

Underbank Primary School
Parent Council Meeting
Thursday 6th May 2025

Present: Scott Martin (Chair), Margo Millar (HT), Mhairi van der Kaars, Natalie Dow, Lindsay Speirs, Chrissie Finnigan, Jenny Parry, Rebekah Bond (Class Teacher)

Co-opted Member: None

Apologies: Krystal McNicol

Councillors: None

Minutes: Susan Jackson

Welcome & Apologies - SM welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting and shared apologies received.

Previous Minutes.

Approved – ND

Seconded – LS

HT Report – See Appendix 1

MM confirmed this was SM's last meeting as Chair and thanked him for working with school and chairing the PC.

MM shared the HT report, as part of which RB gave a short presentation on a maths resource used in school – Times Tables Rock Stars. Both answered any questions on the merits of the resource and its clear reporting process.

MM answered questions relevant to her HT report.

Funding Update

No funding update available as Lorraine Cameron not in attendance.

School Self-Evaluation Exercise Results

LS suggested some parents may feel awkward to select disagree on the form, MM reiterated that names are not included so results and comments cannot be traced back. SM commented that from his experience which was typically positive, the results were a fair reflection. LS asked for clarification on question 15 (*Where possible, the school takes my views into account when making changes*), MM and RB gave examples of questionnaires sent e.g. homework questionnaire, PC meetings, feedback directly from parents etc. MM explained that this annual questionnaire completed at Parent Consultations is also a useful reflection tool and in preparation for any future HMIE visits.

SLC Policy on X/Formerly Twitter

MM delivered SLC statement advising schools stepping back from use of X/Formerly Twitter and potentially using Blue Sky. Some PC members had not heard of Blue Sky. RB explained that X/Formerly Twitter can still be used for sharing information. She went on to explain the background ownership of Blue Sky and that it has a similar functionality to X/Formerly Twitter though there are questions regarding its accelerated popularity with regards to security and policing of use.

MM advised that employees are awaiting more guidelines from SLC and that there is an increase in parents withdrawing permission for their child(ren) to be included in some platforms used e.g. X/Formerly Twitter.

JP voiced concern about using too many avenues of communication and information of different platforms could be missed by parents. Her opinion was that parents mostly want photographs.

LS commented on struggles using Google Classroom and how parents are not meant to access it via their child's password. RB explained Glow is being reviewed and she will be involved in further discussions at Co-ordinators meetings. She highlighted that the current secure use for children may be jeopardised if adults are allowed access.

Further discussion took place on using various platforms and the security issues around each. MM advised that consideration as to the best method of issuing information and photographs is ongoing.

SLC Parent Council Conference Event – 31st March 2025

No attendees from Underbank Primary.

SM commented that he has access to slides from the Conference and that there was not a lot of change from previous years. Similar issues surrounding budget, SLC targets, engaging with parents etc. He offered to forward the slides to school and any interested PC members.

MM shared a summary of the conference hosted by Education resources.

PVG Guidance for Parent Run Groups

SM advised of an email and guidance around PVG that he had received from MM. He and MM explained the value of PVG, the impacts on PFA members and regulated roles. This means PC Chair and Vice Chair may need a PVG certificate. SM expressed concern that this may discourage parent participation in school activities and groups. MM assured all that the school will continue to apply for PVG clearance for as parent helpers and mentioned that SLC may limit applications or direct us on a different route as SLC currently pay for the process. JP explained that PVG may be required for all PC members as, for example, discussing best maths applications and software comes under the guidelines as 'influencing' a child. MM advised that there is a grace period until 1st July 2025 after which all guidelines must be strictly adhered to.

Discussion about the PVG system highlighted areas needing clarification such as:

Does a SLC employed teacher requires an additional application?

Will it affect new P1 parents?

Will current grace period be extended?

MM will pass all current information on PVG to new or Interim Chairperson.

Retirement of Director of Education

MM advised that Carole McKenzie's decision to retire came after a period of ill health and the new Director of Education has been announced recently. Lyndsey McRoberts, formerly Director of Education in South Ayrshire and previous Head Teacher of Duncanrig High School will resume the post over the coming months.

AOCB

SM advised that the majority of business had been covered in the meeting. He commented that UPS had been a fantastic foundation for both of his children and that they were performing well. MM thanked him for stepping in as Chair and all of his work and support for the school.

AGM

MM suggested that due to the low numbers present at meeting that an Interim Chairperson should be elected until the next meeting. JP agreed to take on the role after being nominated by LS and 2nd by MvdK. The meeting will be on 4th September to coincide with the next PFA meeting. CF asked that the current Vice Chair be emailed to confirm continuation in this role until the Sept meeting. JP agreed to do this.

The members suggested that the PC and PFA could sit together for a period of time at the next meeting to discuss PVG rules.

CF explained that there were no substantial changes made to the current PC Constitution. The members discussed the possibility of removing the paragraph about Teams Meetings during pandemics such as Covid. It was felt that for reasons of safeguarding and security face to face was preferential though for inclusion for people with ill health a hybrid meeting may be an option. The paragraph will remain at present.

JP made suggestion of using village hall and grassy area close by for the school sports day, which would eliminate transport costs. MM explained lack of toilets, ensuring areas were free of hazards etc dog poo, the size of the village hall and supervision of pupils made it undesirable to utilise these areas. She confirmed that the pupils voted overwhelmingly to return to John Cumming Stadium in Carlisle and its facilities and security there was much more manageable. MvdK asked if transport was discounted and MM confirmed cost was very fair compared to other companies.

JP asked about PC using PFA bank account. Discussion surrounded the need for a separate PC account, if fundraising was within PC remit and if PFA could ringfence any money secured by PC. Clarification that PC might wish to look for external funding while PFA organised local fundraising was given by MM. She explained that an annual calendar was created in conjunction with the PFA, balancing the frequency of fundraising events and activities, and took into consideration the impact on the Cost of the School Day. The optional KUA fund was also highlighted as available for contributions if your child attended a club, for donations all year as this helps with transport costs.

MM stated that the school's Cost of School Day policy was shared with SLC but that charges/donations for school shows are used to offset resources/costumes required. LS suggested approaching PFA for costs for shows e.g. licence and costumes. She added that events with no entry fee but donations for refreshments were more inclusive but also successful in raising money. MM shared that the PFA chair and MM now meet early in the session to ensure that we are all mindful of financial impact on our families.

Next meeting: Thursday 4th September at 1800hrs or 1830hrs to potentially meet with PFA to discuss new PVG guidance which has been issued to PC and PFA Chairs.