



OLOL PTA EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

21st January 2023

In Attendance:

- Mrs Boon, Annabel Blakesley, Amanda Campbell, Irene Feely, Vicky Taylor, Alex Athienitou, Aoibheann Foley Bogusia Danielewicz, Patience Rusinga, Michelle Jeyes, Harriet Gordon, Lama Tadros, Vania, Ellie White, Katy, Lauren Thomas, Josephine Assani, Nicky Barham, Emma, Jen Jardine, Jessie, Maurice Day, Nic B, Sylvia Malo, Avinash Ragh, Julia Gillert, Erika Saroli, Elizabeth Stokoe, Elizabeth Marks, Anne, Dolores, Caroline Cooper, Siobhan Dowers, Sarah Bracken, Jen Fisher, Grainne Curran, P Nicola, Tristan Shelley, Daniella, Denis and Elisa Patras, Janina Agutoli, Jacqueline Adu, Jason, Laura Nicholls-Petrie, VWC, Rachael, Carley Reynolds, Sara Gull, Anna Cooke, Simone Clarke, Aga, Clara Turner, Yvonne Keal, Zoom User, iPhone, iPhone

1. Chairs' Welcome and Introduction to the Meeting

- Annabel Blakesley welcomed all and explained the structure and purpose of the meeting. It was noted that OLOL PTA is a registered charity and as such is bound by its constitution. The PTA exists to advance the education of pupils in the school, in particular by engaging in activities, providing facilities or equipment, which support the school and advance the education of all pupils.

This meeting was called to propose and discuss plans to renovate the playground and give a chance for parents to ask questions to the Head Teacher, Mrs Boon, before voting whether to commit to a donation of £34,000 maximum towards the project or decline. It is noted that the current playground structure has been in place for at least 25 years and needs attention. Ideally what it is replaced with should last as long. If the PTA is not able to fund this project, the school does not have the funds to pay for it. If the spend is agreed, Mrs Boon will go ahead and source more detailed designs and competitive quotes to allow the best price possible.

The PTA is not required to put proposed spends to the vote of the general parent body, however it is recognised and highly appreciated that all parents have contributed much time and effort, as well as money, to raise funds for the school and should therefore be invited to discuss and vote on high value spends.

2. Playground Project Proposal - Mrs Boon

- Mrs Boon gave a presentation starting with some background on the school community: children; parents; friends; staff; governors the parish and local community all work together towards the success of the school. Projects that the PTA have funded have been for the benefit of this whole community.
- Learning takes a variety of forms: indoor and outdoor. School is not just about learning, but about friendship, experiences and life - not just for the children, but also for parents and carers as well.
- In the past 3 years since Mrs Boon has been Head Teacher at OLOL, the PTA have funded projects such as: laptops for remote learning, equipment for the IT Suite, books and equipment for the library, KS2 pantomime trips and EYFS and KS1 children's entertainer. Previous projects include: the astro-turf, stage and lighting and the outdoor pavilion.
- 3 pots of money fund the school. Pot 1 comes from the Government. It is allocated for pupil numbers on a particular day of the year, it includes SEND budget and school office costs etc. From this budget the school has to pay rates and fuel bills etc and the budget is extremely tight and getting tighter. Pot 2 is the Governor's fund, which supplements the school budget and is there to help finance the school building. It is made up of parental contributions and is set at approximately 53p per day per pupil. Pot 3 is the PTA money. The PTA organises fun school community events with the common purpose of raising money for the children.
- The proposed playground project has 3 parts. The first part is to remove the play structure in the nursery area and make good the surrounding floor area. There is a health and safety issue, as it is showing signs of dry rot. Nursery would prefer not to replace it but to make use of the space. Part 2 is to replace the existing climbing wall as it is near the end of its life. The children love the climbing wall and so ideally it would be replaced

with a newer version. Part 3 is the biggest part of the project, which is to replace the current play structure in the playground and replace the safety surface. Both the structure and the surface are coming to the end of their life and the annual maintenance cost shows this. This main structure is loved by children of all ages, it is used every break and lunchtime and is good for the development of gross motor skills, as well as social skills. This structure is at least 28 - 30 years old. The play surface has a safety life span of 10-15 years and it is nearing that age.

- PTA vote has 3 options:
 - Option 1 - do nothing to invest in the project, the consequence being that the project will not go ahead as the school cannot afford to pay for it at this time. Children will not be allowed to use the equipment for much longer at play times, for safety reasons, which will impact their physical and mental health.
 - Option 2 - a partial donation, the consequence of which is as above, as the school does not have the funds to make up the shortfall.
 - Option 3 - vote for a proposed spend of £30,000 - £34, 000 to fully fund the project. Mrs Boon has already approached some recommended companies for 3 design options and quotes per company, in order to get an idea of the cost to bring to the PTA. The designs and costs already received are a very similar expenditure. The school really wants to have a say in what is installed and how it is designed so that it truly reflects the school and its needs. Once all the designs have been received and considered by the school, they will be shared with the PTA and pupils will have the final choice.
- Playtimes - never before has outdoor play been so crucial as these post-covid times. Children tell staff that they enjoy OPAL and their playtimes with the equipment, teachers are saying that they see the benefits of OPAL. The Local Authority have asked the school to support other schools with the OLOL model of playtimes as it is deemed so beneficial. Other Head Teachers have visited to see how OLOL playtimes are organised, as it works for the school and the staff, as well as the children.
- The purpose of this meeting is to get an agreement in principle from the PTA to fund the project so that it can proceed to the next stage of acquiring more designs and quotes. Ideally the works would take place during the summer holidays so that the children can benefit from the project as soon as possible but without disrupting playtimes and the school day.

3. Current PTA Finances

Current bank balance as at 30/1/23 less pending items	£27, 550
Raffle income to be banked	£948
Estimate of funds to be raised from upcoming events in 2023 (Quiz, St Pat's disco, Easter egg hunt, summer ball, summer fayre, non-uniform day)	£12,000
Year 6 party/yearbook/other expenses based on 2022	- £1,700
Contingency funds to be held	- £5,000

4. Questions

- Does the school get any funding as it's part of the CMAT? (Erika) - The Trust has funded the new boiler and expanded the car park. The car park was essential for teacher recruitment and retention, as many teachers could not work at the school, as there were not enough parking spaces. Three bids have also been submitted - one is for £200,000 - £300,000 for the roof, another is for major work on the Benedict Building. The Trust cannot fund this project as it is hopefully funding these essential works.
- Will the works impact the summer holiday camps? (Erika) - The work should not disrupt the holiday club. There may be a short period of time, such as a week, where part of the playground may not be available to use but the clubs will still go ahead.
- Could it be completed earlier so that Year 6 can benefit? (Julia) - We want to make sure that it is the best possible design and we don't want to compromise the project just so that it can be completed a few weeks earlier. Year 6 will miss out and it is a shame, as the parents have contributed so much over the years. This is a very valid point.
- Question re green spaces and materials to be used - Space in the playground is very limited. Our current focus is to use natural materials in the playground so there will be no plastic as far as possible in the new structures and their designs.

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- Feedback that play is especially important at the moment (Jason) - There is a large amount of hidden mental health issues amongst our children, and this is the reason the school is invested in making playtimes the best they can be. The children work very hard in lessons and their behaviour is exemplary and their playtimes need to be the times when they are allowed to climb, play in the mud, dress up and be children. Childhood goes so quickly and it all changes once they go to secondary school.
 - A link was shared from the Natural History Museum about their initiative to improve green spaces within schools to encourage children to learn about nature and improve biodiversity in the local area. There are lots of ideas, resources, competitions and support for schools wanting to start the initiative. (Erika). [Apologies, the link was not saved] - Mrs Boon made note of the link and stated that this would be very useful in the near future when they start to look at the second phase. This would be to develop the area where the mud kitchen is, near the pavilion.
 - Feedback that the Lego area has been very well received - the children love the Lego area, where Year 6 mix with Reception children and play together. The PTA recently donated £185 and Lego was donated. Whether the children like playing Lego or running around playing basketball, the school wants there to be something for everyone at playtimes.
 - Question about the suitability for all ages of the new play structure and climbing wall (Daniella) - The school does not want to separate the children into different playgrounds again, it works well as a mix and all the children benefit. With this in mind, the new structures will ideally cater for all ages. There is always an adult stationed next to the play structures at playtimes for safety.
 - When you talk about the play structure, do you mean the green one? Is it that old? (Sarah) - Yes, several parents and members of staff were pupils at the time it was installed. This will be removed but the wooden play trail along the edge of the small playground will stay. The children love these and they are still in very good condition and safe. It gets serviced every year. The climbing wall is also very well used, the children really enjoy it. It would be cheaper to just remove it, but replacing it with a wooden one that has different heights for the different heights of the children means the older children can use it and play alongside the younger ones. The grassy area between the climbing wall and the current play structure will remain.

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- Can we see the design that has already been returned? (Erika) - The school has asked for 3 sample designs from each company and they haven't yet been returned. This is why they weren't brought tonight. It takes a lot of time to meet with these companies and share the design vision and discuss potential designs. It was felt it would be better to wait until after this meeting to continue, so that it would be known if funding had been secured or not. Mrs Boon wants the school to decide with the children on the final design. It is the children who will use the playground equipment everyday.
 - Will there be maintenance costs? (Patience) - The school is responsible for maintenance, paid for out of the school budget, and this is how the school knows that the current structures and flooring are coming to the end of their life. This has to be done every year, where they check the connections and the screws and that the wood is safe and free from dry rot.
 - Question re grassy hill. (Maurice) - Space is very limited and there is a lot of concrete in our school playground. The intention is to make it as nice as possible with the space there is and natural materials as far as possible but there just isn't the space for green space or hills.
 - Question re resale value. - This is something that can be looked into as the structure is made of metal.

5. Vote - To contribute £34,000 maximum towards the cost of the Playground Project.

- Votes FOR = 43 (38 in the meeting + 5 via private message)
- Votes AGAINST = 0
- Abstentions = 0

The PTA therefore agrees to fund the Playground Project up to the maximum expenditure of £34,000.

6. Next PTA meeting

- Wednesday 1st March 2023 8pm - to be confirmed

7. Thank you and Close