

**Draft Minutes of GENTS PA Committee**  
**7<sup>th</sup> March 2012, 8 pm**

**Attended by:**

Fiona Nic Choiligh (Chair), Evan Furlong, Sarah Kernaghan, Katarzyna Nikonowicz, Mona McCrea, Susan Battah, Catherine Boothman, Niamh Mac Cárthaigh, Karen Flynn, Peter Bishton, Garrett Phelan, Jane Browne, John Callaghan

**Apologies:**

Fiona McCarthy, Aran McMahon, Eimear McCarthy.

**Final Preparation for the Ceili**

Catherine B reported that the musicians were organised, ample prizes for the raffle, posters have been put up (also in the Gaelscoil) and invitations sent as bag notes. The PA list was emailed, a 'One for All' voucher bought for Suzanne (€30) and face painting to be conducted by Niamh and Aran.

Outstanding Preparations

4-5 money jars, tickets, prizes, games, face painting.

Ask people at the door if they would like to join list for 'Open Mike'.

PAC team to arrive at 3pm for face painting, raffle, H&S, and door team set up.

Evan to provide fame (Hoops on bottle). Sarah will provide beanbag target game.

Balloons/décor to be bought, Niamh, Fiona, Catherine B to finalise plans by email.

**ACTION: Eimear to refund Catherine B €30 for voucher. PC to send out text on Friday re. Ceili.**

**Parade**

Application and fee organised, picture for demo of placards completed, large placards and extra books being made. Numbers to be obtained and meeting point TBC, clarify with parents that it is not a drop off. Email to be send explaining that parents are responsible for own children particularly at the end of the parade.

**ACTION: Sarah, Niamh, Mona to make large placards of 'WE LOVE BOOKS'. Sarah, Niamh, Evan, Mona to make extra placards. Evan to email to parents details of the parade.**

**World Book Day**

Great success, thank you to all the volunteers. Next time follow up sooner for time slots with teachers so parent volunteers are given more notice. Positive feedback from teachers. They would be keen to have more similar events throughout the year.

**ACTION: Catherine B to prepare report following World Book Day.**

**Ethos Self Evaluation Group Update**

Aoife, 3 students, Niamh, Sarah and Lynnea are preparing surveys for different groups based on Educate Together sample Ethos Surveys. Lynnea had a meeting with Emma Grainger for

advice on running self evaluation and workshops. PAC may be needed to help with surveys. The required help will be discussed closer to the time.

### **Parent Survey**

38 responses, less than 10% for 216 students.

### **Art Day, revised proposal**

Catherine B outlined the revised proposal. It was suggested that the Art Teams come to each classroom rather than moving the kids. Will require parents to volunteer. Need BOM approval, although Garrett pointed out this may be an issue for the principal to approve. Original date was Friday 4<sup>th</sup> May, perhaps move to 18<sup>th</sup> May to give more time after Titanic project. Proposed to use Toy time, Golden time and Art time for the week of Art Day to donate time to Art Day. Fiona to provide educational research to support what can be learned during Art Day, connect Art and creativity with academic subjects. The proposed Art Day can be a scaled down version and a practice run for 1<sup>st</sup> day of new school.

**ACTION: Catherine B include links of Art Day to other areas of curriculum. Catherine B to discuss date with PC. Catherine B to send revised proposal to PC and copy to the BOM.**

### **Teddy Bear Picnic**

It is our only fundraiser that involves the community and attracts prospective pupils. Reluctance to host it again as it requires a huge amount of work for little financial reward. Questioned whether we need the PR as we have 150 students enrolled Sept 2012. Suggestion to change the event to develop with the age of the kids etc, proposed to have a community sports day, pet show or an inter schools project, but questions raised on how to raise funds. Also proposed to have scaled down Teddy Bear Picnic in the school grounds and incorporate it with an open day.

**ACTION: Fiona Nic to put on agenda for next meeting.**

### **Revised after school activity policy**

Keep it short, go to the BOM (Lynnea), go to consultation. ??

**ACTION: Catherine B to talk to Lynnea??**

### **School photographs**

Only one parent has expressed disappointment that an official photo will not be taken. Evan has offered to take class photos. It was suggested to write a bag note to explain the school photo situation.

**ACTION: Fiona Nic to ask PC to send a bag note explaining the decision on the school photo and Evan's services.**

### **Junior Infant Swimming**

There was a discussion over the decision of the BOM to cancel Junior Infants (JI) swimming. **Karen reported that the BOM decided that no junior infant swimming would take place because of serious concerns over child protection and protection of volunteers. She also**

**reported that the school had tried to seek and after school hours swimming slot at shoreline, but that none was available.**

Two problems were outlined. Firstly some PAC members expressed exasperation over this decision as they were previously asked to assist in drawing up guidelines for JI swimming at the beginning of term and were then not consulted in this final decision. The lack of communication between the BOM and PAC in this regard was highlighted. The second issue was with the bag note that stated that the BOM decision was based on new child protection guidelines but this was queried.

Geraldine attended a child protection training course recently and it was strongly recommended that JIs do not go swimming because of the child protection policy. The BOM feel it could put volunteers at risk.

As a solution it will be investigated if JI swimming can be conducted after school, as is done in other schools, when parents bring their children and they can avail of the cheaper cost for swimming classes. Alternatively is there another activity that JI can do?

Need to clarify what funds were allocated to JI swimming and if this can go towards a school trip or other activity.

**ACTION: Fiona Nic to clarify allocation of funding with PC. Bag note asking if parents want to participate in afterschool JI swimming.**

### **Coffee Mornings**

Nobody is turning up to the weekly coffee mornings. It was suggested to change it back to once a month.

**ACTION: Change coffee mornings to once a month and invite volunteers to coffee mornings to discuss project in hand.**

### **Emails to the wider PA group**

It was queried whether emails being sent to the PA need to be approved by a dedicated person on the PAC.

**ACTION: Fiona Nic to talk to Katarzyna about PA emails.**

### **After School Club**

CatB gave her apologies and left the meeting.

### **After School Club (ASC)**

A large number of e-mails had been sent through the PAC Google Group over the past week about this topic. The Chair asked Karen to lead the discussion and to brief the PAC on the BOM's perspective, as far as BOM confidentiality allowed.

A copy of Michelle's letter to Fiona was circulated in hard copy. Karen outlined the process by which the BOM had come to their decisions given in this letter. She stated that this was a unanimous decision amongst the BOM, and that no one BOM member had driven the

discussions. It was not the BOM's aim to affect the quality and continuity of care of the ASC, and while tendering had been mentioned in the letter, it was by no means a foregone conclusion to tender. In addition to the onus on the BOM to ensure that the school was getting value from the ASC being provided, the BOM also had to take into account new arrangements drawn up with other after school activity providers. Space had been highlighted as a second major issue. Karen explained that while the BOM were treating the space and tender issues separately, a decision did need to be made quickly. With regards to space, rather than wait for the Department of Education to inform the BOM what space would be made available for September 2012, the BOM would need to make a decision on the ASC service preferably at the next BOM meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March. In order to be informed to make this decision, the BOM did require more information on a number of points. The letter had been sent to the PAC in a hope that it would be able to assist in the carrying out of a survey to obtain this information.

The proposal from the current provider, Sarah Kernaghan and "GETBusyKids", had been based on the proposed new school, with more space for pre- and after-school care. However, the situation with regards to the new school had changed, and as it will not be ready by September 2012, the BOM had sent Sarah a letter looking for an updated proposal. Sarah stated that she had not received the letter, and Karen agreed to look into this.

At this point, Peter asked that Sarah's ownership of GETBusyKids and her Membership of the PAC be acknowledged by the PAC as being an apparent conflict of interest, and that this conflict be borne in mind throughout the following discussions. Accepting this unanimously, the PAC agreed that Sarah continue to be part of the discussions, especially with regards to providing significant information in relation to any queries the PAC had about the ASC.

Sarah reported on her meeting with Michelle from the BOM. Sarah stated that she never received a letter from BOM and only got a one line email from Michelle. She had therefore not been able to reply to the BOM questions nor alter her proposal. Sarah explained that she had requested a meeting with the BOM as she was concerned about the future of GETBusyKids. She needed to inform parents in the next few weeks if GETBusyKids would continue in September 2012 as parents would need to make other arrangements for after school care, which may be difficult to arrange in the locality. Sarah noted that with the change of BOM delegates she had found it difficult to communicate with the BOM, and did not have a specific liaison contact. She noted that she had had to write three emails to get the meeting. Karen agreed to take this back to the BOM and to look for a specific liaison contact for Sarah.

It was felt by some members of the PAC that the BOM wanted to ensure parents that there will be an ASC, but that this would not necessarily be GETBusyKids depending on other proposals from providers. Garrett stated that there was no obligation for the school to seek tenders. Karen again reiterated that the BOM had not decided on any option to tender.

Sarah stated that she was currently unsure herself if she would continue GETBusyKids. In response, it was noted that there was a general consensus amongst PAC members and parents in general that if the school lost GETBusyKids over any lack of communication with the BOM or due to financial matters, then this would be a matter for grave concern.

The yearly need to renew the contract was also discussed, and it was the PAC's opinion that going forward a three- or even five-year contract for the ASC might be considered by the BOM. This was in line with other service contracts in place in Ireland.

In order to move this matter along, Peter stated that he had taken the objective points raised by PAC members in e-mails and had drafted a proposed letter from the PAC to the BOM. He issued a copy to attendees and read through the text. Amendments and suggestions were taken from the PAC members and noted by Peter for inclusion in a revised letter, which he would circulate to the PAC for final comments the next day.

The PAC agreed that the revised draft letter summed up the objective reasoning given in the past e-mails, and that the final letter should be sent to the BOM Chair as soon as possible.

**ACTION: Karen to look into the letter and suggest a liaison contact for Sarah. Peter to revise letter and send final draft to PAC for clearance. Letter then to be sent to BOM Chair as soon as possible, so that the BOM can consider it before their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March.**

#### **End of Meeting**

After a long evening of discussion, the Chair thanked all for their input and closed the meeting.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**LIST OF ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN**

- 1. Eimear to refund Catherine B €30 for voucher for Suzanne.**
- 2. PC to send out text on Friday re. Ceili.**
- 3. Sarah, Niamh, Mona to make large placards of 'WE LOVE BOOKS'**
- 4. Sarah, Niamh, Evan, Mona to make extra placards**
- 5. Evan to email to parents details of the parade.**
- 6. Catherine B to prepare report following World Book Day.**
- 7. Catherine B to include links of Art Day to other areas of curriculum.**
- 8. Catherine B to discuss date of Art Day with PC.**
- 9. Catherine B to send revised Art Day proposal to PC and copy to the BOM.**
- 10. Fiona Nic to put Teddy Bear Picnic on agenda for next meeting.**
- 11. Catherine B to talk to Lynnea regarding revised after school activity policy.**
- 12. Fiona Nic to ask PC to send a bag note explaining the decision on the school photo and Evan's services.**
- 13. Fiona Nic to clarify allocation of JI swimming funds with PC.**
- 14. Bag note asking if parents want to engage in afterschool JI swimming.**
- 15. Change coffee mornings to once a month and invite volunteers to coffee mornings to discuss project in hand.**
- 16. Fiona Nic to talk to Katarzyna about PA emails.**
- 17. Karen to look into the letter and suggest a liaison contact for Sarah.**
- 18. Peter to revise letter and send final draft to PAC for clearance. Letter then to be sent to BOM Chair as soon as possible, so that the BOM can consider it before their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March.**