Meeting opened at 7:00pm

1. Welcome
P&C President Clair Scott welcomed new and returning members and introduced the 2014 P&C Executive.

2. Attendance

3. Minutes
Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting on 11th December 2013:

4. Business carried forward

(a) BAND:
Bandroom project update
Clair Scott reported a delay in the build of the bandroom project, which now won’t be delivered in the Easter 2014 holidays as anticipated. This is due to P&C self-certifying the building. P&C needs to consult the Rural Fire Service (RFS) for approval. There was discussion that we may need an independent assessor.

**ACTION**: P&C Treasurer Derek Lightfoot to contact the RFS and include the specifications from building company Shed Up, along with council development approval letter and the DET email approving the build. Derek to ask, what are the next steps in the process?

Derek added there are lots of positive outcomes already achieved and lots of work done, eg, P&C have signed off on the quote, the detailed specifications, and agreed terms and conditions. All of these have been accepted, subject to the resolution of the fire safety issue.

Band fees/invoices
There was a delay in getting invoices out for band participants, although the band team tried to make sure participants paid before collecting instruments and starting lessons. Band is a user-pays system and as agreed last meeting, payments should be due upfront. Clair Scott added we are approachable re fee
relief / schedule of payments if necessary. Overall, the new system has shown fantastic results, with only one bandmember yet to pay and a handful of recorder players yet to pay. Band Coordinator Anne Seage reported 100 recorder players (slightly up on last year) and 192 bandmembers (slightly down).

**ACTION**: Anne Seage and team to refine the process of sending invoices out and collecting band fees.

Band report
Anne Seage reported that all bands are off to a great start for 2014. See attached Band Report (Appendix A). Anne requested that in the new system of awarding certificates for band, could the new Gold certificates be awarded during school assembly? John Benton said yes.

(b) UNIFORM SHOP
Clair Scott reported that uniform shop is running well. Turnover of stock and payments through Flexischools is huge. New winter fleece jackets are coming into stock. Account payables are moving from traditional cheque payments to electronic format, which is easier and cheaper.

(c) EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING
(i) Tea & Tissues - held on 3 Feb 2014. Well attended by kindergarten parents, a nice event.

(ii) Meet & Greet event - held on 27 Feb 2014. All school parents were invited, small turnout but bad weather that night.

(iii) Student Disco - to be held on 4 April 2014. Already 140 tickets sold on Flexischools. An experienced team is running it, including sausage sizzle.

(iv) Trivia Night Fundraiser - to be held on 21 June 2014. P&C’s main fundraiser for the year. This year’s theme: disco. Organising committee meeting Monday 10 March.

(v) Bush Dance proposed as a Band Committee Fundraiser, with money raised to go specifically towards school band program. Possibly September 2014. A folk band has offered its services free of charge. NB if children are present then there can be no alcohol served.

(vi) Bhangra Night proposal - parent Laurence Hibbert is concerned with the lack of diversity in our fundraising ideas and proposes a night of Indian cultural dancing in term 4. Discussion ensued as to what this would involve - dancing, food, a display of dance? Currently no team organising this, Laurence would welcome input from interested parties.
**Other events**
John Benton noted that all classes will be preparing for an **Art Show** on Friday 15 August 2014. Curated by a professional art curator, parents will be able to buy their child’s artwork for $20.

5. **Principal’s Report**
See attached Principal’s Report (Appendix B).

**School Council**
Discussion ensued regarding disbanding the School Council, which hasn’t been active for several years. Traditionally its job was to look internally at school policies, eg it revised the student welfare policy. John Benton said disbanding it can only take place after a period of consultation. P&C needs to call a meeting where interested parties can have their say, eg at a P&C meeting, and then have a vote. Before that we need the pros and cons in the newsletter.

**ACTION**: John Benton to write a piece *against* keeping School Council, and publish in the newsletter. Clair Scott to ask former President of School Council to write a piece *for* keeping it, also to be published in newsletter. Then discuss and vote at P&C Meeting.

**Traffic issues**
Andrea Millner, School Crossing Supervisor, was present at the meeting to discuss a proposal to extend the times on the No Parking signs out the front of school. Parents are blatantly ignoring these signs and otherwise exhibiting dangerous driving / maneuvering outside the school during busy drop-off and pick-up times, including pulling up in the bus zone, doing U turns across double white lines, backing out of driveways to turn around and stopping in no-stopping zones.

**ACTION**: John Benton to write to Mayor of Kuringai Council regarding extending the times on No Parking signs. Clair Scott to co-sign.

**ACTION**: John Benton to reinforce school rule of no walking up school driveways (use the boardwalk). Ideas were discussed on how to do this, eg make it a Year 6 project handing out flyers.

6. **Treasurer’s Report / Finances**

No written report from Treasurer. Derek Lightfoot noted that of our three entities (P&C, Band and Uniform Shop) we have completed February accounts for two of these: P&C and Uniform Shop. There is still a bit of work to do for the Band accounts. Anne Seage and Michelle Lightfoot are chasing final amounts outstanding and doing final checks. There were teething issues with the band system but the outcome has been good.
Overall 2012 financial accounts have been audited.

**ACTION**: Derek Lightfoot to check that Susan Stenning has sent 2013 financial accounts for audit.

Clair Scott has submitted a 2014 Charities Commission Report on behalf of P&C. Clair noted that of the $150 expenditure approved by the Executive for Tea & Tissues event, $75 was spent. Also of the $1000 approved for spending for the Meet & Greet event, only $687 was spent.

7. Correspondence

(a) P&C has received correspondence from NSW Government/Northern Area Health re hosting community seminars, eg raising resilient kids. Discussion on whether we want to host any of these, or just support similar events locally. Clair Scott to decline hosting these.

(b) Clair Scott has written to the school on behalf of P&C confirming purpose of the new demountable as a dedicated bandroom, not a classroom. John Benton suggests a plaque be mounted on the new demountable to reinforce this.

**ACTION**: P&C to source a plaque for the new building.

(c) P&C has received a letter from the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP confirming Building V (ICT) was provided by P&C and not included as permanent teaching space. However it was discussed that OOSH care is considered part of the permanent available teaching space as a potential classroom.

(d) P&C has received a letter from NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell advising grant application for bandroom was unsuccessful.

(e) Various charity and fundraising mailings - Clair Scott to discard as she sees fit.

8. General Business

(a) School Facebook Fair page being retitled “TheBushSchoolP&C”. Will be useful as communication tool for the Trivia Night fundraiser.

Discussion arose regarding the fact that not a lot of Asian parents attend things like our Trivia Night. Other ideas for fundraisers were raised, with potentially broader appeal, like a casino night or international food night. Discussion arose regarding ‘fundraising fatigue’. John Benton advised it’s better to have fewer events that raise more money than holding more events. Clair Scott advised
that though we are a big school we have a small number of active parents. New/different people would need to come on board to help organize new events as the same people tend to do most of the work, regardless of the event.

Discussion arose about how to promote P&C attendance and to recruit more involvement generally from parents, eg via messages/emails from the class parents.

Anne Seage asks, can we host an Eisteddfod that targets other schools (like one currently put on by Ryde East Public School).

**ACTION**: Anne Seage to take this idea to the band committee.

(b) Front-of-school drop-off zone - discussed earlier

(C) Ethics teachers update - Laurence Hibbert advised Ethics classes will not take place in the scripture timeslot as too hard to get parent involvement.

(d) ‘Skoolbag’ mobile phone app that facilitates school-to-parent communication discussed. It was agreed that text message alerts are read more immediately than emails.

**ACTION**: John Benton to look into cost of ‘Skoolbag’, eg is it a one-off cost (something like $700)?

(e) ‘Steps With Hope’ - Clair Scott to coordinate sending unwanted/unsellable white school shirts from the uniform shop to this Thai/Cambodian children’s charity. Barker mums and a local Uniting Church also involved.

**ACTION**: Clair Scott to invite further donations of used/unwanted white school shirts in school newsletter. This will contribute to a donation being transported in June 2014.

(f) ‘Working with Children’ checks discussed. Only needed for paid employees, not volunteers.

**ACTION**: Anne Seage, Clair Scott and one other person to check band tutors have their paperwork up-to-date on this.

(g) School Council to be disbanded - see earlier discussion.

(h) Safety of pedestrians up Pool Road. See earlier discussion.

(i) Other matters:
- **After school care**
  P&C needs to endorse Wahroonga After School Care Inc as our official OOSH providers. Proposed by Karen Welch, seconded by Jonathan Helps, carried unanimously.

  **ACTION**: Clair Scott to write letter to John Benton confirming this.

- **Pool gate** - doesn’t currently latch automatically. John Benton advised proper pool fencing and self-shutting gate will be installed during April school holidays. Meantime all users to make sure it shuts.

- **Tree safety**
  Discussion arose over the tree near the adventure playground that dropped a substantial branch at 4.30pm one afternoon last term. One parent in particular wants the tree taken down. Following the death of a child from a falling gum tree branch at Pitt Town Public School in February this year, addressing the danger from similar gum trees was discussed as a matter of some urgency. John Benton advised that he gets an arborist report on every tree in the school every year. There are no trees at school in the ‘critical’ category. Two trees that were in the ‘urgent’ category have been trimmed today. The tree the parent wants cut down is in the ‘healthy’ category, and is in a stand of three trees. John Benton reported that it is the arborist’s opinion that if you cut one of these three down, it would make the other two more vulnerable. So we’d need to remove all three if we went down that track. Linda Russell from OOSH care advocated for cutting the tree down. John Benton advised it costs $3000 - $5000 to remove a tree.

  **ACTION**: John Benton to advise in newsletter that the arborist’s assessment is available to parents.

  Derek Lightfoot suggested if we take out these three trees, let’s plant 10 more. A show of hands revealed 6 votes to 4 that the P&C would like the trees removed as we feel they pose a risk to children’s safety because they are in a high-traffic area.

  **ACTION**: John Benton to apply to Council for the three trees to be removed.

**Meeting closed 9.02pm.**

Next meeting Wednesday 2 April, 7pm in the staffroom.

(Appendices A and B to follow).
All bands have made a great start to the year. We are pleased to have our four conductors join us again this year: Mark Barnsley, Colin Philpott, Annabelle Osborne and Tim Ferrier. Mark is particularly pleased with Stage Band, where the children are handling their new, quite difficult pieces very well.

We are following up on the children’s practice schedules each week, in the hope of instilling good habits early in the year. I am putting together a detailed step-by-step set of requirements that the children must achieve before auditioning for the next band. The children will receive bronze, silver and gold certificates for attaining goals at each level, with gold being the standard required to audition.

Collecting fees before instruments and music were distributed and band rehearsals commenced has made a significant difference to the number of overdue fees. Aside from a handful of families who are paying in instalments, there is only one band child and 4 recorder students with outstanding fees, which is an enormous improvement on previous years. There is one child on fee relief. I will meet with Susan, Michelle and Clair once everything is entered into their records to discuss how we can make improvements and streamline procedures for next year. Thank you very much to both Clair and Michelle for their assistance in implementing the new procedures. The one downside of fee collection up-front is that a few families changed their minds about their children joining, as they didn’t want to pay out all the money and then find they didn’t enjoy it.

The Band Workshop is on Saturday 29th March and involves all bands. Thank you to Alix Helps and Sarah Redshaw for their assistance with its organisation.

Band Camp is 28-30 May and Intermediate, Concert and Stage Bands have been entered into the Ryde East Eisteddfod and the Sydney Eisteddfod and all five bands are entered in the NSW Band Festival.
THREE TARGETS

We are in the last year of our 3 year plan of improving writing, girls’ outcomes in mathematics and catering for the range of students in each class through curriculum differentiation. We have met our progressive targets and will assess our cumulative progress in term 4.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The school council is not operational at present. We need to proceed with the consultation for formally winding down the school council. I think the best way is to do this through the P&C as it is our effective parent body.

TEST DATE FOR SELECTIVE HS

14 March

TEST DATES FOR NAPLAN

13 May Test day: Language Conventions and Writing
14 May Test day: Reading
15 May Test day: Numeracy
Test date for OC Classes

OPPORTUNITY CLASS PLACEMENT TEST

Wednesday 23 July 2014

SWIMMING CARNIVAL

The swimming carnival was a great success. Thanks Gabby and everyone for the organisation of this event. I want to especially thanks the parent volunteers who helped out on the day.

NICK CROWN RAISES FUNDS FOR CP CHARITY

The school raised $617 for the CP charity

ART SHOW 2014

The Art Show is on Friday 15 August. You can buy your child’s finished work for $20. Last this covered the costs of the show.
HARMONY DAY 2014 THURSDAY MARCH 20

Our annual Harmony Day celebration is on Thursday 20 March 2014. Students are invited to add a touch of orange colour to their uniforms on the day, e.g. an orange ribbon or orange zinc cream or orange socks etc. Harmony Day is a day of cultural respect for everyone who calls Australia home – from the traditional owners of this land to those who have come from many countries around the world. By participating in Harmony Day activities, we can learn and understand how all Australians from diverse backgrounds equally belong to this nation and enrich it.

LIBRARY

The new way we are using the library as a team teaching and information centre is continuing this year. The library has wireless connectivity to the World Wide Web and we have a number of notebook computers students use in these lessons. I am pleased we are trying to reflect 21 century competencies, such as learning how to learn, web 2.0 skills and group work into our teaching and learning experiences here. Of course we have more to do but we are on the right path.

NEW DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Last year I announced that a second Deputy Principal would be joining the school. Mrs Debra Evans has joined us in the role of Deputy Principal. Debbie was chosen through the DEC merit selection process by a panel including a local deputy principal, a parent and teacher representative and this panel was led my me. Mrs Evans comes to us with a wealth of educational experience and knowledge and please say hello to her if you get the opportunity. Debbie is having knee surgery and will be absent for the second half of this term.

NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

We have four assistant principals who each led the teachers on one or two year levels. Ms Groves was appointed our new assistant principal. She is leading the Year 2 and Year 4 team. Ms Groves was an assistant principal at Chatswood PS and brings a wealth of experience with her. She gain the position through the NSW DEC merit selection process by a panel including a local assistant principal, a parent representative and a teacher representative and this panel was led my me.

NEW TEACHER

Miss Spilanne has joined our staff. She was a targeted graduate and the NSW DEC gave Miss Spilanne a permanent job because she was an outstanding student-teacher. Miss Spilanne is on Year

CLASSES 2014

I have implemented the 29 classes plan even though we do not have enough students for the NSW DEC to pay for the 29th class teacher. We need between 5 more students. I am hopeful we will not have to carry this cost for too long. We will have to tighten our collective belts if don’t get the extras we need.
MEET THE TEACHER NIGHTS
These were a great success. Thanks to all my teachers and to the parents for coming.

MEET AND GREET EVENT
The P&C Meet and Greet was a great event. Thanks Clair and all your team. Thank you to those staff members who attended. It was very good PR.

PARKING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL
We have a proposal to vary the No Parking Times in Burns Road. Some of our neighbours are upset because cars block their driveways during drop-off and pick-up times. Please be considerate of our neighbours. I have asked them to call the council and have parking officers in the area. I sometimes ask council to do this myself but, like all government agencies, their resources are stretched and we should not need to do this.

Outside the school is our ‘Kiss and Ride Zone’ or ‘Drop-off and Pick-up’ area with No Parking signs which provides an appropriate place ‘to drop off or pick up your children from school’.

- Always drop-off or pick-up your child from the designated area, following the school’s procedures.
- Drivers should remain in their vehicles at all times in the ‘Drop-off and Pick-up’ area.
- Make sure children use the footpath-side door when getting in and out of a car.
- Make sure the hand brake is applied when the vehicle is stationary.
- Never double park.
- Never park across a pedestrian crossing.
- Never undertake a U-turn in close proximity to the school.

I have asked the police to come and fine drivers who leave their cars in the No Parking Zone. If you want to come into the school park further away. If you can avoid driving to school please do so. If you are disabled please contact us so we can make some arrangements for you.

PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEW TIMES
Go live tomorrow. Details in the Newsletter

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY (THE PERSON FORMALLY KNOWN AS THE DG)
I wish to advise that the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 (GSE Act) commences today.

The head of our department, Dr Michele Bruniges AM, title has changed from Director-General to Secretary of the Department of Education and Communities.

CLASS PARENTS COORDINATORS

Thanks to those parents who volunteered to be the class parent coordinator.

COMPOSITE CLASSES

We sometimes form composite classes because the number of students in particular year levels. The NSW DET provides teacher on the basis of the total number of students not the number in each year level. Research and our own experience tell us student do neither better or worse in composite classes. One obvious reason is that every class is a composite class in that the age range is 18 months and the achievement range is often 4 years in most every group of 30 students.

The Carrick Report (1989 p 44) states:
"Chronological structures do not relate well to the capacities of students, nor to their different rates of learning; nor do such structures (straight classes) allow sufficient flexibility for advanced and slower learners"

All classes, composite or not, should provide opportunities for:
different learning styles;
cooperative learning;
development of lifelong learners;
development of students taking responsibility for their own learning.

Research has shown that students benefit from class structures that focus on these factors. The DET published the report Multi-Age Classes in NSW - 1997. This report found that these classes based on educational principles do not disadvantage students academically and may benefit them socially and emotionally (p 23). Every teacher who has a class of between 20 and 30 students has a composite class. We are doing our best to cater for the range of students in our classes and we seek to improve our practice as teachers. This is no more or less of a challenge in either arrangement of students. We take care to choose students who will do well in both ends of a composite and ensure they mix with others in their year levels.

BEFORE SCHOOL PLAY

Please remind your children if they arrive at school before 8:50 AM they have to sit and wait until the play bell goes before playing. Students sometimes see the children who are attending before school care playing and think it is Ok to play. If you are not being looked after by before school care people please don’t play before the play bell.

FAMILY VACATIONS

Here is some information on taking family vacations during term time.
Family holidays during term time
• You should try to avoid this and you need a good reason to do so.
• You must make a formal application by letter and there is a form if the holiday is over 15 days.
• You are responsible for your child’s education of the period of the absence.

We do not supply specific work for your child to do while they are away as teachers do not prepare the work more than a day ahead of time.
Activities to do while you are away
• Please keep a travel dairy – a scape book with so your child can paste in tickets, pictures and mementoes is great.
• Keep work on mathletics while you are away
• Write postcards to the class and friends
• Take enough reading books with you
• Buy a puzzle book
• Visit museums and art galleries
• Research the places you are to visit on the web.

SCHOOL CONTRIBUTIONS
Two weeks ago I sent out requests for payment of the School Contributions and subject levies. Many parents have paid these and I am grateful for this. Please pay these as soon as you can. These can be a considerable expense for some families. Please contact me if you are in financial difficulty and we can come to an arrangement. These funds help us to add value to your child’s school experience. Textbooks are included in the contributions. Winter sport fees for Years 3-6 students will be asked for later and depends on the sport chosen.

John Benton
Principal