

Blofield Primary School PTA Meeting minutes

7th July 2011 – 6.30pm

Present O Burwood (OB) (president), J Wheeler (JW) (chair), S Goodson (SG) (vice-chair), L Kitson (LK) (treasurer), J Jarrett (JJ) (secretary), S Woodburn (SW), G Clark (GC), L Taylor (LT), D Patterson (DP), M Frary (MF), H Baker (HB), P Mayo (PM), A Cotter (AC), Deborah Kellett (DK), Oliver James
Apologies A Ledward (AL), J McKenna (JM), C Scupham (CS) S Coldham (SC), C Newton (CN), N Brister (NB), S Blyth, S Buck, Karen Fumero (KF)

No leavers or joiners to report.

Actions closed

- To liaise with the farm shop or Shes Blofield Heath re bulk purchase of plants with a proportion going towards the school – Liaisor TBC as feedback from **LK** suggested to use a local company instead of a company from Kings Lynn. **Closed** - This will be picked up in Spring 2012.
- **OB** to organise for Mrs Gitsham to move the white board nearer the gate for notices. **Closed** – done.

Actions remaining open

- **OB** to organise for the children to make cards to thank the farm shop and the local pub for supporting the recycling for the school. OB showed two hand-crafted cards that have been made and will be passed on shortly.
- **JJ** and **OB** continue to progress the face-lifted school website.

Minutes of previous meeting

- Texting is now in use and bedded in. The usage of the service, and therefore the most cost-effective plan and provider, is to be reviewed at the end of 2011 in the lead-in to the end of the first year.

Correspondence

JJ shared info on the new JustTextGiving service provided by Vodafone. This service is available for all charities and enables donation by SMS, a key benefit being every penny is passed on to the charity. **JJ** to further investigate what is required to set this up. More info at <http://justtextgiving.co.uk/>.

A message was passed on from JMCK that if we are to repeat the Christmas Cards fund raising this year then we should investigate options as better deals are available (we also had some issues with the supplier this time around).

JJ shared a flyer received from the NCPTA advertising the 'PTAlocal' service – which primarily offers online storage of PTA documentation and ability to email parents. Decided that not useful to committee at this time. More info at <http://ptalocal.co.uk/>.

JJ also flagged that need to complete and return the Small Lotteries Return Form following the Grand Draw at the Summer Fete. Action **JJ**.

Treasurers Report

LK walked committee through the Treasurer's Report. Scanned copy embedded.

PTA is healthy with £11k funds available. We are expecting to receive a request for c. £1,500 of funds to cover Enrichment week (this is less than originally anticipated as more was run in-house this year).

| Treasures Report 07-07-11 | |
|---|---|
| Credits since last report | |
| Car Boot | 249.26 |
| Fete | 481.20 |
| Uniform | 44.00 |
| May Ball | 1,033.30 |
| Fete | 562.50 |
| Fete | 440.00 |
| Fete | 4,127.50 |
| Fete | 1,273.08 |
| Fete | 1,148.77 |
| Fete | 1,072.14 |
| Fete | <u>45.00</u> |
| Total Credits | 10,476.75 |
| Debits since last report | |
| Dragons Den | 94.00 |
| Enrichment week | 33.11 |
| May Ball | 686.20 |
| Summer Fete | <u>3,767.15</u> |
| Total Debits | 4,580.46 |
| Funds | |
| Current A/c Balance from latest statement | 15,157.23 |
| Amounts paid in not yet on statement | <u>8,688.99</u> |
| | 23,846.22 |
| plus | Cheques written not yet on statement |
| | <u>4,026.48</u> |
| | Actual Funds |
| | 19,819.74 |
| less | Agreed Funding |
| | Remainder of readingscheme/equip recep |
| | 203.97 |
| | Enrichment week |
| | 1,966.89 |
| | Golden tickets outstanding |
| | 424.62 |
| | 11/12 School Funding Donation |
| | 5,000.00 |
| | Paint (Childrens work for fete) |
| | 50.00 |
| | SMS system |
| | <u>800.00</u> |
| | Less agreed funding |
| | 8,445.48 |
| PTA Expencc reserves | |
| | Disco x1 outstanding balance |
| | <u>90.00</u> |
| | <u>90.00</u> |
| | Funds available waiting requests |
| | 11,284.26 |

Fundraising and Events (ordered by date)

- Car Boot – Thanks to those who gave up their weekend time and to those who donated goods for the Car Boot - this proved to be profitable.
- Summer Fete – success! A big thank you to **GC** for chairing the fete committee and to the many other people who were involved. A news letter with a bit more detail will be issued to all parents shortly. A meeting will take place Mon 18/07 18:30 at the school to act as handover from the significant group of experienced fete committee members who are leaving this year. As soon as practical after this we will need to look at how to get more new people involved. We had lots of positive feedback about FunForce and were very happy with the MC performance from James at the fete. We will look to book dates for events into 2012 at the start of the next school year. (Mad Monster disco is already covered).
- New Parents Meeting – 20th July at 18:30. JW and GC to cover and talk to audience.
- Ceilidh – ~~30th June 2011~~. [Update 08/07] – *Original date cancelled, new date to be arranged.* Takes place at Margaret Harker Hall. We don't currently need to do anything to support this but will benefit from ticket sales. ~~To be advertised in forthcoming PTA newsletter.~~
- Seething 2011 – takes place Sunday 11th September. CS to own. Paperwork has been completed to register us. To see if we can do Candy Floss, Ian has offered the use of his machine. Decided not to do hog roast this year. we do need some helpers for Chris with set-up & close-down, plus help on the day (even if only for an hour or two). Action **JJ** to sort out TEN.
- Tea & Tissues – Wed 7th Sep at school drop-off. First day of new term. MF to own.
- Bingo – to be discussed and dates sorted – proved popular with the children. (NB was owner DP?).
- One Stop Shop – SC keen to own. Focus will be very much upon local shops and businesses. When we regroup in new school year, we will consider dates and combining with the Blofield Church event.
- Christmas Cards – No owner yet. GC to investigate options (providers & prices). Doing them at home last year resulted in lower participation; doing them at school generates hassle for the teachers. To be discussed at next meeting.
- Fashion Show – LK raised a request she had received to run a fashion show, with door ticket sales going to PTA. Discussed and decision made to decline.
- Cake Bake & School Uniform sale – to be run with a bit of a firework theme. Target date 3rd November, to be firmed up at next meeting. Prices to be kept low, 20p / item. 2nd hand uniform shop to be run at the same time. Cake Bake owners LK, SG. Uniform owners SW, KF.
- Christmas Productions – dates will be set at the start of the school year – for discussion at next meeting. Expecting to provide similar offering to last year (no-charge event)
- Quiz n Chips – discussed possibility of running a 2nd quiz by popular demand – however decision made to stick to one in the Spring term. OB offered to do questions. (Fingers crossed this will mean it will be made extra tough for the teachers table!)
- Mini-Triathlon event – OB to talk to Paul Keating re running this; believe he will be keen to do this as it is Olympic related.

Agreed expenditure

The concept of the Outdoor Classroom was discussed, it was agreed that this should be our next Fundraising Target. This will be mentioned in the next PTA Newsletter, however it should be noted that it may take some time to raise sufficient funds. It took 4 or 5 years for the swimming pool changing facilities to be affordable.

Following recent discussion with some parents, OB raised the point of whether the PTA should fund school trips in the future - something the PTA has not been done before. A rich debate ensued around the whole topic, and specifically the recent Year-1 trip, was held. Key points coming out of the discussion were:

- Mixed feedback has been received (from those present; as gathered by MF as Y-1 rep; from wider parental feedback) on the actual cost of the recent Y1 outing (£14). Some viewed it as great value for what the children actually got out of it; others felt it was too much after the Fete (another request for money from parents following school photos, cakes, non-uniform day, etc, and most recently the school fete which raised a significant amount of money);
- It was felt that the money was being asked for with relatively little notice; however as OB pointed out it is not always possible to plan these events a long way in advance.
- The PTA has not funded any such trips to date; if the PTA were to fund such events (and we have not agreed this) then we would need to ensure that it was totally fair and transparent and avoid any suggestion that some classes have better trips than others¹;
- The PTA can always be approached for funding and have yet to actually decline outright any request;
- Such events are hard work for teachers, generating extra work such as investigations, pricing and risk assessments – they are certainly not a ‘jolly’ and teachers are under no obligation to support these; especially if they feel undermined. All concerns or issues around school trips should be taken up directly with OB.
- Point was raised that some parents would like a better understanding of what the funds are being raised for; currently all spend is detailed in newsletters which are sent out to parents and published on the website. Although the PTA committee feels that most parents are happy with the amount of information they receive about PTA activities, further information relating to the use of funds and fund-raising may be of interest and will attempt to put this out from the next newsletter.
- Anyone who still wants more information can ask for it at any time; anyone who wishes to join the committee meetings and be actively involved in decision-making is more than welcome. The AGM is also a great opportunity to hear about the good work done by the PTA and discuss where and how PTA money is being spent.
- A lot of parents are very happy to help the PTA through supporting events such as the Summer Fete but don’t wish to participate in the actual decision-making.
- Raising funds for big items, such as the recent Changing Rooms, can take perhaps 4 or 5 years, so we need to be careful around managing expectations;

¹ NB Whilst the PTA hasn’t funded school trips directly, Y1 and Y2 classes did choose to spend their £100 Dragons Den money on partly funding a trip to the Sealife Centre.

- School trips are becoming more expensive – especially due to costs of coach travel rising dramatically; the cost of these trips has increased as a matter of fact;
- The payments requested from parents are voluntary – anyone who has difficulty in paying should contact the school to discuss; however it should also be noted that if the school doesn't receive sufficient payments from parents - would therefore be left with an unacceptable bill to foot - then the trip will be cancelled.
- Not all parents appreciate the distinction between school funds and PTA funds.
- The point was also raised that it was not entirely clear to outsiders what the £5k ring-fenced PTA is for – OB/JW explained, OB is happy to communicate this more clearly more widely.
- The point was raised that money belonging to a charity must be held within an account of the charity (which we fully adhere to).
- It would be helpful to make the link between school trips and the children's education.

Future action:

- **OB** will ensure that a fuller breakdown of costs is included for future such trips; that the school will attempt to provide increased notice of the trips where possible; that the link between the trip and education will be made clearer.

£5k School Budget Enhancement – explanation

As part of the LEA school budget planning process, money which is likely to be donated should be planned for and included into the school budget. Mr Burwood originally made a request in January for the PTA to consider ring-fencing an amount of cash (i.e. effectively guarantee that it will be made available to the school during the 2011/2012 school financial year) to enable it to be planned for as an income in the school budget. The PTA did discuss this and formally voted on the matter - the majority opinion agreed to support the request, on the basis that:

- any request to actually spend that money would come through the usual channels and would need prior approval from the PTA committee - i.e. no up-front assumption of what it could be spent upon;
- any request to spend PTA money has to be for the benefit of school children, in line with the PTA Constitution;
- there would be no precedent of a repeat allocation of a ring fenced amount for the 2012/2013 school financial year, however Mr Burwood may put in a fresh request for consideration;

It is also worth noting that:

- against the backdrop of tightening LEA budgets there is now very little capital allowance provided for improvement of school facilities;
- the charity operates within the framework set out in the PTA Constitution and abides by regulations laid down by the Charity Commission;
- PTA money is held in a PTA bank account, including the aforementioned £5k, and will do so until any specific requests for expenditure are approved; it has certainly not just been assimilated into an amorphous school 'pot' somewhere;
- everything we do is to further the education of children of the school and we are very lucky to have such a proactive, successful PTA - this is down to the generosity of everyone who

participates through donation of time, gifts, money and support of the many PTA events through the year. Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who gets involved in whatever way.

AOB

AC raised point that the school will be issuing guidance around the use of electronic communications.

SW requested that a request for 2nd hand uniform be included in the next letter; to be backed up with an SMS;

PM raised fact that not everyone is happy with the official school photographs. Two separate issues here (a) technical quality of some photos; (b) style of photos (formal/informal/group) which is highly subjective. **LK** to investigate options for discussion at next meeting.

The ability to make online payments was raised – this has been requested by a number of parents in light of the declining usage of cheques. **JJ** to investigate payment options.

DK requested to be added to email distribution list.

Meeting closed at 20:15.

Future Meeting Dates

Next committee meeting - Wednesday 21st Septembernd 18:30 prompt

AGM - Thursday 13th October 19:00 prompt