

St. Ascus N.S. Strandhill Parents Association

Minutes of the AGM – September 27th 2022

Chair: Ciaran McCauley

Secretary: Dr. Rosaria Kunda Marron

Treasurer: Niamh O'Sullivan

Committee: Laura McHugh, Karen Harris, Pamela McDaid, Keith Moran, Lorraine Roe & James O'Dwyer

Apologies: Dr. R. Kunda Marron, Pamela McDaid , Lorraine Roe & Keith Moran

Resignations: Karen Harris

The minutes of the previous AGM 2021 were proposed (JOD) and seconded (LMCH).
Accepted.

Chairman's report:

Ciaran outlined the role of the Parents association which aspires to discover how best to enhance the children's education in the school. The association is driven by parents, to enhance and support the education delivered by teachers, sharing the responsibility between them.

The parents association would like to formally thank Orla Kenny for the outstanding fundraising achievement and success of Strandhills Fittest family competition. This event raised a total of €11,465.11 before costs and this was divided between the school and Strand Celtic, meaning a total of €5448.06 went to Scoil Ascus N.S. To formally recognise this the parents association wanted to deliver a bouquet of flowers to Orla on behalf of the P.A.

Formation of focused groups:

This year the plan of the PA committee is to form some small groups of parents from the wider parents association whatsapp group. The idea that parents may not be interested in being involved in everything, but may have a strong interest in a specific area. For example there is an established group that has completed some work on researching the literature on the subject of homework in primary school.

Treasurers Report:

Niamh reported a reasonably quiet year this year from a finance / fundraising perspective. The only activity on the bank account was some payments for Teas & coffee, bank fees and flowers for the holy communions. There was an 80c refund or credit to the account.

The total in the PA bank account was: €1,329.00

Parents Association Committee for 2022/23 school year

Chair: Ciaran McCauley

Secretary: Dr. Rosaria Kunda Marron

Treasurer: Jess Smith McKenna

Committee Members:

Niamh O'Sullivan

Laura McHugh

Keith Moran

Pamela McDaid

Lorraine Roe

James O'Dwyer

Claire Matthews

Colin O'Hare

Principal Joseph Fogarty's address to the Parents Association.

Mr. Fogarty first of all thanked the parents who attended the meeting and brought such a positive contribution to the school.

Mr. Fogarty wanted to give an overview of what the role of the P.A. was from his research on the department of education website.

A Parent Association works to build a partnership with the home and the school in primary education.

The parents association can advise the principal and Board of Management on policy issues and incidents that may require a review of school policy, e.g. Bullying, Safety, Homework, Enrolment, Behaviour problems etc. invite the school principal to discuss policy issues. The parents association is a way of getting feedback from the wider parent body on topical issues. For example the survey of parents to ask if they would prefer parent teacher meetings conducted via telephone or face to face was generated from feedback via the PA.

The PA is not a forum for complaints against a teacher. There is a separate complaints procedure for that process.

The PA is a constructive forum.

Mr. Fogarty is happy to see the possibility of opening up the school to parents, allowing parents back into the school is a welcome new development. Mr. Fogarty is happy to see the resurgence of the P.A. committee activities, the introduction of a new payments system using Alladin.

Mr. Fogarty wanted to make a special mention and welcome to the families and children from the Ukraine that have joined St. Ascus since April, 2022.

What Mr. Fogarty would like is that the PA would prioritise the issues they would like to raise with the school and ideally narrow it down to approximately one or two items.

For example, in the past the PA has been involved in a healthy eating focus for the school, or the covid response.

Mr. Fogarty would like if the PA was to focus on fundraising for the schools benefit with ideally a fund raising event per term, but at least x2 per year. Joe would prefer to give the reason or item the money raised would contribute towards.

For example Strandhill's Fittest family raised a sum of money that was put towards a new PA system that will be installed once the new build is complete. An interactive screen was bought from some of the other proceeds. The fundraising is not used to pay for the heating for example.

Mr. Fogarty requested that the PA would acknowledge the upcoming retirement of Ms. Hunter from the school. Ideally there would be a representative from the PA to say a few words, a token gift from the PA and maybe some treats for the kids.

Answers to issues raised from the Agenda to Mr. Fogarty from the Parents:

Hurling 4th Class: the coach can only do x2 hours in the school and as a result 4th class were chosen to be the class who could best cope with out break.

Result of the poll: regarding parent teacher meetings: 94% of parents requested face to face meetings so the meetings will be conducted face to face

Student Council:

Ms. M. Doyle is taking responsibility for wellness in the school. The student council will form part of this programme. The student council is formed with children from 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class.

The student council will focus on areas such as bullying and saving energy.

Music Generation: possible concert?

There has been some difficulty getting a tutor for keyboard. The PA association would generally donate approximately €1,000 towards music generation. It was agreed the PA would contribute from its funds in account towards this years Music generation. Mr. Fogarty felt the choir could get organised first and then can look towards the possibility of a concert.

Student Garden:

The garden needs attention. Mr. Fogarty is happy for parents to get involved in helping with this aspect and would welcome seeing potatoes planted once again there for example.

Grandparents Day:

Mr. Fogarty will look to re-instate grandparents day when the main hall is free. Id. Est. when the new build is complete, perhaps after Easter 2023.

School Band:

Ms. Gilligan is now returned and hopefully can get the choir going first.

Mr. Fogarty would welcome any parent who was appropriately Garda vetted and willing to take a group of children for music lessons for example.

Mr. Fogarty thanked everyone again or their interest and for attending the meeting. He agreed that the common aim was to ensure the children were happy and healthy. The school hopes to help the children realise their own talents.

Parents Association Meeting

There are approximately 250 kids in the school.

The student council was an idea brought forward by the PA. The goal of the student council is to give the children attending a voice. They get to decide what is important to them. It should be child led.

Discussion on determining the priorities for the PA. Could there be a gathering of information to inform what the priorities for the PA in the upcoming year? It was suggested that perhaps the children, the teachers and the parents could be surveyed to ask what is important to them.

Student Council / visibility of policy on bullying

Would the PA make a focus around the education of procedures / policies in the school in a child friendly way related to managing bullying?

Homework in primary school

Teachers have given the view in the past that homework provides a link from the school to the home and gives parents an opportunity to see if a child is struggling in any area at school.

The department of education does not have a definite policy on homework, it is up to local schools discretion. Anyone interested in joining a focus group on homework can get in contact with Niamh O'Sullivan.

Counselling / mental health supports

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The PA previously agreed with the principal to allocate a sum of money to be administered by the BOM on a confidential basis for situations where a child is advised to attend therapy privately and requires financial assistance to do so.

Special needs focus

There was interest expressed in developing a neuro diversity support group. An aim of this group would be to celebrate neurodiversity and different ways of learning so that children understand and respect difference. . It was positively acknowledged that the school celebrates world down syndrome day.

Fundraising activities of the PA

In the past, ideas put forward for fundraising events included a table quiz in the golf club involving family teams (including children).

There was a Boston Tea party in the Radisson.

It was expressed that these events are often better when the children are involved.

Strandhills fittest family fundraiser was discussed. Overall the sense of community it brought along with the raising of funds was deemed a great success.

Action:

Gemma Smyth and Jaime O'Dwyer will contact Orla Kenny regarding the structure involved in repeating the previously successful event.

October Halloween disco organised by the Sarah Middleton J beat it dance school

Action:

Sarah has offered to use this Halloween disco as an opportunity to fund raise for the school.

Fundraising committee:

It was agreed that a fundraising committee would be formed:

Colin O'Hare

Màire Szczepanski

Jess Smith McKenna

Jaime O'Dwyer

Robotics and STEM interest group:

A group of parents expressed interest in providing access to learning and developing their interest in robotics. This may form a sub committee, if expressed out to the PA community.

Address to the PA from Ukrainian community parents

The parents of the children attending the school wanted to thank the school and community for welcoming them. The parents want as much as possible to be involved in the school as parents of the children attending school, and in the future would like to give something back to the community.