

Our Lady and St Joseph Parents Association Open Meeting

Date and time: 7 pm, Tuesday 26 September 2023

Location: Gwada Ethiopian Restaurant, 85 Balls Pond Rd, London N1 4BL, London

Attendees: Milica Tumpic (MT), Linda Ha (LH), Anna Finlay (AF), Ana Cristiano James (ACJ), Vera Rush (VR), Dasha Selyanova (DS), Luisa Sueiro (LS), Carla Russo (CR), Fiona Abrams (FA), Wendy Johnson (WJ)

Apologies: Emma (Sophia's mom), Katie Dallas (KD), Kim Finer (KF), Maria Grazia Savito (MGS), Melissa Gomez (MG)

Agenda:

1) Welcome and members present, apologies

- FA welcomed everyone and made introductions of the Committee members present. All members introduced themselves, and apologies were recorded.

2) Approval of minutes of the last meeting (to be circulated at the meeting)

- AF requested a name correction to the minutes from 7 June 2023, which were circulated at the meeting.

ACTIONS:

- Minutes were approved, subject to above.

3) Update from the committee and financial report

- FA informed that the PA currently holds over £11,000 in the bank account.
- Upcoming payments: £1,000 will be transferred to school on 4 October for library funding. Next payment will be scheduled for April. FA explained the need for this expense: although donations are always welcome, the school needs new resources as they clean up stock of old library books, and older years need several copies of the same book. Suggestion was made to ask the school whether they will still need this contribution.
- FA provided an update to the group about the meeting held between the Committee and the school.
- FA opened discussion regarding the non-availability of the Church Hall on Friday evenings. Options to be considered would be to hire other local venues, or move events to Thursdays or Saturdays.

ACTIONS:

- PA to consult the school regarding the need for the continuation of the library contribution (the current donation is set to expire in April, 2024).

4) School funding wish list

- FA shared the wish list discussed at the meeting with the school. It was explained that these were 'big ticket' requests to which the school would like the PA to contribute, but no specific budget or priority was given for each item. That information is still expected to be received from the school.
 - Santander project: Santander bank will provide labour using volunteers, and the school will need to provide materials (scaffolding, paint and supplies). The PA can contribute to that with funds raised from the Quiz. Ideally there will be a call out to parents who can possibly help with discounts/provide resources.
 - Portable cabin: Many members expressed their views against this project. Preference would be to have children in outdoors settings, like outdoor classrooms, forest school, etc.
 - School house: There was general agreement that the school house needs maintenance and it needs to be utilised better. AF would be happy to have a chat with the school and help with the design of the building.
 - Floodlighting: The school is keen on adding lighting to outdoor space. The main issue is actually adding plugs and electricity points efficiently. LH's partner, Donal, is an electrician and can offer free labour, but next year. AF could also help with design.
 - Storage container: The school needs a place for storage as the previous one is leaking and lacking maintenance. It will likely be in a different place than the current one.

ACTIONS:

- Follow up with the school regarding the wish list and discuss feedback received from members on the different projects (see above).

5) PA Calendar for the academic year (to be circulated at the meeting)

- a. Venues for PA events
 - b. Proposed exchange of cash and card for tokens at events
 - c. Wear your own clothes for all PA events – agreed with school
 - d. PA insurance for events
 - e. Subcommittees and request for volunteers for 2023
 - i. Upcoming PA funded activities
 - ii. Fall Quiz – October – ACJ (bar), FA, ROBERT JAMES (quiz master),
 - iii. Tea Towels and Coasters – by 13 Oct - MG
 - iv. Cauliflower Cards – by 13 Oct - MG
 - v. Christmas Trees – 1 Dec – FA, CR
 - vi. Christmas Trail – 25 Nov – FA, CR, DS, LH, MT
 - vii. Christmas Fair – 7 Dec – FA, CR, LH, DS, ACJ, LS, MT
- The group resumed discussion regarding alternative venues for events, given the limited availability of the Church Hall on Fridays, and the fact that the school has only committed to hosting the Christmas Fair and the Summer Fair on the school grounds. KF provided a list of potential venues in the WhatsApp Core group. All were invited to provide additional ideas.

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- ACJ asked about the Car Boot sale in the calendar and why it was cancelled. FA explained the PA did not have confirmation from the school on time and given the complexity in the organisation of this type of event, it may be postponed or combined as a second hand stall in other events.
- AF inquired about the PA secondary transfer information session. The group started discussion about when it would be best held. Beginning of year 5?
- Fall Quiz: Venue options were discussed. FA will check availability of the Church Hall (likely Thursday or Saturday), to be further discussed.
- Tokens: Idea would be to have less points handling cash and more ways to simplify payment. Card readers and tokens are good options. Kids want to pay with cash – make the tokens colourful and lovely, says Dasha. We have agreed.
- Own Clothes Days have been agreed with the school. Children bring £1 to support the PA. First one will be the day of the Fall Quiz
- CR explained that Parentkind membership includes insurance provided by Zurich, which provides coverage for PA events.
- Regarding the Christmas trees, it was mentioned that last year there were some complaints about the quality of the trees. General sense was that the trees were good quality, but they also must be looked after. Proposal was to make this clear in communications when selling the trees (ie, section on How to look after the Christmas trees).

ACTIONS:

- FA to check availability of Church Hall for the Fall Quiz and to further discuss with the group.
- Create a venue list/database to have at hand for future events.
- Send out a call out to all parents requesting addresses in De Beauvoir to set up stalls for the Christmas trail.
- CR to create WhatsApp groups for each event, with links to be circulated to the class groups. Specific call outs for volunteers to be made in due course from each of the respective events committees.
- Coordinate estate agent boards sponsorship: to reach out to Benyon (request help from Emma Devereux), and resume discussion.

6) PA Communications

- a. Proposed communications to members
 - b. Subcommittees and request of volunteers
- Update from DS regarding objectives from the Committee regarding communications (with members and school).
 - Discussion regarding social media and the necessity of making the PA accounts/communications more appealing.

7) PA organisation

- a. Charity status update
 - b. The School House
 - c. Confirmation of class representatives
- FA and CR provided a summary to new members regarding the necessity of becoming a charity, and provided an update about the process.
 - CR said it would be good to go to the school house, tidy up, and update inventory before the next event (Fall Quiz). Luisa and Wendy volunteered to help with this (dates and plan needed).
 - PA class representatives were confirmed as follows:
 - Reception - Linda and Anna
 - Y1 – Louise/Carla/Dasha/Emma
 - Y2 – Elizabeth Arnoux
 - Y3 – Wendy/Sophie Porter-Stafford
 - Y4 – Kim/Melissa
 - Y5 – Chiara / Elisa
 - Y6 – Fiona/Ana/Luisa/Maria Grazia

ACTIONS

- Send around WhatsApp link to invite people to join Core PA WhatsApp group.

8) Any other business (as applicable)

- ACJ presented concerns regarding Year 6 PGL trip PGL. It has increased in price (£555 for 5 days or £345 for 3 days). Expecting more parents would struggle to cover the full cost, the school presented the option of a 3-day trip requiring a vote from all the parents (last week, Ms Ruminska told all who asked that the 5-day trip will go ahead). The allocation of the PA funds towards the trip was controversial as normally it is fully handled by the school, and the PA does not know which family(ies) they are helping. The PA could step in to help families afford the full 5 days, but we should discuss the best way of providing support.
- The group discussed the ideas to propose to Y6 to do their own events/stalls to raise money towards the trip; AF suggested that the PA could offer to match the funds raised by Y6 and most agreed.

ACTIONS:

- ACJ and LS will work on fundraising ideas for Y6 and discuss with the class.

9) Date, time and location of next meeting (7 November 2023)

- Next meeting is confirmed for 7 November 2023. It will be online.