

PTFA Meeting Minutes

Thursday 6th February 2025

Present

Jess, Holly, Gemma, Simon, Julia, Natalia, Becky

Playground

- Discussion about how the playground is looking very run down – some play equipment has had to be removed and some is in need of considerable repair. Other items are nearing the end of being useable.
- Everyone was in agreement that by investing in the playground we could make a long term and lasting improvement in the school and children's daily lives. The entire school - ages 4-11 make use of the playground once or twice a day so the investment will benefit all of the children rather than a select group. It was also felt that an updated playground would be more appealing to potential future parents when they come to view the school and therefore help with uptake of places.

In addition it was agreed that a lot of the money the PTFA had raised was with the help of the community outside of school and as such would seem fitting that children from the wider community would benefit as well. Some people also suggested that an improved playground would attract more visitors to the village shop and Monks Retreat.

- A couple of local play companies have been approached including Rhino Play and Earthwrights. Of them Earthwrights was the more inspiring.
- Earthwrights have produced an initial plan to start looking at – divided into 2 phases with Phase 1 costing £35K and Phase 2 costing £65K
- Demolition costs can be reduced as Kurtis White has volunteered to help. Also it was thought that members of the parish council might be willing to help – some of them being farmers with access to machinery.

- Discussion was had about the PTFA finances and how much money people were willing to invest and how much should be held back to keep in the pot. Holly reported that currently we had about £35k in the account but once various invoices had been paid the total would be approximately £31K. It was voted to leave £3500 in the account for working with. The general feeling was that investment in the playground - something the children would use every day would be more beneficial than funding more trips and that spending money on other items for school would have to be more considered. It was also felt that the school and the children themselves could consider helping fund raise for specific things as well such as a sponsored event for the Oak residential.
- Ana is working hard at applying for grants for the playground – including Sport England movement award £15K and National Lottery awards for all £20K. These have relatively fast turn arounds – 6 wks and 10wks respectively.
- There is potential for additional funding if the community help raise some funds as well – it needs to be set up through a specific donations platform eg. Just giving or go fund me and then Sport England will add to it. To be explored further.
- Ana will look to do a survey of the community and also the children. Funders generally like to feel they have funded a complete project so for the playground plans would be split into sections to reflect this.
- The plans for the playground will be taken to the Parish Council meeting for discussion and feedback.
- Playground will have a 10 yr guarantee and a 25 year lifespan.
- PTFA to meet with Karen Barlow to show her initial plans and gain feedback from the school.
- Discussion about the plans themselves – all agreed it looked very impressive. Existing playground items that could be kept – the roundabout, shaped bars, single bars – instead of new ones, metal slide, rocket (if repaired). Old equipment being kept could be sandblasted and re painted. The existing surfacing would be used and given a new top coat to help tie everything in together. It was felt that the climbing frame part of the under 5 area could be reduced. The swings could potentially be considered as part of a latter phase. Mixed feeling about basket swing – though it was agreed that it was very popular and multiple children could use it at the same time.

- Discussion that the 2 level rope section was hard for shorter children to use and that perhaps a wobbly bridge of something similar could be put in instead.
- People liked the idea of the nature area – perhaps could be bigger and maybe planted by PTFA rather than Earthwrights to keep costs down.
- Ideas of including a tractor tyre, willow, musical instruments.
- Everyone loved the hangout area, the see saw, bench round the tree.
- Can reuse out picnic benches.
- PTFA to meet with Earthwrights again next week to take back queries and proposed alterations to plans.

Big Fundraiser event

- Jess has approached Kingston House - they are interested in helping. Potentially Ambrook house could be approached as well. Thinking along the lines of a high price ticketed event possibly to include an auction.

Garage Safari

- Not much interest in response to message on Shout Out – last year difficult to drum up stalls. Agreed not to do it this year.

Easter Garden Competition

- To be discussed after half term

Easter Egg Hunt

- Thought maybe to hand this to Birch Class to organise – can give them details of what has been done in the past.

Mufti Day

- Thursday 3rd April? TBC

Bake Sale

- Oak Class – Friday 14th March? TBC

Science Week

- Robot workshop on Thursday 6th March

Bags2School

- No volunteers to organise this despite many attempts to encourage people to help so agreed not to do this at present.

Treasurer succession plan

- Holly will be leaving the school in the summer as Jamie in yr 6
- Natalia is an accountant and will discuss responsibilities with Holly to see if she could take on this role.

Benches

- Benches ordered are very low when used with Village Hall tables. The benches ordered were the same height as Landscope benches however Landscope have tables that are lower.
- There has been a lot of feedback from children and parents that the benches are much too low and do not enable the children to sit comfortably – some having to stand up at lunch or kneel up on the benches to reach. They could also pose a health and safety risk as children are tempted to kneel. Need to consider use by wider community as well as school as they will be in Hall.
- The benches were a considerable investment from the PTFA costing just under £1000 for 10 benches
- Unfortunately it is looking unlikely that the benches can be returned despite PTFAs efforts.
- Options for moving forwards

1. Offer out to the academy to see if any of the other schools would like the benches at a lower cost – eg 60% to recoup some of the money.
 2. Approach schools outside the academy to sell the benches
 3. Ask the village hall to buy some smaller tables as the school is a large user of the hall.
 4. Sell privately
- Holly to discuss options with Karen Barlow
 - Benches to be removed from the hall to prevent them being potentially used by other Hall groups and damaged.

AOB

- Mobile marvels exhibition and National Marine aquarium visits look interesting and very good value – to send details to the school

Next meeting

- Date possibly 3rd March
- Agenda items for next meeting to include
 1. The creation of SOPS for procurement to ensure money is spent correctly
 2. PTFA involvement in this year's fete
 3. Birch parent recruitment to PTFA.