

Balmuildy Primary School Parent Council Minutes

Tuesday 10th September 2024

Present: Marianne MacLeod (Chairperson), Susan Anderson, Stephanie Fowler (Vice-Chairperson), Heather Glass, Hazel Fisher, Charlotte Grogan, Carol Jarman, Rania Henderson, Ria Comidi, Sean Kelly, Wilma Heaney, Ally Barber, Caroline Curran, Edel Paterson, Councillor Low, Councillor Willaimson

Apologies: Kelly O'Neill (Clerk), Oliver Henrich

Welcome new Headteacher and Introductions

Our Chairperson, Marieanne, welcomed the new Balmuildy PS head teacher, Charlotte Grogan

Headteacher's report:

C Grogan gave her report

- **Pupil numbers** - We continue to enrol new children following the start of the new school year. There are currently 364 pupils within the school. P1 - 48, P2 - 48, P3 - 54, P4 - 49, P5 - 53, P6 - 53, P7 - 59
- **Staff recruitment** – one full time equivalent is being recruited for, Mrs Boyle P2 is covering currently.. SS applicant - interviewing on the 16th of September for Maternity leave starting in September. There is one probationer this year. There are no extra teachers and management staff will cover sickness, training etc. Carolyn McAteer is currently acting PT. This position will need to be advertised for the permanent role.
- **School Improvement Plans** - (plans available on school website: [Improvement Plans - Balmuildy Primary](#)) Include well-being and inclusion. Circle resources, education Scotland, learning in an inclusive environment, as part of EDC initiative. Jackie Sutherland 2-3 year priority. Rights respecting school awards – currently at bronze. Next step how do we build rights into the curriculum
- **Reading** – looking at planning, resources, assessment and moderation - are we adding impact, is attainment improving - this is done within an d18-24 month cycle. Looking at the school reading journey, trips planned for the local library, and family learning is being planned.
- **PEBL (Play(P1/2)/Enquiry Based Learning(P6/7))** – looking at pupils journey through play. Lynsey McBride in the steering group for East Dunbartonshire Council (EDC). Looking for consistency within teachers and classrooms. Similar skills language. Looking at transferable skills for kids.
- Year 3 hasn't been planned yet and this will be reviewed after the self evaluation with the school.

New School Build update

Councillor Low provided an update.

At the time of the PC meeting, the decision to progress to the build phase of the new school, has been paused. Cllr Low was asked to update the EDC website on the project status here: [Balmuildy, Milngavie and Bearsden Primary School Projects | East Dunbartonshire Council](#) A update was provided to the website in the 1st half of September 2024.

This pausing of the project was recommended at an East Dunbartonshire Council (EDC) meeting on 21st August 2024.

relevant documents from EDC 21Aug24 meeting

- [EDC minutes \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- [Appendix 2 - General Services Capital Programme & Major Projects Update](#)

The reason for this pause in activity is due to increased construction costs, inflation and borrowing costs. Previous schools have typically cost around £10M and costs received for the construction of the new Balmuildy PS are closer to £30M. East Dunbartonshire Council does not have capital funding to support the project and would therefore need to borrow the £30M. With current borrowing rates this could increase to over £50M over a 35-year pack back period.

East Dunbartonshire Council (EDC) will request an additional capital grant from the Scottish government. A review of financing the new school project will be done and an update will be given at the EDC September council meeting.

PC council members and meeting attendees voiced concerns over the state of the current school building. Some parents have health concerns for their children as the school is past the original design life and is no longer fit for purpose due to numerous repairs and upgrades required. There was also concern about the sunk costs relating to the development works for the school and how long the design can remain relevant before re-design work will be required. Cllr Low acknowledged those concerns, and it is expected these will be forwarded on to EDC.

P7 residential trip

The P7 residential trip is taking place in Spring 2025. The cost of the trip is £350 per pupil plus transportation costs. Parents can pay for the trip in instalments from September 2024 to March 2025. C Grogan confirmed the trip cost will be reduced for P7s receiving free school meals. The school can provide other options for parents concerned about trip costs.

The PTA will be supporting specific P7 fundraising activities to raise funds for the £800 transportation costs including having a P7 stall at the Christmas fayre. H Glass (also a PTA rep) was advised that the PTA constitution should confirm if P7 trips can be funded by general PTA fundraising – the constitution can be changed if the PTA members believe this to be a worthy change.

Parents raised general concerns over the cost of the trip were raised and C Grogan and C Jarman confirmed Mrs Sutherland is looking at options to reduce costs for future P7 trips. Options include having the trip at a different time of year. Giving more notice to P7 parents would also be beneficial (perhaps whilst children are in P6).

Homework (P2)

P2 parents raised concerns about the amount of homework their children were required to complete each week. C Grogan advised homework is provided for parents so they can work on current activities at home but is optional, not mandatory. A reminder of the optional homework policy will be provided in the next school newsletter.

AOB

Vehicles during drop off/pick up times

A parent raised concerns about unsafe driving and parking behaviour from drivers of vehicles at school drop off/pick up times. This behaviour makes it difficult for children to have safe walking routes to the school. The school's lollypop lady, June, had experienced a near miss from a parent speeding along Stirling drive. Additionally, school staff had commented on the speed of vehicles entering and exiting the school grounds at drop off/pick up times. Upper school pupils use the road within the school as an official walking route. Signage on the school gates notes they will be closed during drop off/pick up times but they generally remain open. C Grogan will arrange for school gates to be closed as per the times on the sign. **(post meeting note:** a letter was emailed to parents confirming the gates would be closed to vehicles at 08.50-09.10; 10.25-10.50; 12.10-13.05;14.55-15.10, commencing 12th September 2024. Additionally, the letter encourages all parents and carers to show consideration when parking in the nearby streets as well as parking in a way that ensures safe walking routes for our children.) There was a further discussion on requesting support from community police.

AGM – will take place at the next meeting.

Next Meeting – Wednesday 13th Nov
6.30pm Turnbull High School