

ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Alford Academy
Greystone Road
ALFORD
AB33 8TY



www.alfordacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

alfordaca.pc@outlook.com

Minutes of Meeting 19th March 2018

Present: Colin Turnbull Liz Strachan, Maria Rossi, Penny Fuller, Louise Mitchell, Tara Crooke, Sarah McGregor, Sandy Innes, Richard Stroud, Angela Findlay, Kerry Bryant, Ishbel Mollison, David Wyllie

In Attendance: Moira Milne, Cllr John Latham

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Yvonne Buckingham, Nicola Sedgwick and Charlotte Milburn

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 22nd January 2018 were accepted as accurate.

Proposed by Penny Fuller

Seconded by Sandy Innes

Matters arising

2.1 Parent Council-Pupil Council partnership

Penny Fuller, Liz Strachan and Sarah McGregor met with the Pupil Council on 21st February. The Pupil Council thanked the Parent Council for the money for the Christmas decorations. The following items were discussed:

- **Outdoor seating** areas - the pupils were interested in utilising the stone cages outdoors for seating, by covering with decking or other material. Having liaised with the buildings management company this is not going to be possible. Alternative seating will now be discussed with the Student Council.
- **Forest Schools** – pupils were interested in using the wooded area for activities such as this, possibly as an after-school club, during MEL or as a wider achievement subject. Parent Council suggested applying to the Jo Walters Trust for a grant.
- **More seating in school** – the Pupil Council thought that they would like more seating around the school, some extra folding tables with stools for example and more bistro type chairs for the high tables. Penny obtained a quotation of £930 for a folding table with stools to seat 12. Pupil Council need to ask the wider pupil body what their preferred seating would be.
- **Triangular space behind reception** – pupils had a variety of ideas for the use of this area, more seating wanted. They plan to seek the views of more pupils and also the Primary and Nursery Staff/Pupils.

- **Memorial plaque and statue** for Mr Coston – a plaque will be put up outside the theatre and another sculpture by the same artist as Mr Comforts’ dog has been commissioned.
- **Survival guide** for new S1s – Pupil Council are working on a survival guide for new S1s from a pupil perspective. They intend to print these and may approach Parent Council for help with funding for printing costs.
- **Wi-fi** in senior areas of the school – pupils are keen to have Wi-fi access in senior study areas. Moira reported that the infrastructure is in place, so no cost would be involved; a strategy is under development for Bring Your Own Device however considerable planning is required to progress this.
- **Funding for projects** – suggestions were made to the Pupil Council to investigate community grants from Tesco, Co-op and the Jo Walters trust. It was suggested that any pupils doing Business Studies could possibly take this on as a project for their coursework.

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 Focus Groups

Stuart Cookson (Acting DHT) has been looking at ways to share feedback with parents and engage them. He has started a series of lunch and learn sessions, in which parents and other volunteers from the community will give information about their jobs.

2.5 Information evening in June

David Wyllie met with Frances Talbot and set Wednesday June 6th as the date for the information evening. 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. The format is not confirmed but it may consist of 15 minutes sessions then 5 minutes break repeated through the evening. Refreshments will be served. This is aimed at current S4/5s and their parents. David Wyllie will talk about funding and student loans. Liz Strachan will email contacts to ask for volunteers to discuss their own experiences. Prefects may be asked to help with refreshments.

ACTION: The date for the information evening with advice about university, apprenticeships and other career paths is Wednesday 6th June David Wyllie. Liz Strachan will email contacts for volunteers from parents to discuss their own experiences at the evening.

3. Treasurer's report

In the main account there was £4,005.27 on 19th March and in the lottery account £511.00. The annual payment from Aberdeenshire Council has still yet to be received.

Easyfundraising has generated £973.88 to date. Payments made include £1,808.06 for the Awards Ceremony 2017, sponsored walk water from 2017 and Pupil Council Christmas lights. There is possibly a sponsor for this year's Award's Ceremony, however the Parent Council may be able to contribute if needed. The school is keen to renew Show My Homework and the parents present thought it worthwhile. The renewal in August is £3,700 for 2 years. The school could possibly pay half of this. A request to pay for girls' football kits was made – 20 full kits and kit bags for £575. It was agreed to ask them to see if any sponsors can be found first before the Parent Council make a decision about funding this.

4. Head Teacher's report

Staffing Update

Appointments:

H. Wright - Home Economics

Departures:

C. Marques-Martin – Modern Languages

Vacancies:

Business – no applicants all year – courses may have to be reviewed and alternative models of delivery pursued with e.g. SRUC (rural business courses) or with RGU.

ASL – vacancies are proving difficult to fill.

Modern Languages – 4 applicants for this position – interviews end of March

DHT:

Acting DHT - Stuart Cookson. The DHT position will be advertised and interviews held in May.

The school roll is forecast to increase over the next few years. There are 137 new S1s starting in 2018, only 89 started six years ago. An increase in staffing is planned and Moira is trying to secure probationers for next session.

Highlights since last meeting:

- My Future Aspirations competition sponsored by Thorpe Molloy – runner up F Reynolds S1 - art work on show in the Scottish Parliament.
- Izzy Tolometti – former pupil – competing in the Commonwealth Games in gymnastics.
- Some pupils have entered a writing competition – Stranger Sagas.
- Charity coffee morning organised by T Mackenzie
- World Book Day – pupils had power point presentations, talks and book themed cakes

Forthcoming events

- Mackies Partnership – building real life experiences into the curriculum. Stuart Common -Commercial Director of Mackies will attend the first Lunch and Learn session.
- “Spikin Autism and more” – event in community garden, Princes XL working with Alistair Mclean on the garden. Artwork is being created to promote this.
- Inspiring Aberdeenshire Awards – 3 nominations from Alford Academy have reached the final – K Cooper – leads the Pupil Council, L Wright – Interact, J Coroon – works behind the scenes to support “Spikin Autism” in the library. They will attend an event at Haddo House on 15th June.

5. 3-18 Alford School -update

The Director of Education has decided to halt the plans for a single Senior Leadership Team for the Alford 3-18 campus for now due to the possible implications of a Governance

Review for Head Teachers, however the 3-18 vision remains. The Head Teachers of the Academy and all the cluster primaries will continue to work together to improve the Alford Cluster Schools 3-18 curriculum.

6. Vision and Values – next steps

There have been many responses to the various consultations on the new Vision and Values for the school. A working group will be set up to finalise the Vision and Values with staff, pupils, the Parent Council and possibly local businesses.

7. Parental Engagement – our strategy at Alford Academy?

As well as Visions and Values consultations (see 6.), the Academy is reviewing the S1-S3 curriculum and is asking parents for feedback on this. A draft document “Our Golden Threads” was distributed to parents present, to feedback on what they feel is important. Consideration is being given to the following:

- **What makes Alford Academy unique?** Rural community, culture and heritage. Team of pupils, staff, parents and community. Growth mindset, pride in ethos.
- **Values** – on-going consultation
- **Purpose** - successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors.
- **Principles for curriculum design** - challenge and enjoyment, curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary projects, opportunities for personal achievement, universal and personal support.
- **Alford Academy curriculum drivers** - self, community, empowered learning, technologies, horizons.
- **Core skills** - aim for all pupils to leave with certain skills - literacy, numeracy, wellbeing, thinking, creativity, enterprise, digital skills, leadership, employability.

Creating a culture of respect was discussed; concern was raised about the effect of social media particularly on the younger members of the school. The school focuses on educating young people to help keep them safe and teach basic respect. Peer education is felt to be important, buddy systems are working well, as is the MVP (mentoring for violence prevention) program. Year group assemblies are planned. It was felt that involving the cluster primaries is important as children have access to phones and tablets at an earlier age.

There was a discussion about the decrease in reading, listening and proof reading skills that could be attributed to the increase in use of technology. The impact of young people accessing mobile technology late at night and the physical effects of bright screens late in the evening, was also discussed and identified as a factor of lack of sleep, which in turn may cause underperformance at school. Workshops/presentations to parents were suggested.

8. 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 – ask them to look for sponsor first before decision made.

9. Other

9.1 Improvement Plan – to be discussed at the next meeting. Last year’s plan will be distributed to Parent Council members before then.

10. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 15th May 2018 at 7pm

Close 8.25pm

Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 15th May 2018 at 7pm

Wednesday 20th June 2018 at 8pm

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 6th June David Wyllie. Liz Strachan will email contacts for volunteers from parents to discuss their own experiences at the evening.

