



ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

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

www.alfordacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

Minutes of AGM 19th September 2016

Present: Colin Turnbull, Liz Strachan, David Wyllie, Yvonne Buckingham, Sue-Ann Grant, Tara Crooke, Sandy Innes, Maria Rossi, Kerry Bryant, Penny Fuller, Richard Stroud, Andy Stuart, Sarah McGregor

In Attendance: Moira Milne

Annual General Meeting

1. Welcome and Apologies

Colin Turnbull welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Apologies were received from Ian Findlay, Nicola Sedgwick, Karen Noble and Ian Noble.

2. Chairperson's Annual Report

Colin summarised the events and contribution of the Parent Council to the school in the last year which saw the transition to the new campus. The campus website is now live, though there is still some work to do, and communication to parents has improved. Links with Alford Primary School and the cluster schools will need to be strengthened with the transition to a 3-18 school and the new management structure. The new dress code has been implemented with help from the student council and parent council.

Parent Council members have provided support at the transition evening and also the recent very successful S4 careers day. Colin has been involved with the interview process for the Depute teaching positions and also for the Head boy and girl. Colin has also liaised and attended meetings with the authority directorate on many occasions during the year.

Parent Council members have been involved in the presentations and discussions about restorative practices in the school. The Parent Council have supported the Awards Ceremony again this year.

Colin asked that the school and Parent Council may look at a number of special topics this year, for example managing dyslexia.

Colin thanked all parent council members for their ongoing support and contribution; in particular the hard work of the officers, and especially David Wyllie for his hard work with the lottery

3. Treasurer's Annual Report

The balance of the main account on 31/08/2016 was £8,019.89. Aberdeenshire Council funding is still to be received.

The balance of the lottery account on 31/08/2016 was £1,434.50. Unpresented cheques total £340.00, leaving a cashbook balance of £1,094.50

This leaves an overall balance of approximately £9,000.

The accounts for 2015-2016 are currently being audited.

4. Election of Office Bearers

Chairperson:	Colin Turnbull	Proposed by David Wyllie Seconded by Sandy Innes
Secretary:	Liz Strachan	Proposed by Yvonne Buckingham Seconded by David Wyllie
Treasurer:	Penny Fuller	Proposed by David Wyllie Seconded by Liz Strachan
Co-opted member:	Richard Stroud	Proposed by Colin Turnbull Seconded by Sandy Innes

5. Parent Council Constitution and election of members

All parents present at this meeting agreed to be a member of the Parent Council. Richard Stroud is a co-opted member. There are therefore 12 parent 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 2016-17:

Sarah Mcgregor	(S1)	Andy Stuart	()
Colin Turnbull	(S2, S6)	Sue-Ann Grant	(S4)
Penny Fuller	(S2, S6)	Tara Crooke	(S4 x2)
Liz Strachan	(S3, S5)	Maria Rossi	(S5, S6)
David Wyllie	(S4, S5)	Yvonne Buckingham	(S5)
Kerry Bryant	(S4, S6)		
Sandy Innes	(S4, S5)	Richard Stroud	(co-opted member)

AGM close

First Meeting of Parent Council Session 2016-2017

1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 14th June 2016 were accepted as accurate.

Proposed by David Wyllie

Seconded by Penny Fuller

Matters arising

1.1 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

1.2 Student Council partnership with Parent Council – the request for funding form will be on the campus website. Yvonne Buckingham (acting chair of Donside Community Council) reported that student council members have been attending Donside Community Council meetings.

1.3 Games Hall temporary flooring – this is now in use and stored for future events.

1.4 Bag racks – ongoing. Tara Croke will look at the possible solutions for this that comply with health and safety regulations.

ACTION: Tara Croke will look at possible solutions for bag storage that comply with health and safety regulations.

1.5 Internet Safety event – a request was made from some parents for an internet safety event – this will be discussed in a Parent Council sub group meeting on Monday 3rd October. (see 5.5 below)

2. Educational Institute of Scotland – update on action been taken

Unfortunately the EIS rep could not attend tonight's meeting. Moira outlined the issues surrounding the action being taken by members of this union.

From the start of school session 2016-17 members of the Educational Institute of Scotland have been involved in a campaign of national industrial action over the excessive workload for teachers and pupils associated with National Qualifications. The objective of the campaign is to achieve a reduction in SQA workload - to reduce the bureaucracy and over-assessment of pupils. EIS members are not boycotting SQA related activities but ensuring that they can be carried out within the school's Working Time Agreement and in relation to their contractual obligations within a 35-hour week. The campaign aims to not only reduce workload pressures for staff but to alleviate the assessment burden for pupils, particularly around Unit assessments for National 5 and Higher, which the EIS believes to be excessive. The ultimate aim is to create more time for teaching and learning by reducing the excessive assessment regime which the SQA has created.

Moira proposed to arrange a meeting with Parent Council members and the EIS rep, however, since the meeting the Scottish Government has announced that they plan to remove some unit assessments and final exams will be strengthened. Also externally marked coursework in some subjects will also contribute to students' grades. The plan is for National 5 courses to be altered next year and Higher courses in 2018. If industrial action continues Moira will arrange a meeting.

3. Show My Homework update and feedback

There has been a lot of positive feedback about this from staff, pupils and parents. There have been a few technical issues but the team at Show My Homework will resolve these if parents get in touch with them. There has been no data on parental use as yet. A survey has been conducted by the school of internet availability at pupils' homes; the results are not known as yet. Struan Gardner (Depute Head) welcomes feedback via the academy email: alford.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

The parent page doesn't show all the same information as the pupil page – for example not all the feedback is visible to parents. Members of the Parent Council felt that the pages should contain the same information. There are still some issues with housekeeping- for example which pupils are assigned to which classes. A further meeting will be planned to discuss Show My Homework and decide whether to proceed as it is currently on a risk free trial. Colin asked that parents get in touch with the school on the email with feedback. It will be interesting to see if it improves the number of missed homework deadlines.

4. School Improvement

Moira shared the new staff plan for the 3-18 campus for the next 2 years of transition:

Moira Milne – Head 3-18

Jane Craik – Head of Primary seconded for 2 years

Beth Forbes – Depute Head Primary

Struan Gardner – Depute Head

Lisa Lees – Depute Head

Linda Park – Depute Head 3 days

Jan Holt – Acting Depute Head 2 days

Liz Doyle – Acting Depute Primary

Frances Talbot – Acting Depute Head 2.5 days (and 2.5 days guidance share)

Caroline McIvor – school support co-ordinator

After the transition phase there will be one Head and 5 Deputes.

New Staff

Art and Design – Robbie Duncan

Principal Teacher English – Louise Rae

English – Charlotte Packer

Modern Languages – Claudia Marques

PE - Gaynor Kelman

Biology – Jenni Rees-Jenkins

Additional Support for Learning – Rachel Patterson

Pupil Support Assistant – Ilene Gauld

Active Schools co-ordinator – Kerry Massie

Vacancies

English – 2 vacancies – this is a concern

Music – just filled – Timmy Vickers

Technical – advertised twice so far – no applicants

Moira gave a photographic presentation of some school activities:

- Y factor product design competition
- New Senior Executive appointments
- Awards ceremony – another successful event
- Tree of Knowledge for S4-6
- Rotary Interact Club
- Duke of Edinburgh Award – bronze, silver and gold
- S4 careers day – local businesses represented at stands and pupils had short sessions with each, feedback from some that this was too rushed

- Sponsored walk
- SQA results – good results compared with the Aberdeenshire average at all levels. Strong results generally compared with last year. More highers taken in S6 than advanced highers this year compared to last, reflecting the fact that some universities now ask for a broad range of subjects.

Improvement priorities:

Leadership of learning

- Tapestry Initiative – across Scotland working with primaries to renew teaching practices
- Innovation – iPads
- Quality Assurance visits – learning
- Support for parents to support pupils –for example “Show My Homework”
- Tracking, mentoring and intervention
- MEL (mentoring for Effective Learning) – to be the best learners that the pupils can be – each individual child is mentored

Leadership and School Improvement

- Collaboration
- School vision – values, aims
- Leadership at all levels
- Pupil voice – student council and every pupil
- Campus health and well being

Well being, equality, inclusion

- Rights respecting school
- Restorative practice
- Resilience, positivity
- Equality, diversity

Learning pathways/transition

- Collaborative planning in school and with other schools and outwith school
- Sustainability – creative digital learning, STEM
- 3-18 learning – skills, partnership, careers education
- 3-18 cluster schools planning – 12 schools and 12 parent councils, need to link and tackle bureaucracy

5. Parents as Partners – what do we want to achieve in session 2016-17?

- 5.1** Colin suggested that our Parent Council should discuss the improvement priorities and include the cluster schools parent councils as a priority.
- 5.2** The Parent Council needs to set goals and have smaller subgroups to deliver these, in the way that the fundraising sub group has been doing. It was agreed that fundraising should be aimed at the purchase of specific tangible items.
- 5.3** Parents could be more useful in career guidance.
- 5.4** Parents could be more useful in preparation of pupils for university, and for volunteering opportunities and the Duke of Edinburgh award.
- 5.5** Moira asked how we could encourage more parents along to Parent Forum events – and find out if they can help in any way. A suggestion was to have a table at parents’ evenings to recruit parents to help with the above. It would be good to encourage parents of new S1s to help, though it was felt that many of these have done a lot for their primary school PC or PTA and wish to have a break. It was agreed to have a sub group meeting to discuss and plan a Parent Council event to involve other parents and the community, such as an internet safety event. Cluster primaries could be invited to this.

ACTION: Meeting on Monday 3rd October 7.15pm of sub group of Parent Council to discuss ideas and plan an event. Liz Strachan will email members and parents who have previously attended meetings.

6. AOB

Request for funding from Kerry Bryant for netball training – funding requested to help pay for refreshments for tournaments with other schools and 50% of umpire costs for the next year. Total request £120. This was agreed.

Close 9.15pm

Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 8th November 2016 at 7pm

Monday 23rd January 2017 at 7pm

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 possible solutions for bag storage that comply with health and safety regulations.

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