



Ark Conway Primary Academy

Combined minutes of Ark Conway Parents Forum AGMs held at 60 Hemlock Road on 21 & 23 November 2018 at 7pm & 9.15am respectively

Attendance on 21 November = 6

Attendance on 23 November = 27

Elizabeth Coningsby (“EC”), Parent Chair:

EC explained that the Forum works in partnership with the school to a) build community and b) fundraise to supplement core funding. The Forum supports the school and wants to make Ark Conway a great place for our children.

Funds and events:

Our kitty (excluding library funds) is currently £21k. £8k raised in 2017/18. c.£3k needed to meet the annual minimum commitment to the school to fund i) challenge curriculum (helps to reduce demands on parents to contribute to cost of school trips (coaches cost hundreds, for example)) ii) years 4&5 theatre trip, iii) piano tuning, iv) school Christmas tree and v) Year 6 leavers party.

See “Finance Overview” slide for a more detailed breakdown of what we have raised over the years and how it was spent in 2017/18.

Examples of community fundraising events are the fairs, quiz night, disco, cake sales, bingo and curry night, movie night. Staff really appreciate being included as well.

For pure pleasure and community spirit there is the Summer camping trip (with the added bonus of a screen and surround sound in a tent for a certain football match this year - another great Conway community effort!), Reception Mad Hatter’s Tea Party, picnic in the park for new starters.

Mrs Ross-Wood has committed not to charge for school performances if hosted by the school itself, but may sell drinks, snacks and programs for a small charge.

Rhona Bradley and Clarissa Bain are the Events Team (new this year) taking the lead on organising events. Please contribute all and any ideas for events and all offers of help, however large or small to them. Events are a huge team effort and not just down to the Events Team and Links. Getting involved is also a great way to meet the wider parent community and learn about the school.

Communication:

All parents asked to sign up to “Classlist” which is what we will use to communicate as a parent community from the start of next year. It is an app, easy to sign up and much better functionality. Googlegroups will be closed down. See the email from Carina and book bag note that has been sent home for details. If in doubt ask your Class Links.

Each class has two Parent Links (formerly called “Reps”). They are there to encourage support for events, filter some communications from Mrs Ross-Wood (for example if class specific). Photos and details of the Links will be distributed in book bags.



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Mrs Ross-Wood, School Head: Mrs Ross-Wood extended a massive thank you for all the feedback received prior to the meetings, loads of positive responses and the items not discussed at the meetings are addressed in her written responses at the end of these minutes.

School priorities:

There are set areas in school that OFSTED focus on, the Ark Dot builds on these and is what we use to guide our planning for Ark Conway. Some of priorities in these area this year are:

1. Parents and Community – more parent workshops for example. Please submit any requests for workshops to Mrs Ross-Wood. Materials will be hosted on school website.
2. Pupil Well Being and Enrichment – Daily Mile (parent idea), Mind Up, visiting the elderly, new initiative for charity of the year - School Council will short list three charities and then school community will vote for charity of the year - each class to run an event for this charity. All ideas from parents welcomed
3. Curriculum and Assessment – changed to model of instant feedback for children in class rather than next day. Don't want children leaving lessons feeling uncertain about topics. Learning beyond classroom encouraged; ideas for trips welcomed. Parent feedback that Y3 have not had a trip so far this term so Mrs Ross-Wood is investigating. Plan for Year 1 to catch up on the Woodland Adventures (forest school) that they missed in Reception due to being at Bentworth.
4. Finance and Facilities – eg. Library. How do children use and appreciate it? Two teachers have been appointed to the library team. School asks parents to read regularly with children.

Wish List for fundraising:

Short term: Audio book system and books

Medium term: Hedges around the school to reduce pollution. Grant has been applied for but does not cover full cost. Hear back if successful or not in December. May need an extra £4/£5k from Parents Forum.

Long term (up to 2 years): Vegetable Garden, using the area near Year 4 classroom. Good use of awkward space, will benefit outdoors learning, science lessons, cooking. Cost not clear yet.

Main items from the issues raised in advance by parents:

1. Library:

£12,128.25 raised so far!!!! £3k from the Readathon alone. £500 from grants. Roughly £6,000 still needed. Mrs Ross-Wood is so grateful for all the hard work that has gone into the fundraising. She has never heard of such an effort in such a short time. Grand Opening at 9.15am on 7th December with a special guest author cutting the ribbon.

Once open parent volunteers needed to help look after and run the library, teach the children about using it. Ideally a Library Team, to work with the two nominated teachers. Please let Mrs Ross Wood know if interested.

2. Playground:

The school has spoken to several expert companies. The brief was to create something suitable for ages 4-11, to be compliant with all applicable laws and regs and within a max budget of £16k.



The proposal is a multi play item with a fireman's pole, a side to climb up, poles that you slide down and a xylophone. £16k includes having to change the surrounding flooring. To be situated in the playground near the year 1 classroom. The Council have visited the proposed area with Mrs Ross-Wood and indicated verbally that there should be no problems but planning has not been applied for yet.

Parents at the Friday meeting were really disappointed that this was not dealt with in the main building planning application, meaning yet more delays. They were also generally very disappointed with the proposal which looked too small and very expensive for what it is. The consensus at Friday's meeting was to put that proposal on hold until a working group of parents has had a chance to look into alternatives. Mrs Ross- Wood has asked for volunteers for that group, please let her know if you are interested. Clare Fuchs to put Emily Phillips in touch with the park officer from H&F, who knows everything about playgrounds.

The football area is to be preserved. Alex Vaizey to provide her spare portable goal. The brick benches have to stay as they are as part of the compromise agreed to get permission for the new build as the old build is listed. They mark the original boundary of the listed library building.

There may be some money left over from the main build to put towards the cost of the playground but the final account is still being sorted so unclear how much at this stage.

3. After school clubs:

Consensus that more variety and generally very positive feedback. Main gripe is lack of notice which is a problem when juggling with clubs outside of school. Challenge for school is getting the commitment from staff and third party providers. Mrs Ross-Wood is looking into the idea of separating more clubs by age or ability. Choir at lunchtime is very popular. Book Club, Chess Club and Debating Club all being considered.

AOB

Netball equipment has been ordered; KS2 netball starting after Xmas.

Looking into microphones for the hall.

Mrs Ross-Wood to arrange a time for parents to meet the school chef, Henryk.

Some parents asked for some education about real money skills, perhaps inviting a bank to come in and do a pop up session, SPEND/SAVE/GIVE/CHOICE scenarios, in light of a recent study brought out about young children and gambling.

Who to go to for specific reasons:

i) Well being/ behaviour:

- class teacher/ co-teacher

- Mr White for Reception and KS1 and Mrs Faupel for KS2

ii) Attendance/uniform/lunches:

- School Office

-Teacher/ co-teacher

If you want to meet with Mrs Ross-Wood, you would need to book a time via the school office.

Parent Forum AGM – Mrs Ross-Wood’s Handout

21st November 2018 and 23rd November 2018

Agenda:

- Updates shared in the meeting:
 - School Library
 - Just over £12,000 raised!
 - Library will officially be opened on 7th December by a VIP!
 - We need parent volunteers to become our library team, supporting with re-shelving, teaching children how to check books out etc)
 - Delay on toilet renovation due to finance issue with 3BM and H+F - we are hopeful that this will be sorted out imminently
 - Playground equipment
 - Delay on installation due to finance/planning issue with 3BM and H+F – we are hopeful that this will be sorted out imminently
 - RRW shared the design with parents
 - After School clubs
 - We have increased the range of clubs on offer
 - We will be reviewing the offer for Spring term based on feedback to ensure variety is met for all ages
 - We have also introduced Choir club as a lunchtime clubs
- Written comment provided below on other points raised prior to meeting

Parent Workshops – we are thrilled to hear that parents enjoyed attending these and found them useful. Do let us know if you think of any other workshops that you would like to be offered throughout the school year.

The Daily Mile – we are also very pleased that the daily mile is being well-received. Do join us after Celebration Assembly on Fridays if you would like to take part!

Home Learning – we have hear mixed views from parents, with some saying they like our home learning approach and others asking for more formal home learning. We will continue to follow our evidence-based approach to home learning, with children being asked to read regularly, practise spellings and carry out research on a question linked to their Challenge Curriculum topic (shared in the weekly newsletter). If parents would like to do more with their children, they can use ideas from the topic webs sent home each half term and the information shared in the workshops held earlier in the year.

Year 1 Woodland Adventures (Forest School) – we plan to provide Woodland Adventure time for Year 1 in the near future, as they did not get this last year due to being at Ark Bentworth. We will need parent volunteers to join us on these sessions to ensure they can go ahead. More information will be shared nearer the time.

Children’s attainment – this is shared in the summer term reports and also discussed in parent meetings. Parents are welcome to ask their child’s teacher if they require further information.

Swimming – we have increased our swimming provision so that children in Reception and Year 1 will go swimming to learn the basic skills needed and then children will go swimming again in



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Year 6 to ensure they leave primary school with a love of swimming and the confidence needed to continue this later in life.

Foundation Subjects

- Performing arts:
 - Singing assembly is held weekly, alternating year groups (Rec+KS1; KS2)
 - Singing lessons are held weekly for all year groups and are supported by a vocal expert every fortnight
 - Instrument lessons are held weekly for all year groups and are supported by an expert every week
 - Rec, Y1, Y2 – Recorder
 - Y3, Y4 – Samba drumming
 - Y5, Y6 - Ukulele
 - Drama is linked to current literacy topics and takes place on an ongoing basis throughout the years
 - Art lessons take place weekly and we also have Kite Studios visiting each half term to work with different classes
- French –
 - Takes place weekly in all year groups
 - We are currently reviewing our French curriculum to ensure all necessary skills are covered, as well as engaging children fully in preparation for their trip to France in Year 6!

School office – in order to reduce queuing time, we will introduce a post box system, where parents will be able to drop off permission slips. If you are dropping off money with the permission slip, please ensure these are in a sealed envelope with your child's name on.

Netball – netball club will be for children in KS2 (yrs3-6) from January. We now have two netball posts and we are waiting for bibs to be delivered.

Playground floor – we will be speaking to the company who installed the green playground flooring to review if it can be improved to minimise impact when children fall over.

Bike/scooter security – we have CCTV on site. However, we cannot guarantee the security of bikes or scooters left at school overnight or over the weekend. Please ensure that you collect your child's bike/scooter on a daily basis. Thank you

Water fountain – children have really enjoyed using our new water fountain. Unfortunately, this has been broken for some time and the company who were due to fix it have not met our standards for completion times. We will continue to share the urgency of this matter and hope to have it resolved as soon as possible.

Gate opening times – the schools gates will be open at the following times:

- Main gate 08:20am – 08:35am; 3:55pm – 4:10pm
- Side gate 08:20am – 08:30am; 4:00pm – 4:10pm
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Football – new equipment has been ordered for the football after school clubs, including bibs and new footballs. We are also hoping to begin using portable goal posts. To ensure the football groups are equal in size, the new groupings will be Y1-Y3; Y4-6.



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School uniform quality- we are in communication with the company who provide our school uniform to review the recent changes they have made to some of the items we purchase from them. We will be working to ensure these are always of the highest quality.

Hedges – we are endeavouring to reduce pollution levels wherever possible. We have state-of-the-art filters in our new building to ensure excellent air quality.

First aid – in school, we have a first aid supplies cupboard which is restocked on a regular basis. There are 10 members of staff who are first aid trained to ensure children are in safe hands at all times.

Star of week – we will send a text on Thursday if your child has won ‘Star of the Week’. Unfortunately, we cannot send this any early as we need to allow enough of the week to pass for teachers to make a fair decision.

Parking – it is critically important that parents are considerate when parking near school, both for the safety of our children but also for building important relationships with our neighbours. Please walk/scoot/cycle to and from school wherever possible. If you need to drive, please park as far away from school as possible to reduce congestion. Please do not park illegally on double yellow lines.

Lunches – we are thrilled that parents and children (and staff!) are so pleased with the improvements in our lunches, since welcoming our own chef (Henryk). We will review the quantities for each new meal we serve to ensure all children are eating enough. We also review our menu on a half-termly basis to ensure we repeat the most popular meals in upcoming menus and that we improve/change any meals that were less popular.