

DRAFT

**Echline Parent Association
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday 18 January 2024 6.45 - 8.15pm
Meeting held at Echline Primary School (and by Teams)**

Present:

In person:	By Teams:
Charlotte Davie (Chair)	Jen Costello
Jana Reuter (Vice-Chair)	Katie McRae
Libby Hulme (Treasurer)	Julie Fraser
Jude Moir (Head Teacher)	Hannah Dickson
Lauren Scott (Secretary)	Graeme Keir
Wendy Bishop	
Stacy Taylor	
Allison Walsh	
Tara Zammit	
Nicola Arthur	
Richard Oakley	
Rachel Goater	

Apologies: David Flint

Discussion	Action
<p>1. Welcome – Charlotte welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted a quorum was present and the meeting proceeded to business.</p> <p>2. Minutes and actions from previous meeting</p> <p>a. Minutes of the meeting on 7 November 2023 were approved.</p> <p>b. Actions from previous meeting:-</p> <p>i. To follow up on ‘missing’ Council funding – Jana explained that (despite being given the correct details) the Council was still using incorrect bank account details. Jana to follow up. (Post-meeting – confirm payment has now been received.)</p> <p>ii. To pull together survey for parents/carers to seek their views on what they want from EPA – School has now issued its survey on School comms so EPA to feed into that survey review and process.</p> <p>iii. Theatrical and arts experiences – following on from previous discussion about a possible panto trip (which did not happen) it was agreed to revisit this subject towards the summer.</p>	<p>JR</p> <p>CD/JR</p> <p>JM</p>

iv. **Mobile phone pact** – Graeme Keir updated attendees on developments since the last meeting. There was a varied discussion about the available research, and the pros and cons of implementing a pact. Graeme explained it would need 80% buy-in to be successful. Attendees voiced differing opinions on whether they thought this could work in the school/for certain age groups/for their child. It was recognised that by the end of P6, many of the children will have their own phones, so focus should perhaps be on younger age group. Graeme explained that a sub-group met before Christmas to discuss the pact in more detail, and the next step will be to host a drop in session for parents and carers to find out more (it may be that other organisations are invited to attend that event too e.g. NSPCC). One attendee suggested Open All Hours may have some useful insight too. Graeme to arrange drop-in session with the support of the EPA. The discussion then moved on to considering mobile phone use in the context of internet safety more generally. Mr Moir explained that this does fall within the Health and Wellbeing curriculum but that it could play a more prominent role. One option could be for the School to engage with the community police officers to run some sessions for the children on internet safety.

GK

JM

v. **Musical instrument tuition** – Mr Moir confirmed he had spoken with the woodwind teacher. She confirmed that there is scope to increase the number of lessons (this year) but there are not enough instruments. The woodwind teacher is trying to source more instruments, and will also let Mr Moir know of costs. Could the EPA help fund this? One attendee indicated their view is that the EPA should support an all round package relating to music. Consistency of violin provision was also discussed (but again it was noted that the music teachers do not fall under Mr Moir's remit, so there is a limit to how much influence he has over them). The discussion then progressed to the apparent low numbers of Echline children who continue (or are able to continue) playing instruments at the High School. It was noted that music provision is a topic which seems to come up again and again at EPA meetings, and therefore may merit a separate discussion. Mr Moir acknowledged this is an area which needs to be developed, but there are other areas which take priority in the context of the current improvement plan. The main focus here is developing teaching and learning in the core curriculum (Literacy, Numeracy and HWB) however this feedback is important and will feed in to the

improvement plan for next year and beyond. However, he believes there is traction in looking at the Echline curriculum and how we can build theatrical and expressive arts into it, but we must also bear in mind that this needs to be considered amongst other competing demands. Many views were expressed by attendees. The general consensus was that this seems like a missed opportunity for Echline children (and has been for some years now), and that the EPA should be supporting wider musical/expressive arts opportunities which the School *does* have control over (in whatever form that might take e.g. funding extracurricular musical opportunities). Mr Moir was supportive of this, but voiced some reservation about the speed of any proposed changes – these would not form part of this year’s school improvement plan and so any views/suggestions may need to be rolled over for consideration in the context of next year’s improvement plan. Agreed that Mr Moir would consider arranging a drop in session for parents and carers to discuss this topic more generally.

JM

- vi. **Nursery buddies** – at the last meeting, Ms Conway had been tasked with exploring setting up a buddy system for the current nursery children. Mr Moir reported that, since then, there have been detailed discussions with the nursery staff about why this was being proposed - these discussions took into account up to date nursery play based pedagogy and Education Scotland’s focus on free flow play. The conclusion which had been reached was that - in the staffs’ professional opinion – introducing a buddy system for the nursery children was not necessary and would not be taken forward. The conversation then moved on to discussing transition arrangements for nursery children moving into P1. Again, attendees offered differing views. Some felt their children had benefitted from the buddy system when transitioning from Echline nursery to Echline P1, others felt the system was not equitable as children transitioning from private nurseries were not given the same transitional opportunities. Mr Moir noted that the P1/P6 buddy system was also under review for the reasons he had already mentioned.

LS/RG

- vii. **Constitution** – as reported previously, the constitution has not been updated for a few years and there are parts of it which could be improved/adapted to reflect reality. Rachel Goater and Lauren Scott will do an initial review and report back to the EPA (also bearing in mind that the current committee will technically need to stand

down at this year's AGM, so timing needs to be considered).

3. Chair's report

- a. Much of what Charlotte intended to mention has been/will be dealt with elsewhere during this meeting.
- b. **Xmas events** – big thanks to all of those who contributed to the various Xmas activities which the EPA supported.
- c. **Priorities for the next year** – meeting to be arranged between the Committee and Mr Moir to discuss priorities for the next year e.g. what should the EPA be fundraising for; musical opportunities as discussed earlier; comms with parents/carers.
- d. **Ceilidh/raffle** – to be held next week. Tickets selling well.
- e. **Assistance** – once again, CD asked those attending and the wider group to consider if they could assist the EPA in their fundraising and other endeavours.

CD/JM

4. Treasurer's Report

- a. Libby explained that there has not been that much activity since her report at the last meeting. Since then, income has been received for the Xmas cards and some other Xmas events. We still have some commitments which we have not yet paid for, such as the £100 per class which was previously agreed, and payment for the science app. Recent expenses include some outlays for the ceilidh and the raffle.
- a. The current bank balance is £8502. After deducting expenses (and including income still to be received), the balance will be around £7209.
- b. P7 leavers – the EPA usually funds the purchase of scientific calculators and the yearbook for the P7 leavers. Attendees confirmed they were happy for the EPA to support these this year too (cost is usually in the region of £1500). EPA to keep an eye on costs of calculators and purchase before end of term when prices are likely to increase.
- c. The EPA has not received copy invoices to evidence the School's £3,00 wishlist spend. Libby suggested if these are not available, an alternative could be for Mr Moir to provide a declaration that the funds have been spent as per the wishlist. Mr Moir undertook to pick this up with the School's Business Manager.
- d. One of our parents has secured a donation of £750 from the Ebay Foundation - thank you. They would like this

JM

donation to be transferred to the Opportunities Fund, to be used towards the costs of the skiing trips and camps.

- e. Opportunities Fund – Mr Moir explained that the money in the Opportunities Fund has almost all been used up, which is great. It seems people have been more willing to approach the School to ask for some support from this Fund. It has also been used to keep costs down for some of the large one-off costs. It was agreed the EPA should transfer the sum of £1000 into the Opportunities Fund now (this is over and above the £750 Ebay donation which will be transferred over when received).
- f. Camp – it was noted that a call had been put out on social media for supplies for the upcoming camp. EPA asked Mr Moir if there was anything specific the EPA could help with. Mr Moir confirmed he would approach the EPA if there was anything.

LH

5. Head Teacher's Report

- a. **Generally** - it does not feel like two months since the last report. Christmas was a happy time – thank you for all the support and the gifts.
- b. **Staffing** - Mr Moir wanted to be honest and upfront and explained that the School has been really unfortunate with recent staffing absences. This has resulted in limitations on capacity and availability. Mr Moir asked for parents'/carers' understanding here.
- c. **Teaching and learning** – the staff are in dogged pursuit of high quality teaching and learning. The Quality Improvement Officer visited the School recently and indicated they were happy with a lot of areas but there are areas which require further improvement. Learners are engaged. Mr Moir and the rest of the staff will continue to build on challenging learners through the curriculum and high quality teaching and learning.
- d. **Sexual Health** – Mr Moir noted this is being rolled out within the School and more specific information about what this will mean for each class will be included in the Termly Newsletters from each class tomorrow.
- e. **Relaunch/realignment of Behaviour Policy** – Mr Moir wants to encourage really positive behaviour, which is in line with the School's rules and values. Do parents/carers have any feedback on this?
- f. **Burns celebrations/Language Week** – Mr Moir is excited with all the Burns activities! It is also the launch of Language Week next week – parents/carers are invited into the School to share their languages and experiences.

6. Fundraising Update

- a. **Xmas stuff** – Jana expressed her thanks again to all those who supported the EPA's activities.
- b. **Ceilidh** – plans for the inaugural ceilidh next week are coming along. Let's hope this can become an annual event!
- c. **Raffle** – to be drawn at the ceilidh. Thank you to all the local businesses, parents and carers who have contributed gifts to the raffle, and to all those who have purchased raffle tickets.
- d. **Quiz** – this was due to be held in December but we postponed it. The new date is expected to be in March.
- e. **Colour Run** – we are planning a colour run for the Spring. Jana is keen for this event to be used to raise funds for a specific project (rather than just for general fundraising purposes).
- f. **Summer Fun Day** – we hope to hold another fun day before the summer holidays. Watch this space!

7. Items Raised/AOB

- a. **Usborne Book Fair** – Wendy Bishop explained that World Book Day is coming up and she wanted to ask if the School/EPA would like her to arrange a Book Fair or sponsored read. These have been successful and have raised significant sums in the past. Mr Moir is keen to explore this further and has agreed to arrange a meeting with Wendy to discuss this further.
- b. **PE kit** – although the School encourages children to wear their PE kit on PE days, this policy is not enforced which means that some children are coming in in PE kit while others are wearing 'normal' (and in some cases, designer) clothes. Again, there were mixed views amongst attendees about their preferred option. That said, it was acknowledged that this inconsistent approach can cause issues for parents/carers when their children are getting ready in the mornings, and also for the children who can sometimes be picked on for what they are wearing. Should a strict rule be applied, so that there is simply no debate over what should be worn on PE days? Mr Moir to consider further, ask the children for their thoughts, and consider asking parents/carers for their views on this before the end of the summer term. Any change would need to be effected for the start of the school year (not now).
- c. **Outdoor learning** – a parent had queried the extent to which staff were making use of the outdoor areas of the

JM

JM

School for classes. In their experience, their children did not seem to be given much opportunity to learn outside. Mr Moir responded that he believes the School provides a comprehensive outdoor learning experience e.g. camps, sailing etc. He also thinks that the School's outdoor space is well utilised. He recognised this is an area where there could be improvements, bearing in mind the School's eco goals and the involvement of the wider community. We should see a drive towards bigger improvements here, particularly as one teacher has been allocated specific time out of class to improve the School's sustainability. Mr Moir considers Echline to be in a better position here than comparator schools.

JM

- d. **Lunches** - the quality and quantity of lunches has been raised as an issue. There have been some instances of food running out for some of the older children (whose lunch slots are later than the younger children). Mr Moir indicated he was not aware this was an issue, but the token system which has just been introduced to reduce time spent and the scope for children to select a meal which is not what they originally ordered may help alleviate this. Mr Moir to keep an eye on this and will report back to the next meeting. One attendee whose children are vegan believes the food to be of high quality, and praised the School's Waste Free Wednesdays initiative.
- e. **Catchment changes** - following on from the foregoing lunch discussion, one attendee made the point that the hall is not a suitable space for school lunches to be provided (particularly given the Scottish Government's desire to roll out hot meals [for all]). This is an issue which has been raised time and time again. Mr Moir indicated that it is counter space which is the real issue here.

Mr Moir noted that Edinburgh Council has just recently issued its Outcomes Reports following the consultations on the proposed changes to the Echline catchment area (and the building of a new high school). There had not been time to digest the contents of the Outcomes Reports, but it seems that, in relation to the catchment changes, option 1 is the preferred option. Only 29 people had responded to the catchment change consultation, which attendees considered a small number on which to base a decision (particularly bearing in mind that two of the public meetings which were to be held before the consultation deadlines were cancelled as a result of strike action). The EPA was asked to contact Robie Crockett at the Council to query the process.

LS

Mr Moir explained that when he is consulted on the proposed changes, the single biggest issue for him will be the School's capacity to provide lunches and to make the space permanent.

JM

<p>f. Emergency contact – given the staffing challenges, one attendee asked what they should do in the event they need to get a message through to their child but the School office is closed (e.g. if running late and will not make school pick up). Mr Moir is to consider and confirm what parents/carers should do in such an event.</p> <p>8. Date of next meeting</p> <p>19 March 2024 (this will be in person and over Teams) subject to checking there is no clash with High School events.</p>	
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ACTION LIST

18.01.24	Initials	Action	Date
1.	CD	EPA to feed into School communications strategy work	Ongoing
2.	JM	To consider access to arts experiences (theatre/panto etc)	By end of summer term
3.	GK	Mobile phone pact - drop-in session to be arranged for parents and carers, to find out more (may involve other organisations such as NSPCC)	End April
4.	JM	To consider approaching community police officers to run sessions for children on internet safety	End April
5.	JM	To consider arranging a drop in session for parents and carers to discuss this topic more generally.	Before next EPA meeting
6.	LS/RG	Constitution - initial review and recommend changes	Report back at next EPA meeting
7.	CD/JM	Priorities for the next year – committee to meet with Mr Moir to discuss priorities for the year ahead	End February
8.	LH	£1,000 to be transferred from EPA account to the Opportunities Fund	End February
9.	JM	Usborne Book Fair/sponsored reading challenge – Mr Moir to arrange meeting with Wendy Bishop to discuss further	End February
10.	JM	PE Kit rules - Mr Moir to consider whether changes are needed (to include asking children for their thoughts etc). (Any change not to take effect before end of this academic year.).	Before end of summer term
11.	JM	To monitor quality/quantity of school lunches.	By next EPA meeting
12.	LS	To contact Robbie Crockett re proposed catchment changes	By next EPA meeting
13.	JM	Emergency contacts - Mr Moir to confirm arrangements when School office is not being manned.	16 February