

# ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Alford Academy  
Greystone Road  
ALFORD  
AB33 8TY



[www.alfordacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk](http://www.alfordacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk)

alfordaca.pc@outlook.com

## Minutes of Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018

**Present:** Liz Strachan, Maria Rossi, Penny Fuller, Tara Crooke, Sandy Innes,  
Karen Noble, David Wyllie

**In Attendance:** Moira Milne

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Colin Turnbull, Nicola Sedgwick, Denise Smith, Ishbel Mollison, Richard Stroud, Sarah McGregor, Charlotte Milburn and Yvonne Buckingham. Yvonne is standing down as a member she will no longer have a child at the school.

#### Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018 were accepted as accurate.

Proposed by Penny Fuller

Seconded by Maria Rossi

#### Matters arising

##### 2.1 Parent Council-Pupil Council partnership

Ongoing – carried forward to next meeting

**ACTION:** Parent Council-Pupil Council partnership - Penny Fuller will meet again with the Pupil Council and report any developments to the Parent council at our next meeting. Moira Milne/Penny Fuller

##### 2.2 Supporting learning

Ongoing.

**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

##### 2.3 Forum across all cluster schools

Ongoing. No date yet, topic of first event will be dyslexia.

**ACTION:** Parent Council to create a forum across all cluster schools and aim to hold a topic driven event twice yearly.

## 2.4 Information evening in June

The information evening will be on Wednesday June 6<sup>th</sup>. The evening will be attended by representatives from NESCOL (North East Scotland College), UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) and SAAS (Student Award Agency Scotland), and information will be available about apprenticeships and parents' past experiences. This is aimed at current S4/5s and their parents, though any others are welcome to attend. David Wyllie will talk about funding and student loans. There have been a few volunteers to help with sharing their experiences. Liz Strachan will email contacts to ask for any other volunteers – past pupils would be welcome to talk about experiences from student point of view.

**ACTION:** The date for the information evening with advice about university, apprenticeships and other career paths is Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June David Wyllie. Volunteers to talk about experiences required.

## 2. Treasurer's report

In the main account there was £3992.40 on 15<sup>th</sup> May and in the lottery account £1001.00. Easyfundraising has generated £1011.49 to date. There is possibly a sponsor for this year's Award's Ceremony, however the Parent Council may be able to contribute if needed. The renewal for Show My Homework is due in August - £3,700 for 2 years. The Parent Council have agreed to help fund this.

## 4. Head Teacher's report

### Staffing Update

R Strachan –leaving, position not needed any longer

K Findlay (Guidance Teacher) – leaving to new school - recruiting for Guidance Teachers at present

K Henderson-Young (History) – probationer- now permanent

D McCance (Art) – probationer- now permanent

B Cruickshank (PE)– 3 days as of August 2018

T Macfarlane (PE) – 3 days as of August 2018

A Shearer (PE)– 2 days acting Principal Teacher of PE

2 probationers requested for PE

S Walker (Maths) – 3 days as of August

Probationer requested for Maths

J Sande (Technical)– 4 days as of August

### Vacancies:

Depute Head Teacher (curriculum and timetabling) – many applicants, preliminary interviews followed by interviews for those on the final shortlist. Colin Turnbull as chair of the Parent Council will be involved in the selection process at this stage.

Principal Teacher of Guidance – the school role is increasing therefore an extra PT of Guidance will be recruited.

Modern languages – long term vacancy – a probationer has been appointed

Biology – a probationer has been requested

Computing – a probationer has been requested

Business Studies – still a vacancy – probationer requested

### Highlights since last meeting:

- NASA astronaut visited Alford - team of 3 from NASA came to visit as they were involved in a local program. Pupils enjoyed this.
- John Muir Award – learning science outdoors
- Netball – S1 tournament organised by Active Schools, the Alford team won 3 of their 4 games
- Basketball – a pupil from Alford academy (S1) has become an U14 National Champion playing in the Fraserburgh team. She also trains with the Alford teams.
- Lunch and Learn – organised by S Cookson/F Talbot. Successful sessions involving staff and pupils.
- Alford Netball Challenge – staff v pupils, 3<sup>rd</sup> annual event.
- 7-aside football- fun tournament was held in Inverurie
- Deeside Orienteering Festival – Alford Academy has 2 bronze medal winners in the boys' event and a silver in the girls' event.

## 5. School Improvement Plan

Moira shared a draft version of the summary Standards and Quality report and School Improvement plan for 2018-19 and asked for feedback especially on the use of language to avoid “Education Speak”. Liz will email contacts to ask for feedback to be sent to Moira.

The Alford Academy main priorities are:

- Development of leadership at all levels
- High quality learning, teaching and assessment
- Enabling young people to be the very best learners they can be
- Review and further improve curriculum

Parental engagement is one of the National Improvement Plan Drivers and Moira asked what can be done to encourage this. What does good communication look like? The school blog currently celebrates achievements and reports events and could be expanded, however there is a limit to how much time can be spent on this as staff have other priorities.

Engaging parents in the learning process is important – one idea to help with this included a regular parent café drop in session in the evening. This could be an opportunity to share experiences and get feedback. A rota of Parent Council members could be drawn up to ensure a representative would be present.

More volunteer helpers could be used by the school for events – it was suggested to try and get more parents PVG assessed so that there is a supply of helpers available when needed to help with events and school trips etc. David Wyllie will contact Caroline McIver.

**ACTION:** Liz Strachan will email contacts to send feedback to Moira Milne on the Alford Academy Improvement Plan

**ACTION:** David Wyllie will contact Caroline McIver to organise PVG applications for parents interested in volunteering

## 6. Holiday dates

Two occasional days are proposed for 2018-2019 as in previous years – February half term Friday 8<sup>th</sup> and local holiday Monday June 3<sup>rd</sup>. These were agreed.

## **7. School leavers Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

Moira reported that a small group of 5<sup>th</sup> years had planned and carried out an act on leavers day that was in poor taste and disruptive. A small number of 6<sup>th</sup> years were also involved. There was also unacceptable behaviour at lunchtime in the village. The police were involved and were supportive of the school. This kind of behaviour is common throughout many schools on the last day and not just in Alford. Moira wishes to try and make the day special for the leavers and make it clear that disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated. Letters had been sent to parents and assemblies will be held to encourage pupils to think about their actions. Only a small minority of pupils were involved.

## **8. School Trips**

The traditional events week was paused due to a number of factors including increasing absence rates/decreasing engagement, the high cost of some activities and the equity issue, and the capacity in the staff team (particularly with the move to the new campus as staff were busy with the transition).

This year, curriculum-focussed events have been planned for S1-3 pupils. S1s have a teambuilding/careers day at Craibstone and a trip to Huntly Nordic Centre. S2s have a day at NESCOL in Aberdeen, teambuilding and looking at vocational courses, and a trip to Knockburn Loch for water-based activities such as canoeing and windsurfing. S3s have been offered traditional opt in activities but so far uptake is not good. Those who do not opt in will be doing school work.

Residential trips are being reviewed again with consideration of educational rationale, costs and risk assessments. A music trip to Belgium is currently being planned and will hopefully take place in 2019, with plans for pupils to perform while there.

There is concern that some trips are very costly and that this is not equitable for all pupils. The parents present thought that it would be good to start building up residential trips again. Offering Scottish trips might make them accessible to more pupils – cultural and outdoor trips could be planned. The school could aspire to put all pupils through a Duke of Edinburgh expedition. Some schools offer very expensive trips, but most schools have pulled this back and trips are more modestly priced. A cap could be put on trips for example £500 for a 5-day trip? Moira reported that there is capacity in staffing again now to support residential trips. Major expeditions have taken place every 2 years in the past with a community project component, however these are very expensive, and it can be difficult and costly to free up staff to attend. Moira is looking into offering this sort of expedition in the future.

Last year the Royal Highland Show trip was cancelled at the last minute due to a range of health and safety issues which would have prevented pupils exploring the show ground unattended. This year the Show falls in link week and the school can't release enough staff to support a trip. As per usual, pupils may make their own arrangements to attend the show during school time – a request can be made to the school for an authorised absence for educational purposes.

## **9. Proposals for Funding**

- Awards Ceremony 2018 – possibly help with funding if no sponsor found
- SMHW - £3,700 in total over 2 years – possibly pay all or some.
- Girls' football kit - £575 – the team have applied for a grant and are waiting to hear.

**10. Date of next meeting** – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at the later time of 8pm

**Close 8.55pm**

## **ACTION POINTS**

**ACTION:** Parent Council-Pupil Council partnership - Penny Fuller will meet with the Pupil Council and report to the Parent council at the next meeting. Moira Milne/Penny Fuller

**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 and aim to hold a topic driven event twice yearly.

**ACTION:** The date for the information evening with advice about university, apprenticeships and other career paths is Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June David Wyllie. Volunteers to talk about experiences required.

**ACTION:** Liz Strachan will email contacts to send feedback to Moira Milne on the Alford Academy Improvement Plan

**ACTION:** David Wyllie will contact Caroline McIver to organise PVG applications for parents interested in volunteering