

James Rennie PTFA
Annual General Meeting
23rd November 2017

Present

Debbie Stafford – Chair
Debbie Wilkinson – Treasurer
Wendy Banks – Secretary
Kris Williams – Head
Lisa Hollywood – School Business Manager
Marilyn King
Stephen Spencer
Adrienne Gill
Joanne Gill
Helen Turton
Louise Johnstone

1. Apologies

Sandrine Chieze
Wioleta Stramlau
Sarah Edgar

2. Appointment of Committee Officers

Chair – Debbie Stafford
Treasurer – Debbie Wilkinson
Secretary – Wendy Banks
Marilyn King
Helen Turton

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Copies are on the James Rennie School website. Further copies were available at the meeting. These were agreed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising

Coffee Mornings

This year the Coffee Mornings have been planned for different days each month, at the request of some parents that were not able to attend on a Thursday morning. This does not seem to have made any difference, as the same parents attend. Debbie to send out the flyers of dates for this coming term again. The days will be reviewed at the end of the academic year.

Puberty Workshops

Kris reported that the School Nurses have now amalgamated. Debbie will ask them to deliver a puberty workshop in the Summer Term. In addition Kris will arrange for the Communication Team and our Nurse to attend and bring along the resources that we use in school.

New Build

Parents asked what was happening with the New Build.

Kris reported that he had had a meeting with the Education Department and County Council. They decided that if School was to become an Academy there was the possibility that we could make the new build into a profit making organisation. They have taken legal advice now so a Covenant is being set up. We also have a Solicitor on our Governing Body. We will hear by mid December what the position is.

This is linked to the reason why the new play equipment has not been installed. Once a decision has been made on the New Build the equipment can be put in.

Justgiving

Adrienne suggested that we look at other organisations rather than Justgiving to manage our on-line fundraising. She will bring details of the organisation she uses to one of the Coffee Mornings.

5. Treasurer's Report

Copies of the balance sheets and the accounts were available at the meeting.

Debbie reported that the end of financial year accounts showed a balance of £14,150.66. She pointed out that during 2016/17 money had been transferred to the School account relating to the purchase of the defibrillator (£919.75) and the cost of soft play/sensory rooms (£24,508.91). The current balance is £11,356.17.

Debbie informed the meeting that she would be arranging to replace Margaret Ratcliffe (the previous School Business Manager) with Lisa Hollywood as a Trustee and Signatory on the PTFA Bank Account. She also asked for the meeting to nominate a parent to fill the vacant Trustee and Signatory position. It was agreed that Marilyn King would take up this post, as she is regularly in School.

6. Christmas Funding

A spreadsheet giving details of the cost of Christmas 2017 was distributed at the meeting. The total cost being £2,538. It was agreed that the PTFA would pay this.

7. Fundraising Events

The Family Bingo Night is planned for Friday 1st December, arrangements are all in place for this and ticket sales have gone well. Money raised will be for PTFA Funds.

Debbie said she will be organising a Quiz Night with Pie and Peas in the spring term for Extended School.

Adrienne said that she had a contact that had surplus tins of peas (RDA). She will find out more and let Debbie know.

Race Night – Wendy would still like to organise this. She will look into it and let us know suggested dates at a future Coffee Morning.

Sponsored Walk – It was suggested that the PTFA arrange a 5K Walk at Watchtree. This will be discussed at a Coffee Morning.

Both the Race Night and Sponsored Walk will be raising money for PTFA Funds.

8. Any Other Business

Makaton

Previously School has subsidised parents attending Makaton Courses by 50%. Unfortunately, they are no longer able to do this. Debbie asked if the PTFA would be happy to take this on. The average number of parents attending each year has been 6, which would mean a financial commitment of £450. This was agreed.

Update by Kris

- The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra will be coming to do 4 performances during the last week of this term.
- McVitties have donated a Friendship Bench to School, which is wheelchair accessible.
- The School Council are setting up Playground Buddies and a Talking Bench.
- DIY Wholesales have donated 2 large sheds. Suggestions for their use are an outdoor Toy Library or Sand Pit. An ex parent has put in concrete bases.
- Marks & Spencer have donated a solar powered outdoor feature, which will be located in the Sensory Garden.
- Kris will be applying for a grant from Screwfix linked to the Extended School and a Horticulture Club.
- Debbie has been successful in her application to Children In Need to staff a selection of after school clubs for the next 3 years.

Class Dojo

Currently 4 classes are using the Class Dojo. Parents said that it is 'brilliant'.

The possibility of raising funds to support the extension of this was discussed. Kris said that it is best used on an Android or Kindle.

It was agreed that after Christmas Debbie will send out flyers to parents requesting donations of any old/surplus Androids or Kindles. The cost of repair and update will then be looked at, in the hope of using these for pupils.

This will be discussed further at a future Coffee Morning.

After the official part of the meeting Stephen Spencer, one of our Parent Governors, addressed those present to give an update on the situation regarding the possibility of our School becoming an Academy.

Firstly, he gave thanks on behalf of the Governors for the PTFA's enthusiasm and contribution to the School and said that it was clear that they are very pro-active.

Stephen reported that School has a dark horizon and would be worse off if we increase our numbers to the maximum of 150. We currently have 145 on role.

If we look at our statistical neighbours we are paid the least per child than any county. The reality is that an Academy could be an improvement for us. It is still not decided yet, there is still a lot to look at. At this point we are still gathering information. Parents will be given the information and asked for their comments in the future. We would not go ahead until due diligence is completed.

The Governors started looking at this 2 years ago and no decision has been taken yet.

Kris explained how schools are funded. The advantage of becoming an Academy would be that we can set our own bandings.

The ideal solution would be for Cumbria County Council to raise their funding. However, the only way to make Cumbria County Council move is to be more pro-active and make a big noise. We need to go to elected Officers. If the Local Authority didn't move with the top-ups we could look at the examples of Northumberland banding levels.

As a PTFA we could write to Cumbria County Council.

SLD pupils in mainstream receive more funding than James Rennie School.

He assured those present that if the Governors made the decision that they want to go for Academy Status there has to be a consultation with parents and staff before anything can proceed.

Stephen will come along to the Coffee Morning on 6th December to update parents on a meeting he will be attending on 1st December.

It was pointed out that anything we do we need to be organised and have the facts first. We need to have detailed information and comparable data first.

Any specific questions to put to Stephen should be forwarded to Debbie, who will e-mail them to Stephen.

Stephen was thanked for attending.