Houston Primary School Parent Council Meeting Wednesday 17th March 2021

Members Present (apologies for any names missed)

Nicki Barrett, Cheryl Logan< Alexis Alexander, Mrs Murray. J McPherson, L Wilson, L Masterton, C Farquhar, Mrs Johnstone, E Bull, Louise Hastings, James McBeath, John Gaffney, L Macleod, Sarah Paterson, Nicola MacNair, J Renshaw, S Ballantyne.

Chair opened the meeting with an apology for being unable to attend the last meeting.

Minutes were approved

Mrs Murray mentioned that she had not been receiving the minutes so Nicki will send them over to her once she received them.

Nicki hopes everyone is finding the return to school for all the pupils ok.

TREASURERS REPORT

Absolutely no change on the bank account from the last meeting. The balance remains at £5,409.97

So funds are still available to pay for P7s leavers gifts and inflatables should we be in a position to have them.

UNIFORM REPORT

Not much to report other than there is a third tracksuit order being placed due to the popularity of them.

It was confirmed that all year groups would be able to wear them going forward. They are also going to discuss the possibility of introducing shorts to the tracksuit uniform.

It was discussed that it is not likely that the p1 induction will go ahead in a normal capacity due to the ongoing covid situation, so therefore the selling of uniforms will have to be reviewed and a new format explored.

Mrs Johnstone said that the induction would be explored once guidance comes out from the government (possibly next week) and following risk assessments etc, they may need to explore using google teams, thinglinks etc.

Laura is going to Email Mrs Johnstone regarding the possibility of doing a form that she can collate in order to maximize their fund raising on the commissions.

Mrs Johnstone mentioned that the early learning class was in discussions with a graphic designer as the new logo had been chosen so this was all being finalised.

Nicki took the opportunity to thank Laura for all the hard and great work she did on the Facebook page.

SOCIAL EVENTS REPORT

The question of whether or not the summer fayre could go ahead and Mrs Murray doubts that we will be able to do any fundraising until after the summer. A brief discussion was had regarding if it was fair or not to ask parents to pay towards funds at present given the covid situation. It was mentioned that Gryffe were back to raising funds. Could we possibly do it through parent pay? Mrs Murray said the school isn’t struggling but that they should make it known what the funds are for. Ideas like a lottery were suggested wherein the school would take half the funds and the rest would go towards a prize, but this was not moved upon as we entered a second period of lockdown. Similarly the idea of a school tea towel was discussed. It was discussed that doing something to raise funds may help to re-establish links with the parents and re-establish the wonderful sense of school community spirit we have all enjoyed.

BOOK CLUB

Nothing to report either as the book club hasn’t been running in the school.

HEAD TEACHERS REPORT

Mrs Murray noted how lovely it was having all the pupils back and everything felt proper and correct.

AS ever, the teaching staff has changed a little with returns from maternity leave and a few teachers now going on maternity leave. There are a few new staff members, and also the office staff have changed.

In accordance with the councils Right for Renfrewshire, there has been an overhaul of council staff within the school. The Janitor will be moving to a new role as a senior operative elsewhere and will sadly be leaving us on26th March. We will be getting 2 new janitors, or senior operatives, that will overlap during the day to attend to kitchen duties. We shall remain a non cooking school wherein all hot meals will be prepared in Bridge of Weir primary and delivered to us hot. Similarly due to contractual changes, kitchen and cleaning staff will be changing.

The early learning and childcare centre is ALMOST finished. Now that the power, gas and water suppliers have confirmed when their respective works will be completed, we can confirm it will be operational with a full compliment of staff on the 10th MAY. Current work is being done on paths and landscaping the play areas and garden areas. There will be more pitch than appears at present once the work is completed. The old nursery will be demolished and reinstated as a play area.

Ongoing bidding for funds is underway, and we have secured funds for replacement flooring and the grass area at the back path in the p1 area after concerns were raised as to its safety following a period of severely inclement weather. Technically it is out with school grounds but we are hopeful this will be redressed soon.

Mrs Murray Highlighted that we are very much at the mercy of the government with regards to how quickly we can come out of lockdown. As a result, school trips in the summer term are unlikely to go ahead. They will try to come up with ideas that can facilitate the acknowledgement of the end of the school year within the parameters set.

Houston Primary School and Gryffe High school are part of a pilot study of super-fast broadband in the area. The school will provide feedback to the company. It is hoping it will be turned on for term 3 wherein all pupils can log in at once. The school has been gifted 30 chrome books for taking part. Mrs Murray says it will be a joy to see the school fully operational on the IT front.

Mrs Murray wanted to thank the pupils for their massive effort with home learning.

Mrs Johnstone created a survey, as well as the local authority for pupils and parents to receive feedback during lockdown. The answers were somewhat ambiguous with a lack of evidence given to support negative answers, other than the anticipated IT problems. The main issues highlighted were keeping children focused and motivated, and an overwhelming sense of isolation. They children relied heavily on parental support which is difficult to facilitate if working from home. Alas because the survey was anonymous, individual issues couldn’t be solved directly but they did try to answer issues via the Facebook page and newsletter. Of the 94 people surveyed, to was largely positive given the circumstances. It was never going to be easy, and there is lots to reflect on going forward and indeed should the situation present itself again. The staff have learned a great many new skills that can only help broaden their teaching and the children’s learning experience.

Mrs Farquhar is to facilitate the assessments done within the school involving the staff and children for the Digital Award.

AOB

A question was asked regarding the p7s transitions to high school and sadly Mrs Murray couldn’t give any clarity on this matter currently as they will have to seek guidance from the government. They will facilitate something for the p7s however nearer the time.

Next meeting will be MONDAY 17th MAY.