

ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Alford Academy
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Minutes of AGM 18th September 2017

Present: Colin Turnbull, Liz Strachan, David Wyllie, Yvonne Buckingham, Sue-Ann Grant, Sandy Innes, Maria Rossi, Penny Fuller, Richard Stroud, Denise Smith, Charlotte Milburn, Angela Findlay, Louise Mitchell

In Attendance: Moira Milne, Lisa lees, Cllr John Latham

Annual General Meeting

1. Welcome and Apologies

Colin Turnbull welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Yvonne Buckingham, Nicola Sedgwick, Tara Crooke and Sarah McGregor

2. Chairperson's Annual Report

Colin summarised the activities of the Parent Council and its sub groups over the last year. The fundraising sub group continues to be successful in raising money which has helped the school in a variety of ways. Colin thanked David Wyllie for his continued work with this. The Parent Council is involved in developing topic driven events across the cluster schools with help from Donna Wilson (Parental Engagement officer for Aberdeenshire Council). The topic planned for the first cluster event is dyslexia.

Funding has been provided by the Parent Council for two years of the app "Show my homework", which was implemented last year after a trial period of a few months. The Parent Council worked closely with the school on this project.

A successful social media/internet safety event for parents and carers was organised by the Parent Council in May this year.

Colin, as chair, has been involved with a variety of recruitment processes involving staff and the senior prefect team.

The outdoor learning sub group is involved with the student council to develop the outdoor space of the campus.

The Parent Council has been involved in the development of the school's restorative practice policy and punctuality policy as well as the vision, values and aims of the school.

There is a subgroup working with the school to help with the transition to the 3-18 campus, this will have representation from the primary and academy and the group will work together with staff to ensure that all have a voice and opportunity to contribute to the implementation plan that draws on Aberdeenshire's 3-18 policy.

Colin thanked Richard Stroud and Councillor Latham for their support, as well as all members of the Parent Council and other parents who have helped this year. The Parent Council needs to build on the successes of the last year and look at more ways to support the school effectively.

3. Treasurer's Annual Report

The balance of the main account on 31/08/2017 was £4,151.46.

The balance of the lottery account on 31/08/2017 was £1666.00. Unpresented cheques total £180.00, leaving a cashbook balance of £1486.00

This leaves an overall balance of approximately £5,600.

The accounts for 2016-2017 have been audited.
(See attached financial statements)

4. Election of Office Bearers

Chairperson:	Colin Turnbull	Proposed by Penny Fuller Seconded by Richard Stroud
Secretary:	Liz Strachan	Proposed by Colin Turnbull Seconded by David Wyllie
Treasurer:	Penny Fuller	Proposed by Liz Strachan Seconded by Colin Turnbull
Co-opted member:	Richard Stroud	Proposed by Colin Turnbull Seconded by David Wyllie
Vice-chair:	David Wyllie	Proposed by Colin Turnbull Seconded by Maria Rossi

Election of Members

There are 13 parent/carer members at present, and 1 co-opted member; 2 more parent places remain which can be filled at subsequent meetings if required.

The following are members for 2017-18:

Charlotte Milburn	(S1)	David Wyllie	(S5, S6)
Denise Smith	(S1, S5)	Sandy Innes	(S5, S6)
Sarah McGregor	(S2)	Sue-Ann Grant	(S5)
Nicola Sedgwick	(S2)	Tara Crooke	(S5 x2)
Colin Turnbull	(S3)	Maria Rossi	(S6)
Penny Fuller	(S3)	Yvonne Buckingham	(S6)
Liz Strachan	(S4, S6)	Richard Stroud	(co-opted member)

AGM close

First Meeting of Parent Council Session 2017-2018

1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 14th June 2017 were accepted as accurate.

Proposed by Penny Fuller

Seconded by Colin Turnbull

Matters arising

1.1 Parent Council- Pupil Council partnership – outdoor learning environment

Ongoing

ACTION: Outdoor learning environment – Pupil Council representatives will be invited to a Parent Council meeting. Moira Milne

1.2 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

1.3 Forum across all cluster schools

Ongoing

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

1.4 Student financial advice/mentoring opportunities

Ongoing

ACTION: David Wyllie will attend the careers evening on 11th October to present financial advice for students and parents and post information on the website.

1.5 Focus Groups

Ongoing

ACTION: Moira Milne and Colin Turnbull will look at ways to discuss and progress feedback gathered at parents' evenings and how focus groups could be developed.

2. Head Teacher's report

Staffing Update

New to the team

K Henderson-Young	Probationer (Secondary - History)
D McCance	Probationer (Secondary – Art)
R Strachan	Probationer (Secondary – Geography)

G Mathewson	Teacher (Secondary – Mathematics)
A Saunders	Teacher (Secondary – Art)
A Shearer	Teacher (Secondary – PE)
D Wood	Teacher (Secondary – Physics)
J Munro	Teacher (Additional Support for Learners)
F Murray	Principal Teacher (Faculty of ASL)

Changes to roles

F Talbot	Principal Teacher(DYW) - 0.2 FTE
D Gerrie	Acting Principal Teacher (Guidance) – 0.2FTE

Vacancies:

- Business – no applicants and re-advertised
- PT Creativity and Enterprise – interviews this week

Leadership team for the 3-18 campus transition phase:

3-18 Campus Head/Head Secondary – Moira Milne
Head Primary – Jane Craik (secondment ends June)
Depute Head Primary – Beth Forbes
Depute Head Primary (acting) – Liz Doyle
Depute Head Secondary – Struan Gardner
Depute Head Secondary – Lisa Lees
Depute Head Secondary (acting) – Jan Holt

In August 2018, the Senior Leadership Team will consist of the 3-18 Head Teacher and five Depute Heads (two primary and three Secondary).

Other campus senior staff are: Network librarian – J Coroon
Senior Community Learning Worker – T Latham
Community Leisure Officer – G Wood

Highlights since last meeting:

- S6 induction – team building
- Young Engineers – Greenpower F24 challenge 3rd place
- House Assemblies
- CREST bronze award for S1 pupils in science
- Walk for Life in June
- Tree of Knowledge
- Whole school assembly – 655 pupils led by Senior Executive, motivational messages given
- Danish School visit to Alford Academy
- Successful folk group formed
- J Gillespie – 2nd Scottish U17 800m
- S1 Interhouse Wii challenge
- S1-2 wellbeing event – pupil equity funding paying for this, will be extended to S3s and parent sessions involving cluster schools
- S4 careers event – Colin Slessor speaker, more than 40 companies/individuals

3. Improvement priorities:

3.1 Raising Attainment Strategy 2017-2020

Moira shared the 4 key drivers for the school's draft strategy for raising attainment i.e.

- **Leadership and school improvement** – the very best leaders at all levels
Developing our 3-18 inclusive, healthy and ambitious community
- **Our young people** – the very best learners
Supporting and enabling our young people to be the very best learners with a particular focus on their health and well-being and parental engagement
- **Teacher professionalism** – the very best teachers
Continuing our focus on teaching, learning and assessment of learner's progress through career long professional development, a focus on the craft of teaching (including through emerging technologies in the classroom) and further development of our tracking and monitoring systems.
- **Developing our curriculum** – the very best pathways for our learners
Better equipping all our young people with the skills, attitudes, attainment and achievements needed for their next phase of learning/employment.

Moira made reference to the National Improvement Framework, GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) and DYW (Developing the Young Workforce) as being central

to the school's improvement agenda. Any feedback about the improvement priorities should be sent to Moira.

A discussion about the SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) followed and the changes in SQA courses this year – N4 and N5 courses have changed significantly which will make it more difficult to drop from N5 to N4 in some subjects. Higher courses will change next year and Advanced Highers the following year.

Communications - information about changes to the SQA courses will be shared with parents. Feedback on communications via e-mail and the blog has been positive. It was suggested that as a possible enhancement to current practice, a letter could be uploaded to the school website and blog with a text or email alert to direct attention to it.

- 3.2 Actively seeking parent's views** – “This is what you said. This is what we did.” Parental questionnaires seeking parents' views at Parents Evenings have indicated that some parents do not feel that their views are actively sought. The key word being ‘actively’. There is a high turnout of parents at Parents Evenings however not all parents feedback on the evening. The school and Parent Council need to plan a more effective strategy for seeking views and sharing feedback with parents.

During the past session workshops with Tree of Knowledge were planned but generally attendance was low. Open afternoons have been offered in the past, again attendance was low. S1 parents were given information from school and from parents of older pupils about what to expect on transition to the Academy and feedback was positive.

Opportunities exist to share experiences at parents' evenings, and some of these could be pupil-led, for example course choice experience and how to get the most out of S5-6.

A suggestion was made to have more specific questions on questionnaires for example bullying, transition. Moira shared how important the role of the Parent Council is in seeking feedback.

A suggestion was made to provide a regular newsletter of everything going on in the Academy, so that parents would have a better understanding of events across the whole school and not just their child's year group. Moira said that events are currently posted on the blog daily. A possible improvement could be to post a termly calendar of forthcoming events, rather than just reports after the event. This could be added to the website/blog with an email sent to all parents to alert them to look. This may be an opportunity to get pupils involved.

4. Restorative practice in Alford Academy

Lisa Lees has drafted a leaflet for parents and carers outlining a restorative approach to dealing with conflict in Alford Academy. She asked if members of the Parent Council could send her their comments by email and the leaflet will then be circulated. A restorative approach involves all those affected by an incident to repair the harm that it has caused to the relationship, find ways forward that reduce resentment and prevent it from escalating further. The leaflet contains a diagram of actions and stages that teachers will follow in the event of behaviours that do not meet agreed expectations. Detentions are no longer used, consequences should relate in some way to the issue. All staff have had training and use the approach in the diagram.

5. Parents as Partners – what do we want to achieve in session 2017-18?

We would like to empower parents, with parental involvement driven by parents rather than the school. We need to continue to work together with the school and discover how we can contribute. Parent's Evenings will be opportunities to have conversations. The S1 Open Evening in October is an opportunity to give support – the Parent Council could

communicate our fundraising endeavours and give examples of parents supporting the curriculum. It was suggested that we could ask parents to come forward and help with offers of work experience or giving advice to pupils and parents about career paths. An information evening is proposed to be held in June for the current S4-5s with advice about university (e.g. applications, course choice, open days, finances) apprenticeships and other career paths.

ACTION: An information evening is proposed to be held in June for the current S4-5s with advice about university, apprenticeships and other career paths

6. AOB

6.1 Nicola Sedgwick is the joint chair of the Donside Community Council and asked if the school would be willing to send a representative to some of the meetings which are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, except for July and December. Moira Milne will organise a representative if available.

6.2 Some parents commented that the S1-S3 commendations for hard work at the Awards' Ceremony were virtually all girls. The criteria for receiving an award has been changed in recent years and now only commendations are given to these year groups rather than both commendations (rewarding hard work) and merits (rewarding academic achievement). The rationale for the change is to acknowledge the pupils who work hard to achieve their best at all levels of attainment not just those with the highest attainment. This has been achieved, not just in S1-S3 but also in the Senior Phase. Further research will be carried out prior to the next meeting with regards to criteria for awards in S1-S3. Recognising positive achievements will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Close 9.30pm

Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 8th November 2017 at 7pm

Monday 22nd January 2018 at 7pm

Monday 19th March 2018 at 7pm

Tuesday 15th May 2018 at 7pm

Wednesday 20th June 2018 at 8pm

ACTION POINTS

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

ACTION: David Wyllie will attend the careers evening on 11th October to present financial advice for students and parents and post information on the website.

ACTION: Moira Milne and Colin Turnbull will look at ways to discuss and progress feedback gathered at parents' evenings and how focus groups could be developed.

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