**Minutes of Cramond Parents & Staff Council meeting held at Cramond Primary School on Tuesday 31 January 2017**

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| Present | | | Apologies | | |
| Caroline Duff (Chair) Linda Campbell Steph Croan Helen Donaldson Jim Poseley  Louise Taylor  Maggie Smith  Livia Wright  Caroline Duguid  Caroline Ashbrook  Gwen Shaw  Fran Warren | | Claire McDowell  Kathryn Garvie  Nick Balchin  Emma Walker  Kari Cessford  Debbie Smith  Fiona Pengelly  Sarah Anderson  Niketa Platt  Claire McDowell | Jenny McLeish  Joanna McLeod  Katie Bruce  Nicola McKirdy  Celina Davis  Alison McKay  Sheila Kennedy  Louise Taylor  Tammie Fletcher | | |
| **Agenda Item** | **Discussion** | | **Action** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Date for completion** |
| Welcome | Caroline welcomed everyone to the meeting.  Caroline Ashbrook, newly appointed DHT, came to introduce herself to CPSC. Caroline takes up post after Easter. | |  |  |  |
| Apologies | Apologies were given as above. | |  |  |  |
| Acceptance of minutes of last meeting | The minutes were reviewed and accepted as an accurate reflection of the meeting. | | The Headteacher will be taking on nursery responsibility for the next period of time.  CPSC section has been set up on website, but more work needed on it. | HD  CPSC website editors |  |
| Treasurers Report | £ 978 movie night profit. £561 silent auction. £3390 in 100 Club Account. £3500 in main Account, with £1000 in Parent Voice account. | |  |  |  |
| 100 Club Update | £3440.21 with £303.90 required for unclaimed prizes. There are 104 active balls with 2 more waiting for the first payment to come through. This is up from 88 on 1 April 2016.  Request to amend the rules so that the proceeds do not necessarily have to go to OurPLACE maintenance. It is a bit restrictive and might put off some potential members. It was suggested we change the wording to say the proceeds are for school funds and a breakdown of purchases can be shared with members on request. | | Rules to be amended and sent around the group. | Caroline Duff |  |
| Class Reps Updates –  Nursery – P7 (with Headteacher response below) | Tea towel fundraising – great idea – self portrait of each child.  Point raised about Walk a Mile – has not stopped, it is not consistently undertaken by all classes every day now. This may change in better weather although it is a challenge to fit everything into the school day. The new sportshall removes the need for the daily mile to meet 2 hours of PE a week.  Burns poetry reciting. Burns supper is a planned joint CPSC and school possibility for next year, with greater emphasis on Scottish poetry, rhyme and dance.  Request that children in P4 and upwards are allowed to use the new changing rooms for gym classes.  Nursery feedback extremely positive, especially about Mrs Waddell and Mrs Warender. Concerns for Mrs Bain’s group moving to P1, that there is a smooth transition into handing over when she leaves.  New online payment system is still not up and running. | | Headteacher will look into this with the teachers. Update at next CPSC.  Firm plans are already in place to allow full handover, including parent appointments with Mrs Bain. Advert is live for replacement.  Headteacher will check up on where this is at present and feedback. | HD  HD |  |
| Headteacher response to Class Rep Discussion Points | **Gardening & Grounds maintenance**  Sincere thanks to volunteers working on nursery grounds and playground wildlife gardens. **Queries have been raised as to what is SSO (janitors) responsibility and remit in terms of grounds and what is for parent volunteers. Concern over unsafe materials in playground.**  A meeting has been arranged with Facilities management after February break to clarify this, seek support in managing other works and in accessing council garden waste uplift. Details will be shared at next CPSC. HD keen to link with parks & maintenance again.  SSO is concerned with bins being used by public to dispose of dog dirt. Request to FM for dog waste collection (CPSC to action please) as it is on a right of way.  Query re bins in playground emptying. Helen will raise this with SSO (see link above)  **Crossing Patrol & Parking**  School shares parental concern. This was shared again with local MSP visit recently.  CPSC could please action this directly. Similarly, ongoing issues with irresponsible and unsafe parking.  Back gate needs to be open to allow safe exit of numbers of pupils. Gates at front and side of school are closed but not locked – it is a right of way.  **Christmas - December is perceived by some parents to be a wasted learning opportunity.**  We take on board from feedback that greater clarity around learning needs to be provided by the school and that we could look again at the Christmas calendar (running it past CPSC) before implementing next session.  Learning at Cramond will be clarified to all parents by a short video clip for website to be finalised by Easter. This is intended to clarify the purpose and high quality learning & teaching which takes place.  Learning under Curriculum for Excellence is planned in 4 contexts – discreet subjects, ethos and life of the school, wider achievements and interdisciplinary learning. All experiences planned by teachers have learning at their core. Children learn through different contexts and in December many tasks are Christmas themed –eg coordinates with Santa or writing recipes for cookies. The children undertake various activities specifically created to develop skills, knowledge and understanding whilst both motivating and engaging them. Learning using media clips, technology and practical activities allows children to put skills in practice, work with others, explain their thinking and develop learning by applying in different contexts. Learning most certainly did not stop in December – right up until the end of term children were learning. Whole school activities such as parties, startime, panto and assemblies allow children to learn through different experiences whilst further building school community and relationships. The Christmas movie morning was the only down time in the calendar. The children may say just ‘fun’ and not work but the learning is always there – all staff share learning plans for each week – matching activities to curriculum requirements.  Christmas crafts are intended to develop creative art skills and falls under Expressive arts in curriculum. Enterprise is an essential requirement of developing skills for life, learning & work. This was thus not a replacement for learning but rather integral to learning.  **Christmas costs were a concern for some parents.**  We keep costs to a minimum (prior to my HT role Cramond would go to Pantomime at Kings averaging £13 – £15) No profits are made – no child misses out.  We accept that with the calendar and change to Christmas Fayre this had additional pressure on families at an expensive time of year. We will take this on board for future.  Christmas Fayre was changed to be school run event due to lack of parental volunteers to run a CPSC event. School staff already commit to supporting summer fair. Happy to look at how this will be run in future (see fundraising below)  No **Homelearning** in December and June is our school policy. Homelearning is a contentious issue – which divides staff and parents as to extent, amount and depth. Parents are able to continue reading, using Sum dog and own choice of learning activities in December and June if they wish.  **Communication**  **Website update and frequency of emails was raised.**  Facebook forum for class discussion is not the most helpful or constructive way to gather opinion.  We encourage all individuals to get in school directly with school (or via class reps) with any concerns, queries or suggestions. Please note, it is great to also get the good news!  This should be sent directly to Alison McKay who will respond, discuss with class stages or staff as required and keep record of key themes emerging to share at next CPSC.  Class reps can directly communicate with Alison who meets regularly with me to update. discuss and agree actions. Parents can of course approach myself, but with no DHT this term I am juggling more plates than usual and may not be able to respond as quickly.  For urgent matters please telephone the office or pop in – emails will be replied to within a few days and due to teaching commitments we may not get onto email every day.  **School and local authority finances: A budget challenge**  In such challenging times for Local authority budgets, every penny counts. What used to be ‘nice to have’ paid for by CPSC may increasingly need to help us purchase the ‘need to have’. The fundraising role of CPSC is essential although we are aware of demands this has had recently. See Christmas costs above. **Some parents have been concerned over requests for money from school**.  It is worth noting that I have ensured that uniform costs have been ‘frozen’ since I took up post. I actively encourage parents to source most affordable uniform and ensure that we keep prices competitive.  Similarly, trips are limited to those with greatest learning value. Parents have the opportunity to pay up trips over time and although the school receive no budget to assist families in need with costs, we do all we can to ensure no child misses out. Transport costs have spiralled in past few years impacting on trip costs. Swimming transport costs have long been a source of contention at Cramond and due to our location, is a drain on school budgets even with parental contribution.  Costs of supplies such as glue sticks and whiteboard pens, photocopying costs and art supplies are paid for from a dwindling per capita supplies and services budget – savings have to be made here to offset council set efficiency savings. To provide these learning resources we are relying on funds we can generate through things such as Christmas cards, school photographs and calendars. This small income is not used on big ticket/jazzy items but rather everyday essentials. This also helps us buy new class resources such as games and activities. The Santa gifts for p1-3 were individual but for P4-7 went to class set gifts (marble run and domino rally in P4 & P5, KNex in P6 & P7)  Numicon is the creative maths resource which we are starting to invest in at Cramond. Along with Big Maths this forms part of our school improvement priority. I have a strategic plan for Numicon across school which costs around £3000 to implement. The CPSC have already invested £600 (not spent yet) and with Christmas funds raised we hope to proceed in ordering soon. Due to demands on our time with Our Place, as explained above, we have not yet had the opportunity to progress plans yet but hope to do so imminently.  **Literacy** Some parents were concerned with lack of reading books home. Ms Cessford leads on Literacy with both Ali King and Gillian Waddell. Our new DHT will continue to develop this. Ms Cessford will explain reading. Additionally, she has added literacy details to school website.  **Staffing** Some parents raised concern about staffing – supply teachers and classes with more than one teacher. There is a National and local supply teacher crisis. In some local authorities, schools are faced with choice of sending classes home or having long assemblies with classes together to cover absence. At Cramond our level of staff absence is low. It is considered a desirable area for supply teachers to come to. That said there are simply not enough supply teachers to meet demand. In many school Heads and DHTs are covering classes.  As council employees, all staff are entitled to request flexible reduction in hours or job share. Which has to be considered. I keep careful note of classes and year groups in terms of maternity leave, long term absence or job share partners. I am fortunate to have a highly committed staff team who are flexible, work together and are determined to give their best to the children of school. We do have absence and do all we can to minimise impact. Unfortunately, this can result in Support for learning or leadership team having to prioritise covering a class and this has operational impact. It is out with our control.  **Our School roll** is increasing with a far higher enrolment of catchment pupils for P1 in August. This currently looks like 75 in P1 with team teaching (currently 60) This requires us to look again at teaching spaces. Composite class organisation may be required. I will keep CPSC and wider parent body updated. There is an obvious knock on effect with future class organisation as in P2 we are used to having 2 classes of 30.  **Ever Changing Educational context.**  With two major consultations in education happening nationally (Governance review and change to Early childcare and education almost doubling from 600 hours to 1140) there are big changes ahead.  The Government are focussing on education with First minister determined to close attainment gap and big changes to the assessment structure. Equity funding and the Inclusion agenda with more children with increasingly complex needs in main school setting, the pressure is on.  Moving forward with CPSC I propose that we revert to Fundraising/social/events/class reps Cramond group (PSA) and a strategic bigger picture Nationally and locally (Parent council) is required. Both will communicate, but will each have a different role. | | | | |
|  | Literacy – handout with information on the website. Whole school is using reading for enjoyment.  Links to the reading challenge. Bookbanding (all on the school website).  Information from all the teachers on what they are doing. Reading is still being taught in the classroom. All teachers have some sort of reading for enjoyment challenge, so there is a requirement for each stage to read.  How to choose a good book? Pick a random book and try the 5-finger challenge. There is a First Ministers book list. Miss Cessford will put a list on our website.  Each year stage can bring home books from the library. P3-P7 can take books from the book-bus home when they visit the School.  Parents are encouraged to read to their children and encouraged to get their children to read anything – books, magazines, Sumdog. Anything at all helps build their knowledge. Sometimes they will find books they like and sometimes they won’t enjoy them. It is about finding something they enjoy. | | The School will base a whole assembly on reading and the importance/benefits of this.  If this took place on a Friday, we could incorporate this into a Shared Learning morning.  World Book Day is coming up. | HD and Miss Cessford  Miss Cessford |  |
| Fundraising | Disco went well as well as the Pinewood Derby for the P1s. Movie Night went really well. Sold a lot on the door on the night. Quite a lot of parents stayed and very positive feedback.  Louise was fantastic at the organisation of the whole evening. This is a really easy event to run again, with just a film and tea/coffee. Some parents did not want to stay.  Pinewood Derby for P2-P7 will happen. Payment could hopefully be paid straight into a bank account as way of signing up to the event, which could cut back on administration.  This will be the 4th event we have run. Capacity is 50.  Quiz night was postponed last year. Could this happen during the movie night in future? There are ways of making sure it runs to the same sort of length of time as the film.  Talent evening with perhaps groups of children, such as highland dancing could happen in May.  Date for disco – 23 March. (THURSDAY) for all years. Some children really enjoy structured games as part of a disco. Mrs Donaldson will be in charge of games and music. Younger children get really tired at discos, after a full day at School, so think we should have it earlier. 6-7pm for younger children and 7.15-8.15pm for older year groups.  Food for parents? Very difficult to serve food due to health and safety regulations. We do not have facilities to keep food warm at present.  Friday afternoon movie is an idea we could try. Parents would be required to volunteer to help register some Friday afternoon. Children could bring their own packed lunch and sit and watch a movie. It would be very cheap to run. Mrs Donaldson happy to assist with ‘on the day’ running. | | Miss Cessford to look into food warmers. |  |  |
| Our PLACE and grounds Maintenance | Trim Trail – turf with impact absorbing surface to go underneath £2449.55. (check with Helen) Request for CPSC to fund this. Discussion held on why we cannot use lots of other ideas for ground cover. The School have to follow strict guidelines for H&S.  Concern raised about the amount of money which is needed to maintain the whole of OurPLACE. Also this is so time consuming and must be taking time away from the running of what is happening inside the  School. The School are concentrating efforts on how they can improve this for the future.  CPSC agreed as a group to fund this for the Trim Trail ground. | | HD to go ahead with the turf with impact absorbing surface for the Trim Trail. |  |  |
| Moving Forward with the CPSC | Group asked to look at the suggested structure for the CPSC. Reps to ask wider parent body why they are not involved and if it looked different, would the get involved. Proposed structure to be discussed at next meeting. | | Class Reps to ask wider parent body about getting involved in CPSC if the structure was different. |  |  |

Next meeting: Monday 13th March 2017