



Partnership Group
Minutes
13th November 2024

Present

Office bearers:	Staff:	Attendees:
Mrs E Dempsie (Chair) Mr S Smith (Secretary) Mrs L Lockhart (Treasurer)	Mrs W Gallacher (Acting Headteacher) Mr S Hall Church representative: Mrs V Stewart	Mrs K Neill Ms S Quigley Ms B Wielgosz Mr C Gibney Ms K Szczur Ms A Ryazanova

1. Welcome & apologies

- Mrs Dempsie welcomed all
- No apologies were received

2. Actions from previous meeting (not covered by other agenda items)

- Asda Cashpot
Mr Smith reported that as of the 12th of November with 18 days to go there is £160.30 in our Asda Cashpot. Can everyone please continue to use the App and encourage family and friends to do so as well. The Cashpot closes on the 30th of November.
- School Pantomime bus funding
Mr Smith advised that between the signed Celtic ball raffle and the donations at the Halloween disco, we now have more than half the money to cover the bus to the school pantomime. The Partnership Group will cover the rest of the cost so the bus will be free of charge.
- Ground Maintenance at SLC
Mr Smith has emailed the council regarding the maintenance of the grounds at the front of the school on Carlisle Road and received an acknowledgement reply on the 5th of September (Ref: 2349504). Mrs Gallacher reported that she too had reported and received an acknowledgement reply. Neither have heard any more from the Council. Mrs Gallacher advised that pupils might be able to do environmental cleanups to keep the area tidy.

3. Headteacher's report

- Mrs Gallacher thanked everyone for attending the meeting and issued the Partnership Group Constitution so all members are fully aware of the objectives of the group, structure, guidelines and their roles and responsibilities as part of the group.



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- Mrs Brown (one of our SSA) has been redeployed to another school. Mrs Birtles has developed a new timetable for SSA, focusing on providing targeted support for classes and scheduling support during the times when it's needed most throughout the week.
- Cost of the School Day - 29 parents responded to the questionnaire. Although this was slightly disappointing, all views were taken into account to help complete the Cost of the School Day Policy. Mrs Gallacher shared the policy with the PG and they discussed some of the content. As part of the CoSD, the PG developed a preliminary calendar to ensure events are distributed evenly throughout the year. The policy and calendar will be shared on our website at the end of the month.
- Mrs Gallacher is currently creating our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy. This will be shared with the Parent Group prior to submission to the council to gather feedback.
- A new vision and values were created in June 2024. Mrs Gallacher is actively promoting the vision and values with the children during assemblies and all staff are committed to embedding these principles in all aspects of life at St. John's Primary School.
Vision - Creating a caring community of faith, enabling all learners to reach their potential.
- School Improvement Plan - Mrs Kelly is leading the implementation of Inquiry-Based Learning. She has already visited two schools within the authority to learn about their approaches, and both Mrs Gallacher and Mrs Kelly will visit another school in a different authority later this session. On the recent inset day, Mrs. Kelly conducted a training session for the staff. We plan to begin piloting this learning approach in January with an introductory theme, after which we will evaluate and promptly plan the next session.
- Maths - CPA approach - Both Mrs Reid and Mrs McKee have attended training for this approach and will begin to embed this in their learning. Mrs Kelly will be attending training later in the year. Staff have also begun to use SLC numeracy and maths planners to ensure a consistent approach to learning and teaching of numeracy and mathematics.
- Attachment - All staff have been reviewing and assessing both their individual practices and the school's overall approaches. We have been collecting evidence and aim to submit this for the November deadline in order to be awarded Pledge 1 - Act to Make a Difference.



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- The Circle Framework - Mrs Gallacher attended training on the inset day and will cascade this to staff. The CIRCLE Framework is a way of organising and supporting input using a staged system of support, beginning with setting up an inclusive classroom. We will begin by collaboratively assessing our school environment and ways in which we can adapt the environment to ensure that all learners feel included.
- UNCRC - All classes have created a class charter and Mrs Gallacher is promoting the UNCRC via weekly assemblies.
- Pupil Voice - We are creating numerous opportunities for learners to share their voices and will continue to expand these efforts. Examples include: Fun 31, Star and a wish, Suggestion box, Songs for assembly
- Parental Engagement - We will keep developing diverse opportunities to engage parents with the school including Big Blether, learning show cases etc. The responses from the parental questionnaire is helping to share ideas, suitability of time etc so thank you to all the parents/carers who completed these. Thank You
- Mrs Gallacher thanked the PG for the successful Halloween disco, money for the bus for the panto trip. She also thanked Vivien and the PG for the time they have taken to complete funding bids for the community garden and their efforts maintaining the garden.

4. Treasurer's report

- Mrs Lockhart reported that the Halloween Disco bucket donations totalled £82.40, the signed Celtic ball raffle raised £183, the DJ cost £70 and food and snacks for the Disco cost £44.60.
- The current balance is £3572.78 (although £2500 is ringfenced for the Garden project due to a successful funding bid from the Climate Emergency and Resilience Fund - see Item 7) leaving the group with a working total of £1072.78.
- Mrs Gallacher reported that Second Chance Charity Shop had donated £500 directly to the school and that St John's Catholic Church SSVDP had also contacted her about supporting the school financially.

5. Christmas Fayre - Sun 1st December

- Mrs Dempsie asked the group members for ideas and volunteers for the upcoming Christmas Fayre which included home baking/various stall-keepers selling wares/Santa visit/craft and cards made by school pupils/raffle/face painting and glitter tattoos.
- Stall-keepers who ask for a table to sell their wares will be asked for a donation rather than a fixed fee.



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6. Christmas Café & Christmas Gifts (W. Gallacher)

- The Christmas café will be held Friday 13th of December when parents will be invited to the school for home baking, tea/coffee and to see the pupils performing festive songs. Donations of home baking would be welcome.
- The Christmas nativity performances will be Tues 10th Dec (10am) and Wed 11th (2pm).
- Mrs Gallacher stated that the school would cover the cost of the Christmas gift to pupils from the Partnership Group this year.

7. School Garden Update

- Mrs Stewart advised that a successful bid to the Climate Emergency and Resilience Fund (via SLC) for £2500 had been successful which will be used to replace the 'Living Roof' on the garden shed (though some of the work may have to wait until spring).
- The garden project has been entered into a competition "It's Your Neighbourhood" ran by Keep Scotland Beautiful for the award 'Pollinator of the Year'. There are cash prizes for the top 3 places.
- BECCA (Loch Wood) have put Mrs Stewart in touch with a Development Officer for Lanark Climate Action Group who is keen to meet and support the garden development.
- Johnny Hamilton from the Blackwood and Kirkmuirhill Coordination Group has been in contact with Mrs Stewart about a £500 microgrant to support vulnerable families.
- Mrs Stewart would like 4 St John's children to be Ambassadors for the Garden at the upcoming church 'Lite Bite' on Sunday 24th November to seek community ideas from parishoners.

8. Blackwood Solar Farm Action Group Update (V. Stewart)

- Mrs Stewart spoke about the plans for the Solar farm in Blackwood Estate on behalf of the Action Group (attached as an Appendix) and asked that any objections or support for the plans are made using the survey.



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9. Any parent issues/suggestions for discussions:

- **Pope Francis Award**

This will be starting in November

- **P7 leavers treat/hoodies**

Ms Szczur asked about the P7 having a Prom as a leavers treat. Mrs Gallacher does not feel a Prom would be appropriate and will engage with pupils on their views on what leavers treat they would like.

- **Parent Portal?**

Ms Szczur raised concerns about the functionality of Parent Portal compared to the School App. Concerns were shared by other parents and Mrs Gallacher. However, as Parent Portal is supported both at a council and national level (and is free) it will continue to be the main method used for parental communication in addition to Twitter and the school website.

10. AOCB

- N/A

Date of next meeting - 6.30pm, Wednesday 22nd January 2025



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Appendix

Information for Schools

PROPOSED 98MW SOLAR AND 100MW BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM AT ROGERHILL FARM, BLACKWOOD ESTATE.

During a recent meeting with the developer, they advise they intend to submit their proposal to South Lanarkshire Council before Christmas 2024. The following outcomes were also noted:

Jobs: NO long term full time jobs.

Community Benefit: Greenswitch Capital have stated they will pay a total of £10,000 per year in community benefit. This equates to £50 per MW instead of the recommended level of £5000 per MW currently paid by wind farms.

Fuel Bills: No reduction in local fuel bills.

Traffic: During construction, it's estimated 135 construction vehicle journeys per day will be made, including HGVs. It may be many more on any given day. Estimated construction time is 18 months. This is a total of 73,912 vehicle journeys, of which 20,805 will be HGVs.

There will be 2 site access points (1) Strathaven Road via Thornton Road (2) New road constructed just past the entrance to Blackwood Estate.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS): Located next to Loch Wood

children's outdoor learning area, this will comprise 3.8 acres of containers filled with Lithium-ion batteries.

Safety: There is a new plan for a large electricity substation sited over shallow mine workings in a Coal Authority 'development high risk area', and close to homes.

Scale: The development will cover 342 acres, one of the largest in the UK. The proposal is contrary to our local community plan in relation to preservation of our easily accessible green space.

Education: Loch Wood is the only natural green space accessible on pavement from Blackwood/Kirkmuirhill within 30mph limit. All other spaces involve walking through 60mph roads without pavement. Pupils from Blackwood and St John's primaries walk to lessons at Loch Wood every week. This can be over 200 children per week.

BECA is arranging funding for a bus to allow Bent to access the wood next term with equal use to the other primary schools.

Lesmahagow High inclusion unit has weekly lessons with forest ranger. Our local children also regularly use Loch Wood for play in a familiar, safe, (mostly) litter free environment.

Future of access to Loch Wood outdoor learning areas for our children is at risk and will be significantly diminished if the development goes ahead.

Unlikely that schools would risk sending children there due to perceived public safety risks and noise from the lithium-ion battery containers **immediately** next to the outdoor learning areas and estate road, plus the 8ft security fencing along the road and around all fields each side to the road and learning areas.

If development consented, BECA is likely to close down. BECA has raised almost £400k for the local community in the past 5 years - is developing a funded wildlife education programme for local schools in 2025, based on the results of its wildlife surveys this year. All this would be lost.

Why would BECA close? BECA is a registered charity and must generate income to maintain its charitable status. Any reduction in use, projects or volunteers risks insolvency and closure.

What can YOU do?

You can complete a short survey to inform the Kirkmuirhill, Blackwood and Boghead Local Place Plan, which South Lanarkshire Council are consulting on. This asks for your views about where you live, including access to local greenspace - have your say and make your views known about the proposed solar development at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KBB-LPP-Survey>

Even though the application has not yet been submitted you can write to your local political representative to express your views.

Imogen Walker MP: Imogen.walker.mp@parliament.uk

Mairi McAllan MSP: Mairi.McAllan.msp@parliament.scot

Brian Whittle MSP: Brian.Whittle.msp@parliament.scot

Mark Horsham Councillor: Mark.Horsham@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Ross Gowland Councillor: ross.gowland@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Ross Lambie Councillor: ross.lambie@southlanarkshire.gov.uk