

ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Alford Academy
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Minutes of Meeting 8th May 2017

Present: David Wyllie, Liz Strachan, Yvonne Buckingham, Penny Fuller, Maria Rossi, Sandy Innes, Richard Stroud, Sue-Ann Grant, Kerry Bryant, Monica Iloya

In Attendance: Moira Milne, Donna Wilson (Parental Engagement Officer Aberdeenshire Council)

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Colin Turnbull, Andy Stuart, Sarah Mcgregor and Nicola Sedgwick.

David Wyllie chaired the meeting in the absence of Colin Turnbull and welcomed everyone. David introduced Donna Wilson (Aberdeenshire Council Parental Engagement Officer).

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 6th March 2017 were accepted as accurate.

Proposed by Sue-Ann Grant

Seconded by Yvonne Buckingham

2. Matters arising

- 2.1 Parent Council-Pupil Council partnership – **outdoor learning environment.** Penny Fuller, Liz Strachan and Sarah Mcgregor met with Shona Ogilvie prior to attending a student council meeting to share ideas and offer support for projects for the outdoor environment of the campus. Penny and Sarah subsequently met members of the Pupil Council to hear their ideas which included more bins, bag racks and benches as well as ideas for larger projects. The Pupil Council will report to the Parent Council by our next meeting.
- 2.2 **Feedback on Internet Safety event** – 20th April - this was a successful event with positive feedback. Pupils benefitted from sessions with Paul Hay during the day followed by an evening presentation for the parents. Feedback from primary parents was that they were very happy to be included, events such as this help them become familiar with the school. Struan Gardner presented Show My Homework and the school website and blog to interested parents. **Feedback on Health and Wellbeing event organised by the school** – some thought the presentation in the evening was too long and not pitched to all parents, but good feedback in general.

2.3 Feedback on implementation of Punctuality Policy – this policy seems to be effective – only 12 letters have been sent home so far and no pupil has had more than 1 letter.

2.4 Supporting learning
This is ongoing – a subgroup will 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

2.5 Forum across all cluster schools - hold topic driven event twice yearly. Ongoing. Colin Turnbull.

ACTION: Parent Council to create a forum across all cluster schools to hold a topic driven event twice yearly. Colin Turnbull

3. Treasurer’s report

The balance of the main account as of 8th May was £9215. The balance of the lottery account was £996. The Easyfundraising app has generated £687 in total since it was first set up a few years ago. Outgoings since the last meeting include water bottles for exams, basketball funding and clerk’s fees. Commitments for funding are £1500 for the awards ceremony, approximately £3,600 for Show My Homework and approx. £570 for the internet safety day. Funding will be offered for the outdoor learning environment projects (see **2.1.** above). External sources of funding for this will be investigated also.

4. S6 ‘last day’

Moira reported that the S6 pupils had generally behaved well this year. Some mess was made, however a small group of S6 were proactive and cleaned up. Posters with inappropriate wording were put up at the school, and also some tributes to staff no longer at the school. Senior staff took the decision to remove them. Some of the pupils regarded this as a heavy-handed approach but it was stressed by Moira that all pupils need to feel safe and be safe, in particular vulnerable pupils (including those with serious medical conditions). Disruption to the rest of the school pupils and community has to be avoided. S6 pupils signed out of school after 11 a.m.

5. 3-18 campus

- Colin Turnbull met with the Chair of the Primary School Parent Council to discuss the transition to the 3-18 campus. It was agreed to keep separate Parent Councils at present and create a 3-18 subgroup with members of the parent body and wider. Colin Turnbull, Penny Fuller and Richard Stroud volunteered to join this group with 3 primary parents.
- The management structure for the 3-18 campus is one Head Teacher (Moira Milne) with 5 Deputies. The job specifications are being written and job sizing is in progress. It is planned to have the team in place by Christmas. The new team will lead from August 2018.
- Vision, values and aims – ‘What matters to us?’ Consultation will begin this term. Care is being taken to consider all cluster parents and cluster primary schools’. Already, rather than focussing on bringing pupils to the campus, teachers are taking learning out to the cluster schools.

6. Head Teacher's report

6.1 Staffing update

- **Modern Languages** – new appointment J Bugeia – a native French speaker.
- **English** – G Leven in position
- **Art/Technical** – long term absences but new appointment in Technical Education - H Scrivens
- **ASL** – vacancy, currently advertised.
- **Developing the Young Workforce** 0.2 FTE Principal Teacher post temporary until Christmas initially

6.2 Departures

- **Art & Design** – R Duncan (0.6 FTE)
- **PE** – G Kelman
- **History/ASL** - D Mackenzie – retiring
- **Mathematics** -J Bowen – retiring – have applicant for this post
- **Physics** – H Booth – retiring – have applicants for this post
- **PT additional support for learning** – P Masson, retiring
- **Geography (October)** – P McDonald, retiring

6.3 Highlights

- Netball – teams successful, winning Aberdeenshire League
- Cross country running – J Gillespie and A Gillespie medal winners
- Apprenticeships week
- Performing Arts showcase evening – successful event involving the school choir, band, drama group and individual performers
- CPR training for S5/6 pupils provided by the Sandpiper trust
- British Science Week celebrated
- Gymnastics – I Tolometti achieved bronze at UK level
- Ice Skating – I Vickers achieved gold at international level
- Successful health and well-being event
- Garioch 5 K run – J Gillespie 1st, A Gillespie 2nd
- Albyn Schools Cross Country – Alford Academy achieved several medals
- Charity leg-wax – Youth Philanthropy Initiative raising money for charity
- Student financial advice - talk to S6 pupils – it was felt by parents present that this should be given to S4/S5 pupils also (see 6.4 below for further discussion on this)
- STEM challenge winners
- Guernica Spanish and Art evening – planned by the pupils, a presentation of art and celebration of the Spanish language
- London Marathon – completed by Alford Academy teachers - J Rees Jenkins and S Hassan
- Chaplaincy team – the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Right Reverend Dr Russell Barr visited the campus and gave a presentation
- ROV challenge – success for our Young Engineers
- S6 last day – Struan Gardner used a drone to take an aerial photo of the leavers
- Girls under 15 football team- through to semi-finals
- Deeside Orienteering Festival – silver award

6.4 Student financial advice and mentoring opportunities

A discussion regarding financial advice for students and general financial advice for all pupils resulted in a decision to provide all pupils the opportunity to hear this advice at the next careers evening in September. David Wyllie will lead a subgroup to provide this and also discuss mentoring opportunities for pupils. Liz will email members to ask for volunteers. David Wyllie will post financial information for students/parents on the website. Past pupils could be invited to come and give advice to S4-6 pupils. It was agreed that parents need information, delivered in an interactive way and to talk to other parents. However, with such a large catchment area, getting parents together can be difficult. A video on the website/FB was suggested. A good strategy is to use the pupils to drive conversations with their parents.

ACTION: David Wyllie will lead a subgroup to provide financial advice at the careers evening in September and discuss mentoring opportunities for pupils. Liz Strachan will email members to ask for volunteers. David Wyllie will post financial information for students/parents on the website.

7. Raising the profile of our Parent Council

- 7.1 Donna Wilson (Parental Engagement Officer) asked if the Parent Council had a noticeboard in the school? As yet the Parent Council doesn't have an allocated physical space but has space on the blog. Other methods of communicating include using the school email distribution and texts.
- 7.2 Donna suggested an informal approach might also help with for example a drop box at reception for ideas/comments that can be anonymous.
- 7.3 Publicising the PC priorities at the start of the school year was suggested, also explaining to parents that the PC want to hear their ideas and thoughts and explain to them how things will apply to their child and what the parent can do to help. Explaining what is the school's role and what is the parent's role in their child's learning would be helpful.
- 7.5 Random invitations to focus groups is another strategy to try and reach parents that would otherwise not participate (see 8.1 below)
- 7.6 A parent commented that people may be put off coming to the Parent Council AGM as they would be concerned they may be coerced into taking on a committee post. It was suggested that nominations for posts be sought before the AGM so that parents can attend knowing that there are volunteers for any vacant posts. Liz Strachan will ensure nomination forms are emailed to all parents via the school before the AGM.

ACTION: Liz Strachan will ensure nomination forms are emailed to all parents via the school before the AGM.

8. School Improvement

- 8.1 Random focus group invitations to parents was suggested by Moira as a response to issues raised/trends identified on feedback forms. Feedback to parents in the form of "You said. We did" was identified as a positive step forward. Parent Council meetings could be moved around the catchment area

to make access easier. Pupils together with some staff could facilitate these meetings. A suggestion was made to add a tick box to the feedback forms completed at parents evenings to agree to be contacted and invited to a focus group or not. Focus groups will be discussed at the next meeting.

ACTION: Focus group invitations - Moira Milne will look at feedback forms and how focus groups could be planned.

8.2 A parent commented that if parents are not already involved with the PC they will not be alerted to the next meeting. The details of meetings and minutes and agendas are on the website already but a reminder would be useful. Moira Milne said as has happened, the school can alert all parents via email or text to look at the website for details of the minutes and agenda for the PC meetings. David Wyllie will add to the website that items and suggestions for the agenda can be sent to the PC email address, or direct to Moira Milne and these can be added to the agenda or dealt with if necessary by the school prior to that.

ACTION: Moira Milne will ensure that the school send out text or email alerts before the next PC meeting to all parents. David Wyllie will add information about agenda items to the website.

9. Proposals for funding

9.1 Moira asked if the Parent Council could fund informal refreshments at the P7 Parent's Information evening. This was agreed.

10. AOB

10.1 Developing Your Parent Council Workshop – Tuesday 13th June, Colin Turnbull is attending this. No other volunteers at the meeting. Liz will email other members.

10.2 Dyslexia workshop - for parents and young people. On Monday 12th June at Meldrum academy 7-9pm. David Wyllie will put the information on the blog.

10.3 PC Chairs meeting with Heads of Service and Directors on Thursday 1st June – Colin will be invited to attend this.

10.4 Pupil Equity Funding – an amount of £22,800 has been awarded to Alford Academy. Moira proposed that this money is used to target health and well-being and asked parents for our thoughts. She will update us at the next meeting. Trends between different groups of pupils are being looked at such as engagement in learning, emotional well being, literacy, resilience. Moira asked how she can support parents better.

11. Date of next meeting - Wednesday 14th June 2017 at 8pm

Close 9.10pm

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:** Parent Council to create a forum across all cluster schools to hold a topic driven event twice yearly. Colin Turnbull
- ACTION:** David Wyllie will lead a subgroup to provide financial advice at the careers evening in September and also discuss mentoring opportunities for pupils. Liz Strachan will email members to ask for volunteers. David Wyllie will post financial information for students/parents on the website.
- ACTION:** Liz Strachan will ensure nomination forms are emailed to all parents via the school before the AGM.
- ACTION:** Focus group invitations - Moira Milne will look at feedback forms and how focus groups could be planned.
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