

## **Note of the Annual General Meeting of the Dounby Community School Parent Group held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2010.**

**Present:**       Georgie Clark                               Isla Dougall  
                  Katrina Gray                               Michelle Hill  
                  Kay Morgan                                    Corina Taylor  
                  Andrea Price                                 Alastair Forsyth

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

No apologies were received prior to the meeting.

**2. Approval of Minute from previous meeting.**

The minute of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010 was approved as an accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising from Minute**

There were no matters arising to discuss.

**4. Correspondence Received By Chair**

None had been received since last meeting.

**5. Accounts – Audited Position**

The accounts for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 were examined and audited by Steven Sinclair. Total income for the year was £325.45, total expenditure was £250.00, leaving a balance of £75.45.

**6. Election of Office Bearers**

Michelle Hill was elected as Chair, with Isla Dougall nominated and seconded as Vice Chair.

The Treasurer Role still had term of office to run and no change was made.

Michelle then took over the meeting as new Chair of the Parent Group.

**7. Update from Head Teacher**

**7.1 Insurance Update**

Alastair updated the group on the insurance details for the school. The Parent Group is currently covered by an insurance policy provided by Orkney Islands Council. This insurance covers the Parent Group to hold events within the school.

The events run by Friends of Dounby School are not covered by this insurance as they are a separate group. Up until now any events held by FODs have been hosted by the School to overcome the lack of insurance. Alastair has been researching what is and isn't covered under each insurance, and as of today the school cannot host events on behalf of FODs. It was important to note that without insurance, individual FODs members were open to personal litigation.

FODs currently have their own bank account and produce posters for each event. There was discussion surrounding FODs becoming a sub group of the Parent Group in order to rectify the insurance issue. The separate bank could be an issue, but funds could be paid into either the School bank account or the Parent Group.

In order to resolve the insurance issue, there was a suggestion that this Parent Group and FODs could be merged, but continue with separate meetings.

**ACTION:** this committee to have a meeting with FODs to discuss merging the two groups; Alastair to contact FODs to advise of what had been discussed at this meeting; and Michelle and Katrina to be invited to a meeting with FODs prior to the next event being held on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

## 7.2 Budget Update

Alastair highlighted that the financial position will be difficult over the next 3 years. This is, he pointed out, dependent on the settlement from the Scottish Government for Local Authorities, which wasn't yet known. OIC are hoping this will require not more than a saving of 12% over the next 3 years. There will be threats of closure for some schools, however Dounby is a bigger school and it is very unlikely that it would be included on any closure list.

The School is currently not over staffed and will find it difficult to make cuts on what is delivered.

The school's energy bill is an area where saving could be made. There are plans for a wind turbine. The council is willing to invest in the school if such investment would save money in the longer term.

**ACTION:** Alastair will investigate current plans and report back to a future meeting.

It was thought that there would be news of the budget settlement by the end of October/ early November.

Alastair thought that parents may be asked to contribute to some school items for their children. For example from this year tin whistles will be charged for at about £4 each.

Educational excursions costs are currently met out of the FODs account and Historic Scotland has provided a grant aid of 75% towards travel to their sites. We may be asking parents for a contribution towards some excursions in the future.

Alastair highlighted that where possible, charges to parents will be kept to a minimum, however parents may well be asked for a small contribution towards costs at times.

## 7.3 Staffing Update

Alastair updated that the new staff have settled well into the school.

There is currently one temporary post, the hours that Rachel Garson is currently covering in P2. This post will be advertised in the near future. The teacher in the Nursery, Nicola Moar

will be going on Maternity leave after the October break and this will be filled on a temporary basis.

He also advised that there will be some students working in the school over the coming months. There will be a student in the Nursery for two days a week. A Slovakian student is on placement from the British Council every Friday until March. This is part of the Comenius Project of the British Council. It is an exchange which gives the student an opportunity to improve their English and understand our culture whilst contributing to our school and helping the children to understand more about their culture and language.

#### **7.4 Reading Events with Parents**

Alastair highlighted that there is usually an introductory reading evening session with Parents of P1 pupils, which this year will be extended to Nursery children also.

Alastair asked members if they felt it would be useful for an open session for parents of all pupils. He also asked if the parent group would be prepared to sponsor such an event. There was discussion around whether the evening should be specific for each year or an open session.

**ACTION:** Alastair to advertise for one evening and see what the outcome or turnout is to assess possibility of future sessions.

Although writing is the main area for improvement, reading was the next area. Alastair is to undertake an audit of the quality of teaching and learning.

Alastair highlighted that there are still weaknesses in the progress that some children are making in reading and writing. The minimum target is for all children to achieve a Level C by the time they leave the school and the great majority of children should achieve a Level D or higher.

Alastair advised that he was considering bidding to the Scottish Book Trust Live Literacy Project for another author to visit the school, this time for younger children. The last author visit was a success and many books were sold.

#### **7.5 GLOW evenings**

Alastair advised that plans to hold GLOW evenings were currently being discussed. These would run in the same theme as the reading sessions. It was noted that not all families had access to the internet at home. Alastair is currently looking into running internet café style sessions in the IT suite after school for children to do any homework that requires IT.

Currently teachers using GLOW have come across some problems as well as it being very time consuming. To learn to use the system effectively.

Alastair also highlighted that there are initial plans about doing homework in a more creative way. This will be further discussed when more information is available.

## **7.6 Pattern and Organisation of Parent Evenings**

Alastair asked members for their thoughts on the format of the parent evenings held last term.

There was agreement that being given a choice of evening and time was helpful and allowed working parents to attend at a suitable time.

There were comments surrounding the timings of the reports and final parents evening, with some parents not aware of the opportunity to speak about the report before the end of term. It was acknowledged that the timing of the reports related to specific markers of stages within the school year, but those present felt it would be more beneficial to receive these earlier in order for issues to be raised and discussed.

**ACTION:** It was agreed that there would be 2 consultation evenings early in the school year and one to coincide with the report distribution to discuss its content.

Alastair asked if parents would find questionnaires helpful as a way of obtaining information in an attempt to reduce numbers of consultations/pieces of paper sent home.

Members felt this was a good idea and supported this initiative.

## **8. Any other Business**

### **8.1 Playpark and Bowling Green Update**

Alastair confirmed that the Bowling Green will no longer be going ahead. A bid is being raised to improve the grounds of the school, including improving the playpark and turning the tennis court on the green field into a multi-sport outside area. The new tennis court has been repaired over the summer. The playpark requires improvement, mainly due to wear and tear, but also as a result of vandalism over the summer months.

### **8.2 Positive Parenting Classes**

At a recent meeting it was discussed to advertise for holding Positive Parenting Classes.

It was agreed that a questionnaire will be compiled to seek interest from Parents with a view to holding classes for year specific children. It was felt that the transition class (P7 going into Secondary Education) would be welcomed.

**ACTION:** Clerk to compile questionnaire and work with the school for distribution

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010 at 7pm.