

# Ness Castle Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes

## Microsoft Teams

18 May 2022 at 6:30 pm

<b>In Attendance</b>	
<b>Councillors</b> Cllr Jackie Hendry	JH
<b>Parent Council Representatives</b> Andrew Martin, Holm Parent Council Stuart McLean, Ness Castle Interim Parent Council	AM SML
<b>Community Representatives</b> Murray McCheyne, Holm Community Council Scott McRoberts, Resident	MMC SMR
<b>Holm Primary</b> Ruth MacKay, Head Teacher Janine Webb, Acting Head Teacher	RMK JW
<b>Lochardil Primary</b> Audrey Kellacher, Head Teacher, Lochardil Primary	AK
<b>Ness Castle Primary</b> Craig Conon, Head Teacher Shona MacLean, Depute Head Teacher Helen Mudie, Principal Teacher	CC ShML HM
<b>Highland Council Representatives</b> Robert Campbell, Estates Strategy Manager Dorothy Gibb, Principal Estates Officer Ian Graham, Road Safety Officer Fiona Sangster, Estates Co-ordinator Fiona Shearer, Area Education Manager Liz Scott, ELC Commissioner Gordon Stewart, Education Adviser	RC DMG IG FSa FS LS GS
<b>Kier Construction</b> Philip MacDowall Liz MacIntyre Lindsay McNaughton Steven McRoberts Finlay Niven	PMD LMI LMN StMR FN
<b>Apologies</b> Cllr Alasdair Christie Alan Paul, Estates Officer Sandra Reynolds, Education Officer	

## 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- RC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced recently elected Councillor Jackie Hendry.
- Actions from previous meeting reported.
  - IG confirmed that he had spoken to the Traffic Management Team and the infrastructure was now in place for the crossing along the canal side and would be installed in June.
  - The other two planned crossings at the roundabout are progressing but the installation date has not been confirmed.
  - RC has updated the figures in his presentation and will upload them to the website.
  - White lining is to be carried out in the staff parking area at Holm Primary during the summer holidays.
  - Discussions have been taking place between JW and the Estates Team regarding re storage and furniture.

RC

## 2. UPDATE

### THC

- RC reminded the group of the contingency plan being developed for Ness Castle should the new school not be ready for the August term.
- There has been a lot of pressure on the construction industry and progress has been delayed. With only 12 weeks until the start of the new term, it is important to give certainty to pupils, parents/carers and staff and so the contingency plan is being implemented.
- The new Ness Castle Primary School will therefore be established for a temporary period at Holm Primary School.
- DMG shared the contingency site plans where Holm Primary will vacate Block C at the school, and two double classroom demountable units will be installed alongside it to create the temporary Ness Castle Primary campus.
- DMG reassured the group that although there would effectively be two schools operating from the same location, the net increase in overall pupil numbers will be as little as seven.
- The Estates Team will work closely with Holm Primary on the relocation of their classes and also on their return when Ness Castle pupils move to their new school.
- AM asked which classes from Holm would be moved to another area of the school.
- JW informed him that the four class areas in Block C are currently used as a GP room and two upper school classes. One class will be relocated into the Holm Block J, and the other into Block B.

- AM enquired if the Ness Castle pupils would have a separate play area.
- DMG explained that the green area to the rear of Block C would be used to create a secure play area for Ness Castle nursery, and that Ness Castle Primary pupils would be able to play with Holm pupils in the playground and grass playing field.
- DMG went on to show where the separate nursery entrance will be created and to demonstrate how primary pupils could enter through the various other entrances available to the school.
- SML asked if parents would be informed of the plans before a press release was issued.
- FS assured SML that the information would be shared using the same approach as last time to ensure that parents and staff were made aware of the plans before the media.
- RC will prepare a press release that will be issued through Corporate Communications.
- CC suggested that we could also share some positive news on how plans were progressing.
- CC noted that there had been some indications that parents may choose not to move pupils to Ness Castle until the new building was ready. CC was trying to discourage this as the new school will be established regardless of location, but agreed that a double move could be a challenge for some children to understand
- SML asked if the new school would still open in October and would this be included in the communication.
- RC stated that October was still considered the worst case scenario and that he hoped the school would be ready before then with a possible move on the September in-service dates.
- JH asked if the parents would be reassured that their children would start as a Ness Castle pupil in a new uniform in August.
- FS confirmed that this would be the case and noted that she had met with the Parent Council and made them aware that the new school as an establishment would start in August regardless of location.
- AM asked FS if she would be willing to meet with Holm parents and suggested having a joint meeting with Ness Castle parents.
- FS to arrange a meeting.

**FS**

**RC**

**Keir**

- StMR agreed that it is a difficult time for the construction industry.
- The build originally had a 60 week contract with completion planned for 11 July, but by the end of last year, a 3 week delay caused by Covid issues pushed completion to the end of July. Since then, there have been other issues including the war in Ukraine which has impacted on deliveries, and the required changes to the toilets in the school which have pushed the completion date to 12 August which is a very tight timetable to consider having pupils arriving at the school on 16 August.

**FS**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This programme does not allow for any unforeseen circumstances and although Keir remain committed to achieving the date of 12 August, confidence is not as high as before.</li> <li>• StMR noted that it was fair for THC to have made the decision to implement the contingency plan.</li> <li>• FN gave an update on progress with the building.</li> <li>• Target of end of June to complete external works. The nursery side road access has now been formed and the Brodie Road main access is now progressing.</li> <li>• Internally works continue at pace. The roof is almost finished, internal partitions should be completed within 3 weeks, flooring will then follow, M&amp;E is progressing well and is on programme.</li> <li>• FN agreed that 12 August was still the target but would only be achievable without any slips.</li> <li>• RC enquired if it would be possible to show Stakeholders around the building.</li> <li>• StMR was happy to arrange this but suggested waiting a few more weeks before arranging a date.</li> <li>• StMR suggested that Kier could provide virtual tours for pupils and parents, for example a fly through video with live progress photos</li> <li>• RC suggested a site visit date for just before the summer holidays – to be discussed at the next meeting.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IG has received feedback from Planning on the Travel Plan and he will be working with the school regarding monitoring travel when the school opens.</li> <li>• IG has been working with PDU in relation to traffic calming at Brodie Road.</li> <li>• IG has been working with JW on a Pick Up and Drop Off plan for Holm Primary and noted that this type of plan may be developed for other school locations.</li> <li>• IG plans to work with Ness Castle staff closer to the opening of the new building.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Transition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC – SML in now in post as Depute Head Teacher and has met with CC and HM to discuss taking the school forward.</li> <li>• Transition has begun with children and families on a virtual basis as well as in person.</li> <li>• CC to meet with Active Schools Co-ordinators on 19 May to organise some activities to bring classes together.</li> <li>• Information sessions are planned for ELC and P1 and P1 pupils are to visit Holm soon.</li> <li>• HM is to visit ELC to speak with key workers and see pupils in person and CC is to do the same for primary.</li> <li>• Interviews for the post of Clerical Assistant are to take place on 20 May.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of School Care posts have been advertised. There will be over 30 pupils attending on some days so it will be busy.</li> <li>• CC stressed the important of keeping communication going and is issuing regular newsletters and directing parents to the school website and twitter page.</li> <li>• A Parent Council meeting is to be held next week.</li> <li>• CC announced that there is now an official school badge and shared the image with the group. The badge has been forwarded to a school uniform company and the school uniform is to be discussed soon.</li> <li>• CC and HM had a visit to the new building and were both excited to see the progress.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5. COMMUNITY BENEFITS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LMI is now in place locally working with site teams, local partners and contractors.</li> <li>• Two IRA pupils were on site for work placement which has led to apprenticeships with a sub-contractor.</li> <li>• LMI has been working with the Job Centre to try to help get unemployed individuals into work by organising information sessions with people and work experience opportunities.</li> <li>• An additional local apprentice has been appointed and local labourers and cleaners are working on site.</li> <li>• Kier have been working with Holm Primary and some sessions with pupils are arranged.</li> <li>• Kier supported the Inverness Science Festival. LMN and LMI both attended and interacted with families.</li> <li>• Kier have supported a local social enterprise - Café Artisan.</li> <li>• Continuing to support the local food bank.</li> <li>• Agreed to work with Botanic Gardens and will be attending the volunteer day with the Grow project on 1 July. LMI invited Stakeholders or local families to join them.</li> <li>• DMG suggested Parent Councils were contacted and made aware of the volunteer day at Botanic Gardens.</li> <li>• LMN to create a poster to advertise the event.</li> <li>• LMI to contact CC with regard to arranging some transition activities for pupils.</li> <li>• DMG noted she had just received a Community Benefits report and after review will share with the group.</li> </ul>	<p><b>LMN</b> <b>LMI</b></p>
<p><b>6. AOCB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None noted.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesday 22 June 2022 at 6.30 pm via Microsoft Teams</li> </ul>	