

Gorebridge Primary Parent Council

Minutes

1st May 2025

Present:

Erin Whyte (Co-Chair), Paula Hartley (Co-Chair), Neil Whyte (Treasurer), Stephanie Palmer (Headteacher),,, Lori Cassidy and Amy O'Toole

Minutes: Paula Hartley

1. Welcome & Apologies

EW welcomed all members to the meeting and explained NW would attend asap.

2. PVG

PH explained that there are tightenings to rules to the PVG scheme which has implications for parent councils/PTAs.

PH attended an online meeting on 1/4/25, which was hosted by Connect but run by Volunteer Scotland. The purpose of the meeting was to inform PC chairs how these changes will impact their groups. Unfortunately this meeting did not make the situation clearer and Midlothian PC chairs asked for further clarity from Michelle Strong on 29/4/25. Since then Midlothian Council have sought advice and have shared this with the PC chairs. More details can be found in the updates in section 8. A.O.B. PH asked if a few members of the PTA could read this advice and come together to decide what it means for our PTA and Parent Council. This advice can be found [here](#).

Once it is decided who will require a PVG, a member of the PC should take the lead in administering the process. PH has volunteered herself.

A brief summary to the changes to the PVG scheme:

- Came into effect at the beginning of April, but a grace period until 1st July.
- Anyone in a position of power or influence over a child or group of children must have a PVG.
- Anyone who has contact with a child/children in their regulated duties must have a PVG.
- The PVG scheme will be free for members of PCs and PTAs.

Actions:

- *PH to share advice with the PTA (ASAP).*
- *Members of the PTA to read and feedback their views (ASAP).*
- *PH to start the PVG process for those that require it (By July).*

3. Culture, Ethos and Relationships Policy Update

SP shared the draft culture, ethos and relationships policy with the group. The group was given time to read through, discuss and give feedback on it.

The policy has been put together with 5 members of staff working together on a working party, who have worked with Stephanie.

SP plans to share the draft format with parents prior to the upcoming BOATs session. During the BOATs session, parents will be asked for their views and feedback, which will be reflected in the final draft.

Actions:

- *SP to share file of policy with the PC chairs so they can distribute it to the PTA as well.*
- *SP to share draft policy with the wider parent forum.*

4. Library Project Update

EW shared that Susie Laidlaw has handed over plans from the children of what they would like the new library to look like or include.

Kirstie Campbell is taking the lead on this project. She has gone through these plans (with the help of her daughter, Rosalind) and summarised the children ideas are follows:

- Colourful furniture
- Colourful walls/rainbow wall
- Tent
- Soft toys
- Fairy lights
- posters/art/book characters on the wall
- Lego club
- Board games, puzzles
- Music
- Plants
- Happy library sign
- beanbags/egg chairs
- Bunting
- Colourful rugs
- Different areas for different aged children eg, junior and senior sections
- Pens, pencils, paper for a drawing area
- Comics
- Fish tank
- Bookshelves that are smaller for the young children, with small table and chairs
- Fidgets
- blankets/pillows/cusions
- Computers
- Bookmarks
- instruments

Overall it is felt that the children would like a comfy, colourful, safe space with a cosy feel.

SP shared that she is keen for the library to feel partitioned into zones, perhaps with the use of the bookshelves. The bookshelves at the moment are attached to the wall, but SP will ask the janitor if there is a way for these to be moved.

The next step is for the PTA volunteers to come in and start to clear out what is currently there. The library is free for the PTA to access at the following times:

- All day Monday
- All day Tuesday
- Wednesday morning
- All day Friday

Actions:

- *EW is to pass Kirstie's email address on to Susie so they can communicate directly.*
- *KC to let the school know when PTA volunteers will be coming in so the school can ensure that the teachers know that the library will not be free.*
- *KC to organise PTA volunteers.*

5. Summer Fair

EW shared that there has been interest from a number of staff members to have their own class stall at the summer fair this year. EH explained that if this is the case then we can't have independent stall holders coming in for the fair. The reasons being there won't be enough room for both types of stall holders, plus the independent stall holders feel they won't make any money if the parents are spending it on the children's stalls.

EW made it clear that the PTA are happy to do whatever the school would prefer and we don't want to dictate.

SP will ask the staff if they would like a stall at the summer fair. She will get back to the PTA by Wednesday or Thursday the following week. This will hopefully give EW time to organise independent stall holders if needed.

The PTA will still man their usual stalls, eg homebaking, icecream, hotdogs, bag a bottle, tumbolar and we will run a raffle.

EW explained that we may be short on volunteer numbers this year as both herself and PH will be working that day and will not be able to attend.

Actions:

- *SP to get back to PTA asap with info regarding stalls*
- *EW potentially to organise stall holders*
- *PTA members to say if they can volunteer on the day itself*
- *NW to organise licence, tickets and main prize for the raffle*
- *PTA to have a summer fair planning meeting asap*

6. Status of Office Bearers

EW informed the group that PH will be standing down as co-chair of the PTA and PC after the summer holidays. This will officially happen at the AGM in September.

EW will also be pulling back from the role over the coming year, although will still remain in the role.

Amy O'Toole will now shadow EW over the following year and will begin to take on more responsibility, with the goal of taking on the chair role in August 2026.

Claire Gaffney and Lyndsey Hogg will also take on more responsibility and will step into the vice-chair role under Amy.

This will all be made formal in the next AGM.

7. Treasurer's Report

NW shared a summary of all income and expenditure for the current year. The report will be sent out along with the minutes for this meeting.

In summary:

We have raised £1,406

We have spent £2,375 (£566 of this was for the delayed payment of year books for 2023 & 2024)

Current position for the year so far = - £977

Taking into account pre-allocated funds, our current available funding is £4,033

Our current funds will be used for the library project.

EW asked that the invoice for this year's year books are shared with us as soon as possible.

NW also shared that the financial reports for 23/24 were submitted to OSCAR in March 2025.

8. A.O.B

Parent Council Chair Meeting Update

PH attended the most recent Midlothian parent council chair meeting on 29/04/2025. This meeting was chaired by Michelle Strong (Education Chief Operating officer) who shared a lot of information with the group. PH provided the following updates :

Budget Updates

Following the budget decision at Council on 25 February 2025, the Education Service was asked to find savings as follows:

£200 000 taken from central team resources.

£500 000 taken from Commissioned services linked to educational delivery or supports

£75 000 taken from Community & LifeLong Learning

The £200, 000 and £75,000 has been met through vacancies and reconfiguration of posts. As part of the savings the vacant Parent and Learning Liaison officer post has been deleted. These responsibilities will be picked up by an existing officer but will not be her only duties.

As part of the budget decisions the Service was asked to explore income generation-

1. out of school childcare provision

2. 52-week Early Learning & C provision.

Relationships for Learning Policy

The Draft Relationships for Learning policy was circulated last week. This has been developed as a response to a variety of national publications including, the "National Behaviour Action Plan" which followed the Behaviour In Scottish Schools Report and "Included, Engaged & Involved Part 3".

Judy Thomson and Kirsty to meet to talk though the role of touch.

Add in information on how children who witness behaviours should be supported.

The policy describes a rights-based approach, staged intervention approach to intervention and support around children & young people's behaviour.

Feedback can be collected using the feedback form accompanying the minute of this meeting.

It was noted that the Scottish Government funding for Rights Respecting Schools Award is coming to an end.

The Midlothian Children's Rights Working Group is continuing to support rights-based work in schools.

PVG Changes and how these impact parent council and PTAs

It is a legal requirement since 1st April 2025 for Parent Councils to comply with the PVG legislation.

- There is a Working Group been set up and chaired by Midlothian Council's lead PVG countersignature Elizabeth McDonald, HR Business Partner
- All aspects of the new changes (2025 & 2026) are being looked at and the impact these will have on staff, voluntary groups and others
- Processes will be changed as required following the group discussions
- Elizabeth will be attending the training, mentioned below to ensure she is aware of the message that's being communicated to Headteachers who attend this training.

Information sent to head teachers 28/04/25

From the 1st April 2025 the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020

came into effect. Parent Councils are one of the groups most likely to be impacted by the changes this has introduced. Parent council and associated sub-committee members could now be considered a regulated role. It is a legal requirement for both the parent council and the individuals involved in them to comply with the PVG scheme.

For help understanding how this all affects you and your parent council come along and Join Midlothian Community Action on Wednesday 21 May, 10am for this FREE 'Disclosure Scotland PVG's – Regulated Roles' session.

To find out more book a place on the 'Volunteer Scotland PVGs – Regulated Roles Training' on Wednesday 21 May, 10am

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/disclosure-scotland-pvg-regulated-roles-tickets-1335514021389?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl>

Connect has been asked to provide further guidance for Parent Councils. More information to follow. A crib card produced by the working group would be really useful for Parent Councils.

Connect Membership

Midlothian Council has renewed the membership for Connect for 2025/2026. This covers Parent Councils' public liability insurance too.

School Admissions statutory consultation closes 7th June

The admission policy changes prioritise Midlothian children over non-Midlothian children. 5 public Meetings are also taking part as well as the consultation online. Next meeting will take place at Beeslack high school on Thursday 15th May. This will be independently chaired and will include a presentation from Michelle Strong.

The Admission policy changes seem to mainly impact denominational schools.

Vaping Incidents in schools

A multi-agency PAG group (problem assessment group) is considering what we need to do next to educate young people to make good choices around vaping, legal enforcement, parent support to reduce the purchasing of vapes. The PAG meets on 30/04/25. Update to be brought to a PC Chairs meeting.

Email addresses for Parent Council chairs

All parent councils should now use generic email addresses. These are the addresses that the local authority will use to contact the chairs going forward.

PH will ensure the Gorebridge PTA address is added to this list.

It is important to note that when there is a change of office bearers that these log in details are passed on.

9. Next Meeting

The next Parent Council meeting will be the AGM in September 2025. Date TBC.