

Turner P & C
Minutes of the P&C General Meeting 19 November 2014
(Turner School Library)

Attendees

Helen Bell (President)
Tina Campbell (Secretary)
Diane Jones
Clem Jones (Minute Secretary)
Heather Kettle (Treasurer)
Ephraim Grunhard (Assistant Treasurer)
Jo Padgham (Principal)
David Dunstan (Public Officer)
Margaret Makeham-Kirchner
Stephanie Claessens
Michael Claessens
Diane Jones
Greta Doherty
Taisha Granger
Bob Edwards
Robyn Watson
Rochelle Ball

Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.45pm and welcomed all those present.

Apologies

Linda Keith
Claudia Guszich
Amy Seath

Acceptance Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2014 were accepted – moved Helen Bell seconded Heather Kettle. Carried.

Business Arising from Minutes of previous Meeting

- Protocol for obtaining approval of P&C funded projects. Draft being developed through ongoing discussion and e-mail. Ongoing discussion.
- Digging Mound – item to be referred to 2015 Committee.

Reports

(a) President's Report

Helen thanked everyone for attending and presented her report. However as the major item in her report was the proposed security fence, discussion was deferred to the "Fence proposal discussion" item under General Business.

A copy of the President's Report is at Attachment A.

(b) Treasurer's Report

Heather Kettle presented the Treasurer's Report.

There has been an injection of funds post the school fete.

Account balances at 19 November 2014 are:

Internet savings account	\$28,145.71
Operating cheque account	\$26,575.41
Less unrepresented cheques	-\$356.00
Less cheques to be distributed	-\$1,225.80
Total	\$53,139.32

Current commitments (\$22,784.98) – for the design, plans and construction of ramps and barriers for Cubbies.

Balance of funds, approximately \$30,000 less some minor administrative expenses, e.g. insurance and membership of ACT P&C to be carried forward to 2015 Committee with a strong recommendation that the new Committee consider the outdoor seating and musical playground items previously endorsed.

Moved Helen Bell, seconded Ephraim Grunhard that report as presented be accepted. Carried.

A copy of the Treasurer's Report is at Attachment B.

(c) Principal's Report

Jo Padgham presented her report covering Learning and Teaching; Leading and Managing; Student and Community Engagement.

Jo referred to her written report and noted some brief highlights:

- Water re-fill stations to be installed in the trainyard and near cubbies/library wall;
- Carpark update - internal carpark and landscaping, yet to receive sketch plans or recommendations. David St and Hartley carpark still a concern with vehicles jumping the gutters to park off road.
- Assistant Returning Officer for 2015 Board Elections – parent Linda Keith has again been appointed for the 2015 Board elections
- PALLsACT – Principals as Literacy Leaders – Turner staff presented a display as one of 30 schools to complete the project;
- Co-op School staff joined Turner staff in the Action Learning Fair – hugely impressive work;
- Right here, Right Now (25 year anniversary of the rights of the child) launch – approx. 60 Turner students will participate in launch with the Minister for Children and Young People and the Human Rights Commissioner
- Class representatives – parent Anne Napier is working to organise a group of parents/carers to act as class reps for 2015;
- Thank you to all involved in the very successful Turner school fete.

General Business

- **Bunnings sausage Sizzle** - Saturday 6th December. Roster reasonably Ok, still do with a few more volunteers. Clem Jones to follow up.
- **Christmas Concert – Wednesday 3 December.**
 - BBQ from 5.15pm to 6.15pm
 - Children to be in class groups and ready by 6.20pm
 - Concert commence 6.30pm
 - Volunteers called for BBQ – Tina Campbell to organise roster
 - Tina to do a stocktake of items for BBQ, drinks, serviettes sauces etc. and Ephraim Grunhard to arrange purchase of all other items.

- **2015 Welcome Morning tea**
 - Morning teas to be held on
 - Monday, 2 February 2015, 9.00 - 9.45 am (in the main hall) - new Mon-Wed preschool and new kindy families
 - Tuesday, 3 February 2015, 9.00 - 9.45 am (in the main hall) - returning and new Yr1-Yr6 school families
 - Wednesday, 4 February 2015, 12.15 - 12.45 pm (in the Library) - new Wed-Fri preschool families - Note: this is a lunchtime session!
 - Diane Jones to organise roster for bakers and meet and greet hosts

- **Fete wrap up**
 - Helen Bell thanked everyone involved for an outstanding effort.
 - Need to prepare a list of sponsors to whom “Thank You Certificates” are to be sent to. Tina Campbell to coordinate list and school to prepare certificates.
 - Feedback has been positive and the overall view is that it was a lot of fun
 - Probably the best ever fete layout and the stage was in an ideal location. Committee to look at options for connecting the external PA system with the PA system in the main hall
 - Good that supplies of drinks were spread around all food and other stalls.
 - Gecko Gang awesome
 - Further suggestions for improvements/changes for future fetes included:
 - Developing the car park as a “food alley”
 - Move 5/6 café to an outdoor venue
 - Issuing of multiple purchasing tickets to be re-considered
 - Establish coordinators and volunteer groups to arrange set up/pack up of non-stall equipment
 - Ephraim Grunhard stressed the need to ensure people handling food are not handling money. Apart from the health issues, “dirty” money causes problems for the bank’s counting machines.

- **Fence proposal discussion**
 - Bob Edwards opened the discussion by stating that as Chair of the school Board and as a 14 year Turner parent, he was concerned that some parents of the school were not showing appropriate trust in the school executive, including the principal, to be seeking the best outcome for the school. He said that there seemed to be some doubt from some parents that the board was being open and transparent in this discussion. He stated that the board, and the school, had nothing to hide. He also thanked Helen and Jo for the many hours they had dedicated to this discussion so far.
 - Helen Bell, P&C President informed the meeting that:
 - The ACT Schools directorate required strong community support for the fence proposal
 - Tonight’s meeting was a further attempt to gauge community views
 - There appears to be a lack of knowledge of what is required for our cohort of students
 - The outcome of the quick poll (survey) 54 responses, which is a good response from the 300 on the e-mail list invited to participate;
 - Partial fence school (57% agree, 24% disagree, 9% neutral, 9% need more information. There is less support (39% agree, 31% disagree, 14% neutral, 16% need more

information) for the internal fence running from the hall to the train yard

- Jo Padgham then outlined the next stages of process to be followed with the Directorate
- Further discussion on a number of views then took place. In response to a suggestion that only Hartley St be fenced by the Directorate a view was expressed that without fencing off the section from the hall to the trainyard the children with special needs would still not be able to access the cubbies play area without the current high level of supervision.
- After further debate, it was moved Ephraim Grunhard, seconded Rochelle Ball that Turner School be included in the fencing program for the Hartley St fence and continue to be part of ongoing discussions in the design and style of the internal “trainyard/hall” fence. Carried

Attachment D is an update by Helen Bell on the actions taken immediately following the P&C meeting.

For completeness, **Attachment E** is the report presented by Helen Bell at the public meeting held on 12 November 2014 to discuss the fence proposal.

- **Fairy garden arches** –Clem Jones to submit arch plan to Kidsafe seeking plan approval. If approved, plans to be taken to manufacturer to check quality of work and if satisfied, proceed with manufacture and installation. Given the length of time since the original quotes had been received, the Committee agreed to fund the project to a maximum of \$3000.
- **2015 AGM Date** – the date of the 2015 Annual General Meeting for the Turner School P&C Association is Wednesday 18 February 2015

Other Business

Next Meeting – Annual General Meeting Wednesday 18 February 2015 7.30pm

Close

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

President's report

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come to the community meeting last Wednesday to discuss the proposal to seek funding for school fencing. Thanks also to everyone who took the time to share their concerns about the proposal and the process. In my first letter at the start of the year, I made it clear that as everyone is a member of the P&C, regardless of their ability to attend the meetings, we have a responsibility to work to ensure we continue to represent the views of this broad group. To this end, I sent an email to those on the P&C distribution list yesterday morning to gauge opinions on the fence, to which more than 50 people took the time to contribute.

Summary

I've heard and appreciated your suggestions, concerns and opinions over the last three weeks and considered them in my position as your representative. There is agreement that everyone benefits from Turner being inclusive. Providing additional areas for special needs children to play was also well supported. Given our limited funds (and fund raising record) asking to be included in the Directorate's fencing program seems to be the only real option to provide additional play spaces for our special needs children. The quick poll we undertook in the lead up to this P&C meeting provided me with a strong indication of the level of support for a 1.8 metre fence along Hartley Street. I recommend we ask to be part of the fencing program for the Hartley Street fence. As there are mixed views on the internal fencing and there may be viable alternatives, I propose we leave the internal fencing out of the security fencing program and work together to identify the specific problem we're trying to address and the most suitable option for a solution. There was little support for fencing the bike area and viable alternatives have been raised as part of the consultation. I recommend we remove this section of fencing from the proposal.

The details

The proposal to fence part of Hartley Street has been discussed over the last few weeks. I feel that there is an opportunity to improve our approach to consultation and engagement in the future, which I will speak about shortly. First, I'd like to share my thoughts on the proposal.

The proposal offered a solution to two problems of which many people had not been aware: the need to expand the play area for special needs children and the huge OH&S impost the current school practices are having on Turner staff members.

In the rationale for the fence proposal Jo outlined the need for a fence to reduce the risk of injury to staff. While OH&S is an important area, the P&C is not in a position to evaluate the need for this intervention, or to discuss the best options for policies and procedures to reduce OH&S injuries. This is a matter for the school and the Board. I am happy to defer to their judgement on this area.

The remaining problem we are trying to address is the extension of play spaces for children with special needs. As an inclusive school, it is important that we facilitate interaction between all children and provide pleasant, interesting, play environments. While the number of children an expansion of the play areas would benefit changes each year (with the varying needs of the children, who each have individual development plans), there are approximately 20 children currently at Turner who would be the immediate beneficiaries of an extended play space. All children would benefit from playing together, although it has also been made clear that fencing would create an impost on main stream children and reduce their ability to learn responsibility. It would also come at the expense of losing the open boundary that so many people have cited as central to the character of Turner School and its place within the community.

Through the consultation process there were three alternatives raised:

1. Accepting an offer from the Directorate for a 1.8m containment fence, aligned with the Directorate's Security Fencing Program (fully funded by the Directorate)
2. Upgrading the existing enclosed playgrounds to make them interesting play spaces (funded by the school)

3. Building a containment/playground fence of a lower height (1.2m or 1.4m) that would be more visually appealing, building a fence out of different material, such as the tennis style fence around the Catholic Primary in Page) or digging into the Hartley Street hill, creating a wall as a barrier, rather than fencing (funded by the school)

While in theory all three are options, in reality we are constrained by funding. This year the P&C set out to complete the cubbies project to make it wheel chair accessible, which we achieved. This project, combined with supporting children in the Pegasus Riding Program and the representative teams (Chess & Tournament of the Minds) exhausted our budget.

We had also prioritised a musical playground, which would have helped to make the existing enclosed spaces more interesting, however due to the above commitments we weren't able to fund this project in 2014.

I am not confident there is a commitment within the school community to band together to raise money to build a more visually appealing fence than the one we are being offered.

I accept the school would benefit from having an additional inclusive play area. While a vote is only one of many avenues for feedback, the quick poll in the lead up to tonight showed there is general support for a 1.8 metre fence along Hartley Street. I propose we write to the Directorate to request being included in their security fencing program for a fence along Hartley Street. Following this, we will work with a fence designer to establish the colour (there have been several people asking for green), the number and location of gates, the latch design, a policy on the opening and closing of gates and when, if ever, the gates would be locked. The need to ensure parents continue to be able to drop children off easily along Hartley Street needs to be taken into account.

There is little support for a fencing the bike rack area and this should be excluded from the proposal. In the quick poll undertaken in the lead up to tonight, there was little support (and much disagreement) with the use of security fencing for our internal fencing. It seems that people would rather a much shorter fence (1.2m), or an alternative to fencing.

We need to do some more work here on whether this internal fence is the best option. This includes a discussion of the problem/s, suggestions for possible solutions (or the development of a process that would lead to the generation of solutions) and an evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of each option. As I understand it (based on a discussion with the representatives from the Directorate at the community meeting) the funding for a Hartley Street fence is not conditional upon the inclusion of a 1.8m internal fence. We are able to consider alternatives for this area without forgoing inclusion in the program for the bulk of the fencing; it's just that the Directorate won't fund any alternatives. I propose we leave the internal fencing out of the security fencing program and work together on alternatives.

There will be a short period set aside during the meeting to discuss the fencing proposal.

I'd like to leave time within the meeting to discuss the process, with the aim of improving our future consultations. To be effective, consultation needs to give people the opportunity to discuss the problem, examine the evidence and work together on options for solutions. Our school has a huge opportunity to benefit from the considered input of our parents and community. Decisions that will change the fabric of our school will be better as a result of well-run consultation.

There needs to be a clear distinction between the views of the P&C (by that I mean all parents and the community), those of teachers, students and the Board. In considering the fencing proposal these lines were blurred. While we value the opinion of all groups, as the P&C, we need to be able to consider them separately.

Our 72 teachers were included in the initial survey sent out to the parents and community, with the results inseparable. The proposal had already been adopted by the Board at the October meeting (as was the consultation process). At the community meeting, which was held to hear from the community, there was a perception that

people were not free to present their views. Many at the meeting left with a sense that if you were against a fence you were to be branded as being against inclusion at Turner, which is simply not true. The initial consultation period was too short, with the process rushed to meet a deadline imposed by the Directorate. While we worked to successfully extend this deadline, there was still only a short period to have an informed discussion on the issues. In future, if there is a deadline that means adequate consultation cannot be undertaken, I propose the P&C adopts a position of maintaining the status quo.

The approach that was taken by the school left it open to criticism of advocating for a specific solution, rather than consulting on a problem. This came across in feedback on the interaction between teachers and students in the class discussions, as well as in the absence of alternatives in the fencing proposal put to the community. I tried to balance this at the community meeting and I am doing so again now.

I understand that the next big proposal will be the car parking. Let's look to this as a way of improving our consultation.

I am conscious that this is a long President's report and I appreciate you taking the time to read it before Wednesday night's meeting.

I'd like to thank Bob and Jo for the time they have put into the fencing proposal. I'd also like to thank Phillip and Fiona from the Directorate for working with us towards a solution. Finally, I'd like to thank you, for working as part of the P&C to make Turner an even better school for our children.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Bell

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ACTION LIST FROM P&C COMMITTEE MEETING 22 October 2014

Action	Who	By	Remarks
Protocol for obtaining approval of P&C funded projects. Draft being developed through ongoing discussion and e-mail.	Committee Members		Ongoing discussion.
Bunnings Sausage Sizzle – follow up roster and purchase of food etc.	Clem Jones		
Christmas Concert – Tina to organise roster, arrange stock of items and Ephraim to do the shopping	Tina Campbell and Ephraim Grunhard		
2015 Welcome Morning tea – organise roster and item for newsletter	Diane Jones		
Proposal for a partial fence of Turner School playground. Turner community views.	Helen Bell		Consider and prepare/sign joint letter to directorate
Fairy garden arches.	Clem Jones	ASAP	
Strategy for discouraging school community from parking in dangerous situations to be developed.	Principal and P&C		Ongoing
Fete Sponsor Thank You Certificates – prepare list of sponsors (Tina) – arrange design/printing (Jo) pa	Tina Campbell Jo Padgham		
Suggestions for 2015 Fete	Tina Campbell		Before 2015 fete
Turner School P&C to continue as part of the discussion on the fence proposal	Helen Bell	Directorate's deadline	

Subject: Update from Wednesday night's P&C meeting

Note from the P&C

This is a short update to those of you who couldn't make it to the P&C meeting on Wednesday night.

After a discussion of the fencing proposal it was agreed the school (Principal/Board Chair/P&C President) would write to the Directorate asking for Turner to be considered for a containment fence as part of their current (security) fencing program. We don't need to specify the details of the fence in this letter – these will be worked through in the next 6-12 months.

The pieces I am confident of are:

Hartley Street will be fenced with a 1.8m containment fence

There will no fencing of the bike rack area

We'll work with a fence designer for the whole project, but particularly for the internal fence from the hall to the train yard (it was agreed that a fence is needed here and that we should not limit our options with the Directorate by specifically asking for this area to be left unfenced)

I'd like to thank the 54 people who participated in the snap poll prior to the meeting. While this poll was a small piece in what has been a huge three weeks of consultation, it provided a rough indication of the support for the proposal to partially fence Turner school (57% agree, 24% disagree, 9% neutral, 9% need more information). I also know there is less support (39% agree, 31% disagree, 14% neutral, 16% need more information) for the internal fence running from the hall to the train yard. I'm hoping this won't be a 1.8m security fence – this will be part of the consultation process so we can identify and discuss our options.

We should hear from the Directorate as to where we sit in the queue for fencing early next year. There will then be consultation on the proposed fencing including the number of gates, the height (probably 1.8m), the colour, the exact location, the options for the internal fence etc. prior to the fences being built.

While I know that function is important, I also value beauty, particularly in the built environment. I'd like to see the Turner Community work together over the next 6 to 12 months to get something that will visually enhance our school. I've already been approached by a parent with a suggestion that we create artistic value and cultural meaning by building an interesting archway at the main Hartley Street gate (Hartley St faces East) and call it something like the Beijing Friendship Gate. We could form a sister school in Beijing. This would tie in with Canberra's plans to strengthen our relationship with China. We could ask some of Canberra's leading organisations (engineering firms, building owners, developers, perhaps the ANU) to support us to achieve this goal. Are you feeling inspired?

Thanks for your support!
Kind regards,
Helen.

ATTACHMENT E

Speech to the Community Meeting Wednesday 12th November, 2014.

Helen Bell

Thanks for taking the time to come along tonight to talk about how we can make Turner a more inclusive school. I'd particularly like to thank Jo, for the work you have done in organising tonight and giving people more time to consider the problems we are trying to address. I'd also like to thank Phil and Fiona, from the Directorate, who have given up their time to help us discuss fencing options.

There are two things I'd like to get out of tonight's meeting.

Firstly, I'd like to be clear about what the problem is that we are trying to address.

Secondly, I'd like to talk about ideas for solutions, which I can take to next week's P&C meeting.

We are already on the way to the first part. As Robyn has said, all the students benefit from Turner being an inclusive school. Kathy and Sophie spoke of the needs of our students, particularly the need for independent access to more areas of our playground. No-one has spoken about the need for additional security. When security was raised at the last P&C meeting, there was a consensus that Turner does not want to fence out the community, and that doing this would likely lead to an increase in vandalism, as demonstrated by the locking of gates in the past.

If we agree, as a group, agree that the problem we are attempting to solve is extending our approach to inclusion, we next need to move to the second step, with is spending some time considering best ways to increase our inclusion.

Asking for a \$150,000 security fence, because it is being offered, seems to be jumping over this vital step in the middle, where we seek out and then consider our options. If we don't know what the other options are, how can we be sure that a security fence is the best solution?

While we can claim a containment fence is being proposed, it must have security components for the Directorate to fund it under its security fence program. This means that while ACT rate payers will pay the \$150,000 for the fence, it must come at the cost of fencing out our community, either now, or with the option of locking the gates in the future.

The security fence program has been rolling out fences around Canberra schools since 2008. As I understand it, there is not an intention to fence every school. Under the program, the Minister has said that school sites chosen for fencing are prioritised on the basis of:

- incidence of vandalism, break and enter or graffiti attacks;
- the presence of high value assets at risk of loss or damage;
- site design allowing easy access to school grounds;
- schools in remote locations with poor visibility for afterhours community surveillance; and

- proximity to public spaces.

The needs of the children are not listed among the priorities. We need to consider what the best options are for our children. It may be that a security fence is the solution, but we won't know until we have considered the problem.

As I understand it, 3 fences are installed each financial year. As Turner School doesn't have security concerns, we would be placed at the bottom of the list. This means a security fence would be a solution for inclusion in or around 2018-19.

I think we agree that we need to prioritise our special needs children, giving them open places to play, getting them off the asphalt and out of the fenced, unshaded, play cage over on the oval. We should band together and work towards that goal.

There are extensive benefits to a containment fence, particularly along Hartley Street. A containment fence at the top of the hill will provide all children with more place to play, opening up the tree covered slope, which is currently out of bounds. At school concerts parents will be able to relax as their younger children will not be able to wander onto Hartley Street (or further) while they are paying attention to the performances. Our special needs children will gain access to the imaginative play areas and have space to be free and independent.

Asking to be placed on a list for a security fence, which may or may not be delivered by 2018, when the children we've heard about tonight will have already spent 4 more years waiting, can't be our only solution for inclusion. Perhaps instead we should be asking the Directorate to provide support to the school directly to assist us to grow as an inclusive school.

We shouldn't have to join a program where we trade inclusion for exclusion. I'm reluctant to sign up for a security fence when what we need is a containment fence. I don't see them as mutually inclusive. One provides a physical barrier to children. The other locks out the community.

Tonight is about discussing the problem we're trying to solve and coming up with solutions, as a community. We're not going to have all the answers tonight. Some of the solutions may involve further research and discussion.

Thanks for taking the time to come along and share your thoughts. I look forward to working with you towards a solution. I also encourage you to come along to the P&C meeting next Wednesday night where we'll discuss the outcomes from tonight and agree on the P&C's next steps.