

Parent Council Highlights for year 2021/22

Chairperson's Annual Report

1) Introduction

There is not a truer saying than 'time and tide wait for no one.' It literally does feel as though I was only putting pen to paper to write last year's Chairperson's report! That said, a lot has been achieved through the healthy partnership between the school and Parent Council in the year 21/22.

Sticking with this theme of partnership and similar to last year's Chairperson's report, it is always helpful to re-cap on what we as a Parent Council are working to achieve. Our overriding aim is to build a strong, productive and supportive partnership with the school and the wider community to ensure that the children have a positive and memorable learning experience from their time at St John the Baptist. Of equal importance, is how we can also support parents and the school staff, given the pivotal role they have in nurturing and guiding the children on a daily basis, particularly given the recent and uncertain times we have lived through.

The objectives set out in the Parent Council Constitution very much reinforce this, as outlined below:

- To promote partnership between the school, its pupils, all parents and the Catholic Church to ensure that pupils develop their full potential.
- To work in partnership with the school to contribute to the Catholic ethos and create a welcoming community which is inclusive for all parents.
- To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils.
- To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils.

2) Achievements

Although COVID-19 continued to have an impact on the year 21/22, this was not as profound as the last two years in particular. Below is a snapshot of some of the key areas that the Parent Council supported or influenced across the term:

- In last year's report, we updated that our lengthy fundraising campaign to have a C-Touch in all classrooms to support interactive learning had been reached, with the final two being ordered at the end of term 20/21. At the beginning of 21/22, both became operational, thus completing the final part of this particular jigsaw
- The Facebook page which was launched last year, has continued to prove popular with parents as another mode of communicating the work of the Parent Council and other notifications
- Our resident Horticultural expert on the Parent Council (Mr Craig Wilson) offered his knowledge and time to support the staff and children to plant trees in dedicated areas of the school as part of environmental and climate awareness education. The wider Parent Council

membership supported this too by taking time to help with planting trees along the front of the school, under the tutelage of Craig.

- Due to the pandemic, we were not able to support the Christmas Café in the way we normally would. However, the Parent Council did still manage to produce the annual Christmas Calendars, which again proved successful, returning a surplus of £300 for Parent Council funds.
- Similar to last year, we were not able to hold the Summer Fete with our friends in Muiredge Primary School. However, given the success of the sponsored walk and puzzle challenge, we decided to re-run a similar event, which not only promoted a healthy activity but raised in excess of £2,500 for Parent Council funds. These important funds will be used to support the schools ICT strategy to increase the availability of iPads to support children's learning
- Supported the school to undertake a review of the cost of the school day. Again, this is something that will become ever more important with the cost-of-living increases that we have seen over the last 6 months in particular
- Provided financial support to the P7 Leavers celebrations, including the purchase of a High School tie for all the P7s and a contribution to final year disco.

3) Finance

From a financial perspective, the Parent Council is well placed to continue to support improvements to the school environment and learning experience. Our Treasurer (Kelly Weir) keeps a good handle on the finances to always ensure that we operate within budget, whilst ensuring the school is supported in line with agreed priorities. At the end of school term 21/22, the fund stood at a healthy £893.81.

4) Summary and Next Steps

It goes without saying that this year has been another successful one for the Parent Council and looking to the year ahead, the Parent Council remains well placed to build on its partnership with the school.

Of course, our work does not stop here. To sustain this successful partnership built over many years, the Parent Council requires to focus on continuing to:

- Recruit new members and increased parental involvement as a whole
- The cost-of-living crisis will challenge us all and the Parent Council will have a role to play, alongside the school and other partners regarding how we can all support each other and families
- Supporting the school and staff in maintaining very high standards
- Realise and promote the value of the school as a community asset
- Develop innovative fundraising approaches which allow the Parent Council to support value added initiatives in the school

On a final note, this will be my last Chairperson's report as it is time for me to stand down both as Chairperson and member of the Parent Council, given my son's recent transition to High School.

In light of this, I thought I would offer a few reflections of my time on the Parent Council of St John the Baptist Primary School. As a former pupil of the school myself, albeit a very long time ago (1978-85), it goes without saying I have longstanding attachment to the school. Within the 7 years that I have been involved with the Parent Council, I have first and foremost enjoyed it immensely, meeting a very committed group of parents, teaching staff and Elected Members. Some of the highlights that I would like to reflect on, which also reiterates the role and value of our Parent Council have been:

- Assisting the school on the recruitment and selection process for Senior Leadership posts in the school
- Campaigning for extra barrier protection along the side of the school that borders the extended M74 motorway. Although our vociferous bunch of parents did not manage to achieve a raised fixed barrier, we did secure extra trees and foliage as a screen along the motorway embankment
- Organising our Annual Family Ceilidh night, which was always a great night for both parents, children and their families
- Achieving our joint longstanding goal with the school of providing C-Touch coverage in all 11 classrooms to enhance the learning experience for the children. Since this though, and a result of a larger school roll, there are now 12 classes, meaning a further C-Touch will be required. This is something as a Parent Council that we are well positioned to support
- Working with Muiredge to deliver the annual Summer Fete for both school communities and the wider community of Uddingston
- Supporting the World of Work week to impart information and options to the children regarding training, further education and jobs
- Supporting the Christmas Café with memorabilia such as the School Calendars and other personally designed items
- Encouraging and supporting the relationship between the school, community and the Parish of St John the Baptist
- Providing information and signposting parents and carers on how to access help and support during the COVID19 Pandemic
- Connecting with other Parent Councils and learning from and sharing good practice

Lastly, it would be remiss of me not to pass on special thanks to the following people, whose commitment and support to the school and Parent Council is essentially what makes all of the above possible:

- Fellow Office Bearers on the Parent Council such as our Vice Chair (John Devitt), Treasurer (Kelly Weir) and Secretary (Mhairi Devitt). Also to Craig Wilson and Kevin Smith for their work in supporting the Facebook page and helping with the organisation of events referred to above
- Mrs Beacom, Mrs Clarke and Mrs McNulty who do a tremendous job for the children and parents. I have seen first-hand the long hours of dedication to the task in hand, yet they still manage to be there at the gate the next morning with a smile and welcome that inspires confidence. It is not surprising that St John the Baptist is one of the most sought after schools for placing requests.

- The relationship between members of the Parent Council and our Parish Priest. In my time on the Parent Council, Father Dominic always took a keen interest in the work of the Parent Council and the opportunity is there to do likewise with Father Ivan.

Martin Kane, Chairperson

September, 2022