

## Minute of the Annual General Meeting of the Dounby Community School Parent Group held on 13 September 2012

<b>Present:</b>	Alex Clark	Lorraine Cormack
	Isla Dougall	Anna Davidson
	Geraldine Ferguson (Clerk)	Dawn Flett (Treasurer)
	Alastair Forsyth (Head Teacher)	Katrina Gray
	Michelle Hill (Chair)	Suzanne Lyon
	Tracey Miller	Margaret Sinclair

### 1. Chair's welcome and apologies

Apologies had been received from EmmaJane Rendall, Corina Taylor and Shenagh Leiper.

### 2. Approval of minute of last meeting (24 May 2012)

The minute of the meeting held on 24 May 2012 was approved as an accurate record.

### 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

### 4. Correspondence received by chair

The chair had received:

- A letter from OIC re Parent Group insurance – no action required
- A letter from OIC regarding possible changes to the school holidays (e.g. a longer break in February) – no action required.
- A letter from OIC re radon levels in the school and the action that the Council proposed to take to deal with this. The remedial works had begun on the affected area of the school, i.e. the Primary 5/6 classroom, and Alastair was pleased with the way the Council had responded.
- A letter from OIC providing dates for the next Recruitment, Selection & Redeployment training. The letter explained that these sessions were aimed at any employees and parent council members who sit on recruitment panels. The R&S session would be immediately followed by a short presentation highlighting recent approved changes to OIC's Redeployment Policy & Procedures. The dates were 27 September in the morning and 27 November in the afternoon. Alastair confirmed that it was not strictly necessary, but only a recommendation, that those parent council members who sat on recruitment should have had this training. He stressed that parents were treated as full members of the panel and their contribution was highly valued, and he encouraged anyone who was interested in the OIC sessions to contact the Council on ext. 2250.

### 5. 2011–2012 Annual Report on the activities of the DPG

The written report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, was approved.

### 6. Approval of accounts and appointment of auditor

A Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Parent Group, showing a closing balance (as at 30 June 2012) of £490.69, was circulated and duly approved.

A Statement of Income and Expenditure and a Balance Sheet for Friends of Dounby School was also circulated. This showed a closing balance of £2,758.70 and detailed the amounts raised as a result of various FODS fundraising activities during the year. The accounts also showed an amount of £3000 which had been donated to the school to assist with the purchase of books, and computers and other electronic equipment.

As in previous years Steven Sinclair had examined the records of both groups and certified the Statements of Income & Expenditure. Steven's appointment for the next financial year was approved and there was a vote of thanks to him for providing this service free of charge.

## **7. Election of office bearers**

Chair Michelle Hill confirmed that her term of office, that of Isla Dougall (vice chair), and that of Dawn Flett (treasurer) had come to an end, and sought nominations for the three vacant office-bearer positions. Alex Clark was duly elected as chair, Margaret Sinclair as vice-chair, and Lorraine Cormack as treasurer (of both FODs and Parent Group). The outgoing office bearers were thanked for the very valuable work they had done for the group during the past two years.

## **8. Invitation to co-opted members**

Shenagh Leiper had been a co-opted member on the Parent Group since the end of November 2011 and it was thought that, according to the group's constitution, this meant that she would only be able to serve until end November 2012. It was agreed to look into this further. The same would apply to the co-opted members who were school staff representatives, namely EmmaJane Rendall and Nicola Moar. However, as both these teachers were also parents of children at the school they could always attend in their own right as parents, and this would get around the problem.

## **9. Matters arising from Head Teacher's Report for August 2012**

### **School numbers and implications for school organisation**

Alastair referred to a table that he had included in his report and explained again that, in the next school year (August 2013–June 2014), it looked likely that there would have to be a new composite P1/P2 class as well as a P1 class as there was a maximum limit of 25 children for P1 and composite classes. If this were the case, the school would most likely require another teacher. Alastair explained that schools are staffed to agreed standards based on the total number of pupils within the school regardless of the numbers of pupils at each year stage. This meant that head teachers were required to take management decisions to organise classes to make best use of available staff resources and space. The structure for 2013-14 would therefore most likely be: P1; P1/2 composite; P3; P4; P5; P6; P7. It would all depend on how many children were expected in the Primary 1 class in August 2013. There was a brief discussion about the pros and cons of composite classes. Alastair reassured group members that smaller schools such as Dounby School were adept at providing appropriate teaching and learning opportunities and maximising the benefits of classes where children of two different year stages were grouped together to form a class. Pupils in all classes followed programmes constructed to help them progress at their own level; this applied to all pupils regardless of whether or not they were in a composite or single year stage class.

### **Staffing**

The temporary admin post was to be made permanent and interviews were to take place the following week. There would also be interviews in the near future for the part-time post that would become available when nursery teacher Nicola Moar reduced her hours. Alastair confirmed that the local authority wanted to move towards making sure that all staff had permanent contracts, but in the short term this would not apply to teaching staff as there were still some 'Para 8.5 teachers' who had to be found posts.

### **School policy – homework policy**

As the period of consultation on the draft homework policy had now come to an end, Alastair asked the group to formally approve the policy if it were minded to do so. The policy was duly approved and Alastair confirmed that it would be made available on the school website.

### **ICT**

Referring to the comment in the report that the school was now equipped with updated ICT equipment and would be developing policies on such related things as ICT education, use of ICT in school and internet safety, one member told the group that she had had to raise with Alastair some concerns that she had around internet safety. She had been concerned that when her child had been using the computer another child had taken the mouse and surfed to a site and

content that she, as a parent, deemed undesirable. She had also been concerned about apparent lack of supervision by the class teacher on this particular occasion. She said that Alastair had responded to her concerns immediately, speaking with the class teacher, investigating the circumstances, speaking with the principal teacher and the rest of the staff and sending her an email in which he had set out the school's current approach to the increased use of the internet in all schools, an approach which he said was constantly developing.

Some other parents confirmed that they had also had reason to have concerns about internet use in school. Alastair said that he believed that providing access to the internet in school could only serve to raise educational standards and support the professional work of staff. He said that he and his colleagues in the school and within OIC believed that the educational advantages of enabling the children supervised access to the internet greatly outweighed the likely problems provided that appropriate safeguards were put in place. Some of the safeguards already in place were as follows:

- The worst internet material was filtered out.
- While children needed to use their common sense about what content was acceptable, teachers should discuss this with them and if children were unsure they should talk to their teacher. If children were found to be accessing material purposefully that was clearly unsuitable they would be warned once and would then lose internet privileges for a period of time.
- Various sites were used only with teacher direction, and direct supervision. YouTube would in future be included as one of these.
- School would communicate with parents and suggest that parents also advise their children about what they deemed to be suitable viewing and or listening.
- An internet agreement would be sent out which parents and children would have to sign to say that they agreed that their child would keep to protocols along the lines of those described above.

There followed a brief discussion with some parents expressing the view that, because it was so difficult to police children when they were using computers in school, there should be even tighter filtering and that the effect of the current school policy seemed to be that younger children who had a poorer understanding of what was suitable material were effectively being asked to police themselves. Alastair expressed the view that it is part of children's learning to understand responsible use of the internet and that the expert organisations in the UK strongly supported this approach. It was agreed that this issue would be returned to at a future meeting.

### **Building and grounds**

Alastair informed the group that the bowling-green project was now certain to go ahead and that the playpark project was progressing very slowly. Members were pleased with progress on the school fence but were concerned about the lack of progress on the automatic doors and the holes in the foyer floor. It was agreed that the playpark project should form an agenda item for the next meeting, together with the issue of OIC's failure to date to address the health and safety risk posed by the holes in the foyer floor and in the floor of the school office.

### **10. Agenda items for next meeting**

Suggestions included:

- Head Teacher's Report
- Discussion on 'healthy weight' issues for schoolchildren
- School policy – safe internet usage policy
- Maintenance of building and grounds including playpark project

### **11. Any other competent business**

### **12. Date of next meeting**

There being no other competent business the meeting concluded at 8.30 pm after it had been agreed that the next meeting would be held on 22 November 2012 at 7pm.