

Cumann na dTuismitheoirí Scoil Aonghusa Scoil Aonghusa Parents' Council

Scoil Aonghusa, Geata an Domhnaigh, Droichead Átha. 041 9832531

Cathaoirleach: Yvonne Walsh, Leas Cathaoirleach: Miryam McDonnell

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Clár Oibre

Cumann na dTuismitheoirí A.G.M.

Meán Fómhair 2019

Parents Council A.G.M. September 25th 2019

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Miontuairiscí A.G.M. 25th Meán Fómhair 2018

A.G.M. Minutes 25th September 2018

- 1. Leithscéalta: Apologies: Claire McKeon, Derek Ruddy, Sinead Townsend**
- 2. Fáilte ó Cathairleach : Chairperson's Welcome and Opening -
Miryam Ní Dhomhnaill**
- 3. Tuairsc Cisteoir Bhord Bainistíochta : Board of Management Treasurer's
Report - Olivia Sheil**

My name is Olivia Sheil and I am the treasurer with the Board of Management and the parent's representative. I had three children through the school and currently one still in school. Under Department of Education guidelines we are obliged go through the Board of Management spending for the school for the last financial year. On your seats you will find a list of the spending, and I will quickly run through this.

These are the figures for our current account, and you can see the monies going into the account:

- These are a mixture of Department of Education grants and Parents Council funds. We have a lot of very dedicated people working very hard throughout

the year and volunteering their time and energy. A lot of very hard work goes into the Parents Council and last year they donated €6,500.

- The Extra Curricular income is money that you send in, for example for swimming or guitar lessons, every penny has to be accounted for and a record kept.
- The Use of School Premises is for elections and the Government give us €200.00 for use of the halla.
- Donations received from parents make a huge difference because there is always a shortfall between Department of Education funding and the actual running cost of the school. The school is an old building and it costs a lot more to heat. Lighting is also more expensive.
- Parent Direct Art & Craft is money you send in during September.

And then the spending from last year:

- We had Auxiliary Spending of €27,131.52
- I had to look at why there was a jump on the Water Charges. I figured out that the dates of bill overran the years. We took a small portion of last year's bill forward to this year.
- Insurance is always expensive.
- Cleaning Expenses & Waste is more or less the same.
- Disposal
- Classroom Equipment & Furniture. New chairs and new tables were bought for classrooms. There is a good bit of expense in that last year.
- Electricity has increased.
- Heat
- On Repairs & Maintenance, for those of you who are not new, you will remember the old yard, it wasn't hectic. Last summer we resurfaced the whole yard, with painting, for the children to play on. Those bills were then paid in this year accounts.
- Printing, Postage & Stationary
- Telephone
- IT & Internet Expenses
- Security
- Travel is buses for the children to different events.

- Recruitment & Interview Expenses
- Audit fees are the same as last year. We are obliged under regulations to have the accounts fully audited independently. We use a local firm Callan Stringer & Co. When we are finished here this evening we submit all of the accounts to Callan Stringer and they will audit them independently to make sure everything is ok. We will then get a certificate for the Department of Education.
- Educational Activities is anything that goes on in the school. Teachers will organise different activities and order resources that are suitable for the classroom. That figure is substantial but is it directly for the use of the children.
- Revenue as you can see is a massive figure. There is a change in how VAT and RCT are calculated for the school. It is up to the school to pay the VAT on top of the bill for works done. It costs the school in the long run, and it is a massive figure last year, because of all the works done.
- We have a Credit Union account where we save €300 per month. This covers times when we get stuck waiting on grants. We can dip into that fund to pay bills. It usually goes to about €3,000. We are also building a credit record in the event we need to apply for a loan for emergencies. For example, a plumbing leak or issue with the roof. We can access a loan and pay it back when funding is issued.
- Sundries are a list of items, e.g. first aid supplies and Irish Primary Principal's Network. We are a Catholic school so we are a member of CPSMA. CPD is continuous professional development for teachers.
- The Grants included are capitation grants. We got an ICT grant last year and we have about €2,000 left. There are a lot of old laptops in the school and we are looking at a project to upgrade them. Ancillary services, school books grant and the Standardised Tests that all of your children do at the end of the year.
- We are very grateful as a Board for the Parents Council donations. The money given this year and last year was spent on yard resurfacing, yard painting, back wall repair, library books, new laptops, new classroom readers and children's activities.

All of the bills and lodgements are accounted for and when they come back from Callan Stringer & Co. they are available in the office for any member of the public to view. You can also chat to me at any stage about something you are not clear on. Go raibh mile maith agibh.

4. **Aitheasc an Phríomhoide : Principal's Address - Mairéad Mhic Ríogh**

Go raibh maith agat as teach amach.

I have been the Principal since April and the Parents Council have really supported me and made everything very easy, so thank you for that. The Parents Council work in conjunction with the Board of Management and the staff to ensure that all of the children in Scoil Aonghusa get the best possible education that is really what it is all about. So tonight I have decided to share a few thoughts with you that were discussed at our planning day. We had a planning day on 30th August. On that day many of our teachers took the opportunity to speak openly and frankly, basically about their hopes for the school and one of the things that came through, the resounding message was, that we want the children to be happy in school. The children must be happy to learn well. We feel that children's minds must never be pre occupied with worries, be they big or small. That was the big message that came through that day. It was also felt that as teachers and parents we need to remember that we are dealing with very young children. Some of our infants are only four years of age and in first class some of them are six. So if your first class child isn't reading fluently or just beginning to understand number, don't worry because they have lots of time to develop and learn along the way. Another thing that came through on that day was that we as teachers feel that if a child is struggling or has a little difficulty, parents must be informed as soon as possible. On the other hand as parents, is it very important that you come to us, that you meet the teacher and let us know if at any time of the year your child isn't coping the way you would like them to? You will attend the parent teacher meetings shortly. They will be just before the mid-term, not for all of the classes but for most of the classes and there are others in November. The parent teacher meetings are an ideal time for you to discuss any worries or whatever it is about your child from September to date. You can also come in again and make an appointment if something arises during the year. Another topic discussed on the day, and I heard Olivia mention it, the Standardised Tests. Every May the children in the school from first to sixth class do a test in maths, in Gaelge and in English. Now children all

around the country do these tests, the same test or a very similar test. You get the results of these tests as a score on the Tuairisce Scoile, the school report. These results are very good, they are very helpful, they help us in our planning and they help us in our teaching. They give you an idea of how your child is progressing. However, we feel that they shouldn't get too much weight, that you shouldn't judge your child's school experience in one year on those scores. Basically it's just one test on a particular day, how the child performed. So they are important but they are not very important. Another thing and it always comes up at our staff meetings and at planning meetings, is reading. Reading is really at the core of learning. So despite all the advances, the children now have their smart phones, their tablets, their computers. I know they read on some of those. But still nothing beats a good book. So we have found, and research tells us, that children, who read at home with their parents, read better and they enjoy reading more. So we encourage parents to read at home every night, even Saturday and Sunday night. To spend a little while every day reading with your child, it is really worthwhile. Another idea that came to us is that everybody in the house could have a library card, not just the children, and that now and again on a regular basis you go the library. We have a beautiful library here in Drogheda. Another thing that you could do regarding reading is to read aloud. Lots of parents do that when the children are young, but you can continue that even up to sixth class. Everybody loves to hear a nice story. So that really helps. Recently I was in a class, one of the higher classes, the teacher was attending to something else, and the children were doing a written task and I said when you are finished you can read a book. If you don't have a book you can get one in the class library. So as time went on I noticed they were all reading, and no child in that class got a book from the library, they all had a book they were already reading there on their desks. I also noticed, as I was walking around, that many of the books were brought in from home. So that is a great reflection on you as parents and that is a way that you are supporting and helping us. So thank you for that and keep it up. I see some new parents here tonight that have children in junior infants. So I would like to warmly welcome the new class of junior infants and their parents. It is really special to me when I see past pupils coming back and we have quite a few past pupils in our junior infant class. It is lovely to see them coming back as parents and bringing their children. We also have a new family in second class and I would like to welcome them to the school also. Enjoy these special years with your children. In our home our youngest

finished college this year and we also have a wedding coming up. So the years do fly by and they grow up very quickly. Celebrate their achievements and be proud of them. They are all wonderful children.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh.

5. Tuairsc Bhord Bainistíochta: Board of Management Chairperson's Address - Rhona Uí Cheallaigh

I have much less to say than Mairéad. I just want to explain to you a little about the Board, what it does and who is on it. I think it is lovely for parents, particular the new parents to have a little idea of who's who and who is on the Board and what a Board does. I have to say our children, like Mairéad's, are grown up and finished school. I was a young Mum myself and I had no clue that a Board of Management was involved in a school. I just brought the children to school and collected them and brought them home. I didn't realise that every school obviously has a Board. And, what is the duty of a Board. Well the Board of Management manages the school on behalf of the Diocese and in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills. So we have actually two sets of rules. We have the CPSMA, which was mentioned earlier, which is the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association and we have the Department of Education. So we have lots of rules that we follow exactly, and one of them is that a Board of Management should meet once a term. We meet twice a term. We do the very best we can for the school. So, how is a Board made up? There are eight members on a Board, and I'll just explain. Obviously we have the Principal and a teacher's representative and then we have two Cumann na dTuismitheoirí, the parents. We have Joe McArdle and Olivia Sheil, who you met earlier. They're the two parent's reps. We then have two community reps, Turlough McKevitt and Ivan Ferrans. The final two members are the patron's rep, Monsignor Jim and I. We meet and all of the decisions that we make in planning are made as a corporate body, nobody has full voice. Everything is discussed, considered, talked about and all the decisions are made jointly. If ever there needs to be a vote, I don't think we've ever needed a vote, because generally the running of the school runs very smoothly and there has never been a vote. So what else do we do? We plan, mostly educationally, for the school and all of the Policies that run the school have to be updated very regularly. The Policies include the Child Safety Policy, the Anti Bullying and Behaviour Policies. The Health & Safety, Code of Behaviour,

Enrolment Policies. All these Policies have to be considered, discussed, updated if required and signed off and again that is in the rule book. We also plan for the upkeep of the school and I think that you must agree that this school is beautifully kept. Every year there are improvements, it's absolutely amazing. The upkeep of the school, both internally and outside and repairs, budgeting, etc. So that's what the Board of Management do. We do it on behalf of the school, primarily for the children, as Muinteoir Mairéad said. For the children, their parents and the whole school community, including the wider community because we involve with other people. That is what it is really all about and you are very welcome to meet with us at the cúpan tae afterwards.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

6. **Miontuairisc an A.G.M. deireanach: Minutes of last A.G.M. 27/09/2017 - read by Miryam Ní Dhomhnaill**

7. **Tuairisc Cisteoir Cumann na dTuismitheoirí: Parents Council Treasurers report - Susan Carr**

I have three children in the school, rang haon, rang do and rang sé. Miryam asked me last year as Siobhán was stepping down to come along and give a hand on the Parents Council. So like most people you get a bit apprehensive, I didn't know what it was about, but she didn't leave me much option but to go along, in typical Myriam style. And to be honest I'm actually delighted that I did get involved, because you don't realise the amount of work that goes into organising things like flag days and the Christmas raffle. The First Communion is a huge event and it's such a wonderful day here in the school. It's a great day to be part of, but a huge amount of organising goes into it, and the one thing I could say tonight is we need more parents to help. You don't have to sign up to be in an official role, but even as a helper. We could really do with everyone's support.

So just briefly to go through the accounts:

- The current account opens at €3,011.55, which is the running cost for the year. There were a few main areas where we raised money during the year.
- Pupil insurance, for €9 per year you have your children covered for insurance for the year. We collected €1,195 and we paid out €904. The reason there is a small profit here, is because I submit everything online and the school gets a reduction. It's not something the parents would get directly online. So it's not a underhand way of getting money out of parents. I think that is important for parents to realise.
- Other receipts, is an old cheque that hadn't been cashed from years gone by, so I quickly put it back into the accounts.
- The Xmas Raffle, in fairness to Wendy and all the other parents on the team, they do huge work going around all the local businesses getting sponsorship. Then all the parents going out and getting support, selling all the tickets at Christmas, etc. It is a huge fundraiser for Cumann na dTuismitheoirí and it gives us great flexibility, last year to be able to contribute to the Board and to be able to contribute to the wonderful work on the yard outside. The Board will be putting together some more suggestions on what they feel they would like Cumann na dTuismitheoirí to raise funds for going forward. Mairéad mentioned the laptops, etc. that our kids will all get the benefit of down the line.
- The Flag Day is a tough day, it tends to rain a lot and it's cold because it's in February, and because we are a small school we don't really have enough capacity to cover all the main areas. So we do our best to cover McDonnell's Centra, The Credit Union and the areas where you get enough footfall passing by. Thank you to the parents, the grandparents, the aunts and uncles that turn up on the day to go out and raise money. It is actually great to get a flag day in the town when there are so many charities and schools are looking for their chance to get out there.
- The Book Scheme takes in about €16,400, a large amount of money. It is split between two columns. €10, 532.75 is to cover the cost of the books we are buying in and €5,757.50 is what you see on your list when it goes home for the rental of books and readers. We segregate this money so it is all very clear what needs to be kept aside in terms of money for the library and replenishing

books. There is a small margin, as you can see down the bottom; there is a Book Haven payment for €8,292.18. Now we still have €1,100 to pay because one of the invoices hadn't come in by year end. So it leaves a small profit, and again it is a good profit, because we buy directly as a school, it's not something they make available to parents, so we are making a small bit of money from this.

Other expenditure:

- Insurance for all the activities we run, we need insurance to cover this. Pupil insurance as I mentioned. We had John Spillane last year; I know the kids all thoroughly enjoyed that.
 - Raffle expenses, when you consider the amount of money that was brought in we only had to pay out €341.90 in expenses and considering all the donations that were given towards the raffle.
 - PPN, the text a parent top up.
 - First Communion and we didn't have confirmation last year. So everything from the teas, the coffee, the cake and the photographers.
 - During the year we paid for Hilary Cooke supplementary readers for the library.
 - We mentioned that we transferred €6,500 over to the Board of Management - towards the upkeep of the yard and the school.
 - The opening balance you can see there in the Book Scheme is quite high, €16,805.01. The reason for that is €6,270.70 was still to be paid from last year and it was paid in September post year end. So we have a small overrun in the accounts this year with both of them a loss of -€301.01 and -€1,015.20. The closing balance is €2,710.54 in the current account and €15,789.81 in the Book Scheme account.
- And again, I have the accounts for viewing. They are going to be audited also and they are fully available to read.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh.

8. **Aitheasc an Cathaoirligh: Chairperson's Address -**

Miryam Ní Dhomhnaill

Is mise Miryam Ní Dhomhnaill, I'm the Chairperson of the Scoil Aonghusa Parents Council. I have three children in the school. I have been the Chairperson for three years now and I'll be standing down at this AGM, but I'll still be heavily involved in the Parents Council. The Council works as we meet once a month. We've already met in September and it's usually at the beginning of each month. At the moment we have planned for the next three meetings. Our next meeting is on Tuesday 9th October at 8pm in the Leabharlann, the next meetings will be on Tuesday 13th November and Tuesday 4th December also at 8pm in the Leabharlann. At our December meeting, once we know the dates for the First Communion and the Confirmation, we can plan ahead for the meeting dates for the rest of the year. The Council consists of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, which is Rachel, Treasurer Susan, Secretary Brenda, the National Parents Council Representative Ciara and two Board of Management Parent representatives, a Mother and Father, who are Joe McArdle and Olivia Sheil, and they are voted in every four years. In the school we pride ourselves on our sense of community, the school being the Board of Management, the Parents Council, the students and every parent in the school and grandparents included. There are a lot of grandparents also that help out at different events. The Council works really hard to fundraise for the school. You can see from Olivia's accounts, it's tight every year. If you want your children to have anything extra and for the school to run as well as it does, funds need to come from somewhere. The money we raise all goes back into the school. We transfer it twice a year, as per best practice, into the school. We decide as a Council what we would like the money to be spent on. It's always for the good of the children. So, just to give you an idea of the amount of work we put in for fundraising and why we need to put on a massive recruitment drive every AGM. For example, the Christmas Raffle, which is our biggest fundraiser. We take three months to prepare for that every year. At our first meeting in September we talk about the AGM and the Christmas Raffle and at every meeting until the Raffle is held. It starts in October with Wendy and Eimear, who kindly, for the last few years have handed out letters to all the local businesses within a three mile radius of the school. These letters request donations towards the school raffle. A letter goes out to parents asking for donations, which Deirdre sends out in November. By the December meeting we have an idea of what

prizes we have and what sort of hampers we can put together. We organise for the raffle cards to go out, this is kindly donated by Emmet Steenson. He gets list of the prizes and he prepares the raffle cards to go out to parents. We meet up and put the hampers together. This is the kind of work we need to put in, working together to fundraise for the children and the school. The Council also organise events for the children, which are amazing, e.g. the pancake day. The brain child of Breda Divine and Muinteoir Mairéad. It is the most fantastic day in the school. If there is any day that you can take off, it's pancake Tuesday. Take that day off work and come in a help. It's magical really and it runs like clockwork. There's so much joy in the kid's faces. We also had John Spillane and Óga Yoga last year. At the end of the day, everything we do as a Parents Council is for the children. The more involved you are in the Council the more the children get out of it. The more they see you helping out around the school the more joy they get out of it. They understand the value of the time you put into the school. It is hard work, I won't lie, but it wouldn't be as hard if we had more people. That would be amazing. So basically, I'm trying to do a recruitment drive for the Parents Council. This year I brought along a list for people to sign up. There's a helpers list if you don't mind getting a text off us asking for help. Just give us your e-mail address, your phone number and your name if you would like to be part of the Parents Council and come to our meetings, even just the odd meeting. If you give us your phone number you will be part of the circular texts that go out as reminders for the meetings. If you have some ideas you might like to come to the school with, come to the Council and we can engage with the school. Mairéad or Edel come to our meetings and we engage together to come up with new ideas and different ways to raise funds. Lastly, we have a couple of positions which need to be filled. I'll be stepping down as Chairperson, and I would like to nominate Yvonne Walsh for the role. If there is anyone here to second that it would be wonderful (this was seconded). So Yvonne will be the new Chairperson. Rachel O'Sullivan will be stepping down as Vice Chairperson and I would like to step up as Vice Chairperson. Obviously, I know how everything works and it would be great to work with Yvonne (this was seconded). We also need a National Parents Council Representative as Ciara Kinsella will be stepping down. If anyone would like to put their name forward that would be wonderful. Thank you Sinead Townsend and I second that. And those positions are now filled. Please all stay for a cup of tea. Thank you all so much for coming and thank you to Mairéad, it has been great working with you. Also thank

you to Rhona on the Board of Management, Deirdre, Joe, Olivia and everyone involved.

Susan thanked Miryam for all her work on the Parents Council. She took an awful lot on her shoulders and I think it's important that we spread the load going forward.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh.