

## **Note of a meeting of the Dounby Community School Parent Group held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010.**

**Present:**           Georgie Clark                                   Lorraine Cormack  
                  Katrina Gray                                   Isla Dougall  
                  Michelle Hill                                   Alastair Forsyth  
                  Corina Taylor

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Andrea Price and Emma Grieve.

### **2. Approval of Minute of Last Meeting**

These were approved as an accurate record.

### **3. Matters Arising**

3.1 Parent Group and FODs sub group update: Alastair confirmed that he had coordinated with FODs on insurance, including the running of the bank account. Events will now be publicised with Dounby Community School Parent Group headers. All funds are now banked through one bank account. Both groups will still have a treasurer for each to record and monitor income and expenditure, however to save confusion there will only be one chequebook.

3.2 Budget Decision Update: Alastair confirmed that the UK government have made a settlement for next financial year. The Scottish Government has announced a reasonable budget for the next year, however the budget for the following 2 years has not been set. More information may be available in December.

3.3 Positive Parenting Classes: No update available, it was hoped that more information would be available in time for the next meeting.

### **4. Correspondence received by Chair**

4.1 Recycling Mobile Phones: Currently the school office is looking into a suitable scheme that is best for the School. Alastair took the information to pass on to be considered.

4.2 Year Planner Poster from Learning, Teaching, Scotland: The school are also in receipt of this poster and is not required by the Parent Group.

4.3 Invite to join Scottish Parent Teacher Council. This scheme required a payment to join. The information sent did not seem to offer more than what is currently received as a Parent Group from other sources. This information has been previously received and as agreed before, it was felt that there would be no benefit in joining this scheme.

### **5. Update from Headteacher**

5.1 Wind Turbine: there was no further update

5.2 Bowling Green and Play park: Alastair updated that plans for the bowling green are back up for discussion. He had met with the Community Officers and discussed the proposed location. One suggestion was to level the back end of the play park bringing the equipment closer to the school and extending it out slightly. This will be an opportunity to get drainage into the play park and create better access. The plans and bids for the bowling green are now going forward, along with works to the play park.

5.3 Recent Staff Appointments: Nursery Teacher, Nicola Moar went on maternity leave in October and Hazel McKinlay has been appointed to cover this post. Rachel Garson was successful to continue her current role in P1/P2 on a fixed term contract until the end of the current school year.

- 5.4 Alastair highlighted that the school is continuing to work on raising standards of writing along with reading. He is currently working with staff to develop techniques and strategies. He highlighted that although all teachers have been through teacher training, teachers are not necessarily taught in detail how to teach children to read. Currently Jolly Phonics is the scheme used for the teaching of phonics skills. The school is making progress with these initiatives.

With mathematics, currently I P M is the scheme used as a resource and support to teaching staff. It is not an ideal resource to support Curriculum for Excellence. The school is working to make the best use of this scheme rather than purchase an (expensive) alternative at this time.

- 5.5 Standards and Quality Report: Alastair is currently working on this by comparing standards with other schools in Orkney. The data from the authority helps us identify where the school needs to improve in relation to other Orkney schools. Equally, it also shows where this school is doing well.
- 5.6 School Grounds: Alastair is working with the community officer in putting together a bid to improve the grounds. This will involve upgrading the tennis court on the main field, planting and general maintenance.
- 5.7 Nursery / Pre School: there was some discussion on class sizes for the current pre-school class. Alastair confirmed that this class will spend the last term as one class.
- 5.8 Nursery and Pre-School Drop off/Pick Up area: Parking is still an issue for Nursery and Pre-School. Alastair has spent time observing the situation and will repeat this exercise. He will send out a letter encouraging parents to think of child safety when parking at Nursery and not to park on both sides near the entrance.

## 6. Any Other Business

- 6.1 Road Sign: Lorraine had emailed the Council as the current "School" sign at the end of the path was not visible. This is now being addressed.

She also suggested that the 20 mph limit should be extended to this area due to the number of children who walk to school.

- 6.2 It was discussed that the head teachers' presence was missed at the last Nursery sports day. Alastair will check his diary to see why.
- 6.3 End of Term Services – the volume of services held was discussed and although parents were keen to be involved at these events, some found that it is not always easy to attend. No one wants to disappoint their child by not being present in the audience. It was suggested and agreed that End of Year and Christmas services were an acceptable number. These changes were discussed and the possibility of changing the number of, and content of these services would be discussed further with school staff.
- 6.4 Instruments: at the start of P4 children got a choice of instruments to learn. Those that chose guitar have not had any lessons as there are no tutors available. The music teachers take classes on a rota system for fiddle/woodwind/brass. Alastair to look into why children were given the option to learn guitar. Music instructors do demonstrations and encourage children to take up an instrument.

## 7. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2011 at 7pm.