

Comely Park Parent Council News

Issue 1

Spring 2008

Chairman's Update

This is the first Newsletter communication from Comely Park Parent Council. The aim is to give parents an update of the key activities since our formation in September 2007.

Our initial objectives were to focus on 5 key areas which are outlined below and detailed in this Newsletter:



As parents, we have a vital role to play in our children's education. The Scottish Parliament passed a new law called the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, to encourage and support parent's involvement. The main aims are:

- To help parents become involved with their child's education;
- To welcome parents as active participants in the life of the school;
- To provide easier ways for parents to express their views and wishes.

Active involvement from a wide cross section of parents is critical if we are to make a difference to the education of our children. We have taken our first few steps as a newly-formed Parent Council, but the next steps can only come from people like you becoming involved.

Dougie Kennedy
Chair of Comely Park Parent Council

Parent Council AGM

The Parent Council AGM will be held on **Wednesday 23rd April at 7:30pm** in the school library, where we will be serving cheese and wine!

If you require crèche facilities, please let us know.

Playground Facilities

Following feedback from parents, we have been investigating ways to improve the playground environment:

- A Falkirk Council landscape architect recently surveyed the playground, in order to advise us on possible improvements.
- We are about to submit an application to "Awards For All", a Lottery funded organisation, for £10,000 for upgrading the playground facilities by adding raised planting beds – this will give the children the chance to learn about caring for naturally grown plants and vegetables. We will let you know the outcome of this.
- We are investigating the grant opportunities from Central Scotland Forest Trust for adding greenery to the playground area.
- We will soon be installing weather proof notice boards in the playground, which will display information and updates on the Parent Council and PTA.



The Parent Council is seeking to improve the playground.

Forward Planning

Richard Teed, Senior Forward Planning Officer at Falkirk Council, attended the last Parent Council meeting to update us on forward planning for the school.

The Comely Park School (CPS) catchment area is one of the most urban catchments within the Council area, with over 4,000 dwellings within the catchment boundaries.

CPS has been at high occupancy levels since the 1990s. Roll projections show that, for the next 5 years, there will be similar levels of occupancy, with 45-55 enrolments per year for P1.

Class size pressure comes mainly from placing requests. Places are also reserved for each year group, for families moving into the CPS catchment during the course of the year. (For the August 2008 P1 intake, approx. 2 places will be reserved for children moving into the area.)

Where there is a sustained intake of 50 or more children, the Council can always add additional classrooms to accommodate them, but demand will always exceed supply at a popular school such as CPS.

There are no plans to extend the school at the moment and the Council will resist this if at all possible.

Falkirk Council, along with other Councils, has raised serious concerns about the potential implications for P1-3 class sizes of 18. The Council will get further advice on the timetable for this in the near future.

For more information about Falkirk Council's school capacity plan for schools, see the following web site:

<http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/opendocument.asp?documentid=845>

Falkirk Council's enrolment policy can be found at the following web site:

http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/education/information_for_parents/admissions.aspx



Playground Security



The school gates at the Cow Wynd entrance.

Following feedback from parents regarding playground security, we have surveyed the school perimeter gates to see if they can be properly closed. This will help to increase levels of safety for the children when they are out in the playground.

Our findings showed that a number of the gates are difficult or impossible to close, particularly for smaller children. We also found that the gates are generally left open.

To resolve these issues, we are in discussions with the Council Clerk Of Works to improve gate fastenings. In addition, we are investigating the possibility of adding signage to the gates, to remind people to close them properly.

Finally we have established that, contrary to popular understanding, there is no public right of way from the double gates by Formula 1 to the single gate by the back lane.

What do you think?

- **Would you like to see further measures, such as closing off some of the perimeter gates, to discourage passers by using the playground as a shortcut?**
- **Should signs be added to make people aware that they should only enter the grounds on school business?**

Please let us know your thoughts on this important issue, so we can help keep all the children safe-please email us at:

info@comelyparkparentcouncil.org

Business Links



The Parent Council has discussed the links that Comely Park Primary School has within the community. We agreed two simple principles to use in helping to develop business links with the school.

- The purpose of the links will be to develop new opportunities for the pupils of Comely Park Primary School. These may take the form of experiences or access to additional resources that will enrich the children's education;
- All partners in the links need to be consistent with the ethos of Comely Park Primary School.

You may have an employer or knowledge of a business that would have something to offer our children at Comely Park that is consistent with these principles. If so, please get in touch by email or via the school at:

info@comelyparkparentcouncil.org

School Travel Plan

Falkirk Council has compiled a School Travel Plan for the school, with maps, a list of hazards and recommendations to encourage "green" travel to school.



One recommendation was the introduction of "walking buses" to enable groups of children to walk safely to school, where parents organise themselves to walk a route regularly used by children.

The Walking Bus walks to school collecting children en route, or sometimes uses a nearby car park for a 'Park and Walk'. The adult to child ratio is determined by the route walked and the age of the children. At least 2 adults are needed per bus. Adults and children wear fluorescent waistcoats so that they are highly visible.

Would you be interested in more information on "walking buses"?

Do you:

- Want to improve your fitness at no cost?
- Want to do your bit for the environment?
- Want to avoid the traffic jams on the school run?
- Want to spend more time with your children and friends?

Please email the Parent Council or contact the school, so we can gauge interest for a potential pilot of the scheme.

info@comelyparkparentcouncil.org



Useful Links

Comely Park Parent Council website:

www.comelyparkparentcouncil.org

Falkirk Council website:

www.falkirk.gov.uk

Scottish Government website providing information for parents:

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

MY FUTURE'S IN
falkirk

<http://www.myfuturesinfalkirk.co.uk>

How To Get Involved

There are a range of ways that you can get involved in the Parent Council; here are some suggestions:

- **Submit A Request** - ask the Parent Council to investigate an issue that you feel is important for the school.
- **Attend Meetings** - attend and participate in Parent Council meetings. Join a working group and participate directly in resolving an issue that you feel strongly about. The remaining meetings for this school year are:

Meeting	Wednesday 19 th March 2008 7:30pm School Staff Room
AGM	Wednesday 23 rd April 2008 7:30pm School Library
Meeting	Wednesday 28 th May 2008 7:30pm School Staff Room

How to Contact Us

Send an email to the Parent Council at the following address:

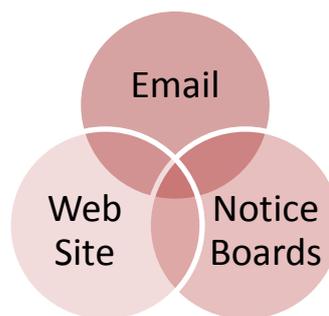
info@comelyparkparentcouncil.org

Or contact us through the school, either by phone (01324 508560) or in writing to:

Comely Park School, Cow Wynd, Falkirk, FK1 1PZ

We'd love to hear from you!

How to Stay Informed



As well as this Newsletter, there are a number of ways that you can stay up to date with Parent Council activities:

- **Email Updates** – stay in touch with Parent Council activities by sending us your email address. We plan to use email as a communications channel for:
 - Reminders of forthcoming meetings;
 - Distribution of meeting minutes;
 - Ultimately as a paperless mechanism for issuing the Newsletter.
- **Website** – we are currently constructing the Parent Council website, where you will soon be able to find more information, including meeting minutes and other updates. We'll let you know via the school newsletter once this is up and running. Our web address will be:

www.comelyparkparentcouncil.org
- **Notice Boards** – keep an eye out for the weatherproof notice boards that we plan to install soon in two locations in the playground.

Who We Are

Parent Council Member	Role	Children
Dougie Kennedy	Chair	P4, P7
Mel Brookes	Vice Chair	Pre-School , Nursery, P2
Colin Gordon	Treasurer	P7
Rochelle Black	Committee Member	Nursery, P3
Brian Cassidy	Committee Member	Nursery, P2, P4
Margaret Cochrane	Committee Member	P3
Stuart Duncan	Committee Member	P3
Sheila Ferguson	Committee Member	Nursery, P2
David Henderson	Committee Member	P5
Lorraine Johnstone	Committee Member	P5
Arlan Mallis	Committee Member	P2, P6
Margaret Marshall	Committee Member	P3
Nicola Morton	Committee Member	P5
Barry Smart	Committee Member	P1
Mrs Simpson (Teacher)	Co-Opted Member	-
Mr Watkinson (Head Teacher)	Co-Opted Member	-