work or arrange child care for 'information giving' sessions leaving more scope to attend child centred sessions.

Father's Day Celebrations – The *Mothering service* communication stated that the invite was for 'anyone who is a significant carer in your child's life', and therefore the significant males are also invited to attend. It was unfortunate that the service on the playground needed to be brought into the hall due to the weather and therefore with a reduced capacity, it tended to be mothers who attended however some males did come too. During the service, both Mrs Kennedy and Reverend Joe brought in more of a celebration of all gender roles in the upbringing of the child. They would rather incorporate this into the inclusive design of the Mothering Service than add another event into the calendar for Father's Day specifically. A couple of suggestions were made;

- The communication of the event for 2024 needs to more explicitly mention that male carers are also invited
- With the recent success of the gifts for mothers / significant females where £245 was raised, FoS will consider the gift for fathers in June

- Actions**
1. FoS to consider the idea re: the fundraiser using a creative parent to take the photos
 2. Parent forum to ask their class parents if they would go on a rota to put out the parking buddies
 3. SLT to consider virtual meetings / recorded and also schedule of events
 4. FoS to consider Father's Day gifts as a fundraising activity

AOB

Summary of Discussion There were no AOB on this forum

Actions

Next Steps	When
Meeting outcomes to be documented and uploaded onto school website click here & link posted in that week's school newsletter	Friday newsletter
All actions agreed to be reviewed & executed with relevant parties	Staff meetings, class forums e.g., face to face or WhatsApp
Class reps to share the outcomes with the parent who raised the agenda items, and then the meeting minutes (via a link) on the class WhatsApp group	Class forums e.g., face to face or WhatsApp
Class reps to gain feedback for 'hot topics' before each meeting, and /or parents to use the parent forum email parentforum@pottenend.herts.sch.uk	Next Parent Forum: Tues 16 May '23