



ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

**Alford Academy
Greystone Road
ALFORD
AB33 8TY**

www.alfordacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

**Minutes of Meeting
5th December 2016**

Present: Colin Turnbull, Liz Strachan, David Wyllie, Yvonne Buckingham, Tara Croke, Nicola Sedgwick, Kerry Bryant, Penny Fuller, Susan Brown

In Attendance: Moira Milne, Struan Gardner

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Sarah McGregor, Ian Findlay and Sue-Ann Grant

2. Post Occupancy Evaluation

Carried forward to next meeting – Allen Williamson is no longer in the post of Asset Management Officer

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the AGM on 19th September 2016 were accepted as accurate.

Proposed by Yvonne Buckingham

Seconded by Penny Fuller

3. Matters arising

3.1 Supporting learning

This is ongoing – a subgroup is still to meet.

ACTION: a subgroup will meet to develop ways to share resources and ideas with parents to support their child's learning. Colin Turnbull and Moira Milne

3.2 Bag racks –ongoing. Tara Croke will look at alternative solutions for bag storage. Moira reported that more lockers are being planned by the school.

ACTION: Tara Croke will look at alternative solutions for bag storage.

3.3 Additional member of Parent Council

Nicola Sedgwick has been added to the Parent Council membership making a total of 13 parent/carer members and 1 co-opted member. Two further parent/carer places remain which can be filled at subsequent meetings if required. Proposed by Colin Turnbull and seconded by Yvonne Buckingham.

4. Treasurer's report

The balance of the main account as of 5/12/2016 was £8,387.14. The balance of the lottery account was £1,576.00. Funding from Aberdeenshire Council of £467 for the year has been received. The Easyfundraising app has generated £77 for the last quarter. David Wyllie will put a reminder on the blog to encourage parents to sign up for Easyfundraising. Commitments for funding are £96 for the netball club, £1500 for the awards ceremony and approximately £3,600 for Show My Homework (see 5. below). Moira reported that there may be funding required for completing an outdoor learning environment at the back of the campus in the wooded area. The Student Council will begin working on developing outdoor areas and Moira suggested that some members of Parent Council attend one of the Student Council meetings to see where we can help. Colin, Tara, Penny and Liz volunteered to attend. Moira will arrange a date for this. Struan Gardner reported that the old forest plot needed some tidying up and possibly replanting and asked that this could be considered at the same time. Tara offered to contact National trust gardeners and rangers for ideas and possibly assistance.

ACTION: Moira Milne will arrange a date for some members of the Parent Council to attend a Student Council meeting to discuss developing an outdoor learning environment and also tidying up the old forest plot. Tara Crooke will contact National trust gardeners and rangers for ideas and possibly assistance.

ACTION: David Wyllie will put a reminder on the blog to encourage parents to sign up to Easyfundraising

5. Show My Homework update

Struan Gardner provided a report for members of the Parent Council with feedback from the initial trial of Show My Homework. Feedback was positive from teachers and most parents and pupils. There have been some problems getting logged on by pupils and parents. Some parents had also not received their login details which were sent via their children. If there are any queries, parents can contact Show My Homework directly or Struan Gardner at the Academy.

A decision to continue or not needs to be made by the end of term so it was agreed unanimously by all members of the Parent Council present at the meeting to go ahead with Show My Homework and purchase the full 2 years at an approximate cost of £3,600. The Parent Council will post the feedback on the blog.

Online submission of homework is possible using the app but has not been used by Alford Academy yet. There is a concern with this that not all pupils will have access to the internet or may have poor or intermittent connections at home. It is proposed that teachers who have any pupils in their class with no internet access will only set traditional paper assignments for that class.

A suggestion was made to see if the Primary School (and possible cluster Primary Schools) would be interested in Show My Homework. Struan reported that if it was included in the Academy package then it would cost more money as it is priced on the size of the school.

A workshop for parents will be organised early next year and Show My Homework will be presented at the P7 information evening.

6. Restorative Practice – sharing the vision

Carried forward to next meeting. It was felt among parents present that restorative practice training ideally needs to be available for pupils and parents as well as all teaching staff and support staff in order to be effective.

7. Head Teacher's Report

Staffing update

- **Mathematics** – there is on-going staff absence in the Mathematics Faculty and on-going difficulty in securing mathematics supply teachers. The school has revised timetables, which has in turn meant there have been some changes to class teachers. It was felt by some parents that continuity was more important than having a specialist teacher. Moira reassured parents that the progress of pupils is being monitored by the Principal Teacher and staff are providing 1:1 tutorials and revision/support sessions. The school has advertised for an extra part time temporary teacher but there are no applicants to date.
- **Modern Languages** – a modern languages supply teacher has covered classes during a long term staff absence.
- **Humanities** – existing staff are covering short term absences.
- **English** – still a vacancy – 4th re-advertisement. An English supply teacher has been covering the majority of this vacancy
- **Technical** – vacancy – 4th re-advertisement. No applicants. A Technical supply teacher has been covering this vacancy.
- **Acting Depute Head** – J Holt (2 days)
- **Acting Principal Teacher Business and Computing** – L Taylor (2.5 days)
- **Acting Depute Head** – F Talbot (2.5 days)
- **Acting PT Guidance Forbes** – S McPhail (2.5 days)

Departures

- **Nursing assistant** – D Paterson leaving
- **ICT** – A Wright - retiring at Christmas
- **Depute Head** – L Park is retiring at Christmas and has been with the school for 21 years.

Highlights

- Advanced Higher English workshop run by the authors Alan Bissett and Catherine Deveney.
- Pupil Participation Forum Volunteering Awards – Y Factor team received highly commended for 'creativity'. J watt received highly commended for his work with other 'young people'.
- Senior Football team won 7-0 in their first game of the season against Bridge of Don.
- A superb performance all round from the Alford students who were crowned the South Aberdeenshire Schools Association Champions for 2016. The Alford Basketball team retained their shield and the S2 boys won the Football shield for the first time.
- Junior Girls Football Team in an away trip to Meldrum Academy won 10-2 taking them to the semi-final of the Aberdeenshire Junior Girls Cup.
- S3 and senior Modern Studies pupils visited the Scottish Parliament.
- European day of languages was celebrated in school. Pupils enjoyed a 'pop up' continental café
- Interact Club have hosted successful fundraising events including a Macmillan coffee morning and Children in Need activities.
- Advanced Higher History trip to the Sir Duncan Rice Library complex (Aberdeen University)
- S1 Parents Evening revised format was a great success.
- First ever Piano recital evening- excellent standard.
- Another great turnout to our annual Careers Evening.
- Young Sports Ambassadors help lead and develop sport.
- I Tolometti – competed at the British Challenge in Guildford and won the senior all round section as well as Gold on Bars and Floor with a Bronze on beam. She now qualifies to compete at the British Championship in March.

- Annual Safe Drive Stay Alive event at Aberdeen beach ballroom for S5 pupils.
- S2/3 Author Visit - Cathy MacPhail.
- Kapten Piano Trio workshop.
- Cluster Schools In-Service Day – focus on health and wellbeing.
- Tree of Knowledge workshops for parents from Nursery, Primary and Academy.

8. Parent Council events sub group

A sub group of the Academy Parent Council met to discuss organising an event. It was agreed to plan an internet safety event for parents and guardians and to include parents of P7 pupils. Lisa Lees and Moira Milne will provide advice and support for the event. The following parents offered to help - David Wyllie, Penny Fuller, Liz Strachan, Tara Crooke and Yvonne Buckingham. Liz Strachan will contact all members and attendees at previous meetings to ask for a volunteer to lead the sub group. It is proposed to hold the event in May 2017. This will be finalised at the next Parent Council meeting in January.

It was also suggested that another fashion show could be organised similar to the one in September 2011.

ACTION: Liz Strachan will contact all members and attendees at previous meetings to ask for a volunteer to lead the sub group.

9. Proposals for Funding

- 9.1 Moira Milne asked for some funding to help develop an outdoor learning environment (see 4. above).
- 9.2 David Wyllie requested funding of £150 for the Alford Basketball club towards purchasing new basketballs. The club has members from S1-S6 and is very successful, teams having reached the semi-finals of the Scottish Cup for the last 3 years. This was agreed – proposed by Colin Turnbull and seconded by Liz Strachan.

10. AOB

Aberdeenshire Council “working with our parents as partners” – a copy of the November e-bulletin was distributed at the meeting giving information on the launch of the Governance Review. The Scottish Government is seeking views on how education from early years through to secondary school is run. Information can be found at www.gov.scot/educationgovernancereview.

11. Date of next meeting

Monday 23rd January 2017 at 7pm

Close 8.55pm

Dates of future meetings

Monday 21st March 2017 at 7pm

Tuesday 9th May 2017 at 7pm

Wednesday 14th June 2017 at 8pm

ACTION POINTS

ACTION: a subgroup will meet to develop ways to share resources and ideas with parents to support their child's learning. Colin Turnbull and Moira Milne

ACTION: Tara Crooke will look at alternative solutions for bag storage.

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ACTION: David Wyllie will put a reminder on the blog to encourage parents to sign up to Easyfundraising

ACTION: Liz Strachan will contact all members and attendees at previous meetings to ask for a volunteer to lead the sub group.