

ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
Alford Academy
Greystone Road
ALFORD
AB33 8TY
www.alfordacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

Minutes of Meeting
30th March 2016

Present: Colin Turnbull, David Wyllie, Tara Crooke, Maria Rossi, Penny Fuller, Ian Findlay,

In Attendance: Moira Milne, Cllr Latham, Shona Ogilvie

1. Welcome and Apologies

Colin Turnbull welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Nicola Sedgwick, Liz Strachan, Sandy Innes, Sue-Ann Grant, Yvonne Buckingham, Joyce Mackie, Richard Stroud, Kerry Bryant and Anne Harvey.

Anne Harvey resigned from the parent council as her daughter is finishing year 6.

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

There was one amendment to the minutes of the meeting on 25th January 2016.

5.7 To read - Moira is going to nominate the New Campus team for an award from Inspiring Aberdeenshire.

Amendment done, the minutes were accepted as accurate.

Proposed by Tara Cooke

Seconded by Penny Fuller

- 2.1 Communications** - The Academy website is due to go live on 31st March
- 2.2 Student Council** - Liz Strachan and Penny Fuller attended a Student Council meeting to discuss ideas for the 'Parent Council' area on the website.
- 2.3** Tara Crooke has set up the closed social media group for the Parent Council. It just needs promoting.
- 2.4 Homework app** - Moira would like to carry this agenda item to the next meeting. The feedback from other schools has been patchy.

ACTION

- 2.5 Supporting learning** – ongoing

ACTION: the sub group is still to meet

2.6 SQA finishing times of exams on days that school finishes early.

Correspondence has been sent out today (Wednesday 30th March) to parents with children in S4/S5/S6. This includes the exam dates. There are two possible days where the exams finish after the end of the school day. Parents/carers will need to arrange the

pupils' own transport home. If there are any issues, then parents are asked to contact the school.

3 Treasurer's Report

- The available funds in the main account at present total £7244.94
- The cashbook balance of the lottery account on 31/03/16 was £1229.50
- Easy Fundraising has generated a BACS payment of £85.37 this quarter.

The Parent Council agreed to fund the cost of:-

- Christmas lights, approximately £200/£250. (Approved and seconded by Colin Turnbull & Penny Fuller)
- Leavers ceremony
- Awards Ceremony
- Any printing costs for feedback/questionnaires to be sent out.

Further discussions were held regarding installing bag racks and the issue with the flooring in the games hall for ceremonies etc. For a removable floor, costs are approximately £10,000.

Parent Council members suggested that the cost of the flooring should hopefully be covered by a retention fund.

Kemnay Academy has a floor available should we need to borrow in an emergency.

ACTION: Moir Milne to investigate.

4 Head Teacher's Report

- Vacancies:
Home Economics – no applicants for this maternity cover post over the course of the year. J Adams plans to return from maternity leave in June.
Miss C Packer finishes her probation in August and has been provisionally appointed to a full time permanent English post at Alford Academy.
Miss May- Art & Design. Leaving at the end of the school session.
Miss Kaura- Biology. Leaving at the beginning of May. Interviews will be held this week.

Staff and pupils have been busy doing:-

- WW1 Propaganda posters
- Premiership Experience – Mr McKinnie accompanied pupils to watch Manchester City v Leicester City at Etihad Stadium
- Ballater Site Visit – 22 pupils were along to see the repairs being carried out by Alford Academy business partners Bert McIntosh Plant Hire. Work is being carried out to repair the damage done to the A93 just outside Ballater. The pupils, from S2-S6 were given a tour of the site by Bert himself, and civil engineers from Aberdeenshire Council spoke to the pupils about the work being carried out.
- Fairtrade staff event
- Holocaust Memorial Day led by pupil, an annual event.
- S3 pupils did a fund raising event by Guessing the Bunny's birthday.
- S3 pupils met with author Alan Bissett who read from his book, Boy Racers.
- A mock election was held on 10th March.
- Phi Day 11th March, an interdisciplinary event including Phi-lip, a robot created by Alford Academy Robotics club.
- Scottish Schools Ski Association (SSSA) races at the Lecht. Alford entered its first ever all female team (3 sisters from the Allan family) who went on to win the Female Team section.
- The Alford U15 Boys played in the Scottish Schools Cup final at Grangemouth. After a slow first quarter the team were down 17-5. The game stood at 24-16 at halftime. By the end of the

3rd quarter it was 39-34. A tense last quarter had the game finishing at 51-48 with Alford making a real push for the win. A fantastic game played in the right spirit with a very loud travelling support.

- Robert Gordon and Albyn Schools Invitational Cross Country event. E Calder, S2, won an individual silver medal in her event and the S2 team of E Calder, J Farquhar and B Stewart, secured a team bronze medal. A special mention to D Rae, S1, who finished 4th.
- Earth Hour- took place again this year. The ECO Group have also arranged for the school to sponsor an animal. Pupils chose a Hawksbill turtle.
- Sports Leaders organised an Inter-house Dodge Ball Event for S1 pupils as part of the S5/6 Sports Leaders programme. A great and very noisy event!
- S3s organised a fund raising event whereby teachers had wet sponges thrown at them
- Dee and Don Ceilidh Collective held a competition for the S1, 2, & 3 to design a logo for them. Prize winners received a meal for 2 and free entries to the ceilidhs
- The Young Philanthropist Initiative group organised a dress up/down day
- The S1 girls' netball team are winners of the active school netball tournament which took place in the beach ballroom in Aberdeen on Wed 30th March. 12 schools participated in this annual tournament with our Alford team beating Mintlaw Academy 12- 2 in the final.
- On Monday 14th March 2016, the school was visited by 3 STEM Ambassadors and a Computing Science professor, all of whom were available to talk to parents about careers and career pathways in STEM-related areas.
- A Performing Arts Evening was held with a very different format. Performers entertained in a variety of locations across the campus with tea served by Duke of Edinburgh pupils. Approximately 60 people attended

Ian Findlay asked if the school would be interested in holding Book Festivals.

Should the opportunity arise that authors were available and their books curriculum related, then there may be an interest.

5. Student Council partnership with Parent Council

One meeting have taken place in the last two months, more will be planned in the future and students will be made aware that the Parent Council can offer guidance as well as financial support. The protocol for the Student Council to access finances will be via a 'Funding form' which is approved by the Head Teacher.

Student Council leaders have worked very hard this session and are one example of the very high standard of pupil leadership. Application forms are now available to students should they wish to apply for the following positions:-

- Prefect
- Head boy
- Head girl
- Depute girl
- Depute boy

ACTION: David Wyllie to prepare a Request for Funding form for students.

6. Excursions

Further to the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels, foreign residential excursions have not been progressed. This decision was taken further to considering the educational outcomes for the excursions and risk assessments of travel arrangements and itineraries. Alternative plans for 'events'

are being considered. An expedition for summer 2017 is at this stage still being considered however no final decision has yet been made.

7. Website- launch and feedback

Shona Ogilvie kindly talked the Parent Council members through the Alford Academy web page. It is to be an informative site rather than a promotional one. Links and fields have been created based on the feed back from students and parents. There is a 'contact us' email system for queries, feedback and communication.

As this is new, some areas are still under construction; diary and logo layouts will change. The website will go live on Thursday 31st March and will be promoted to our school community early next term.

8. Curriculum update

Mrs Park is working on the new timetable. Good progress is being made.

9. Parental engagement-focus on learning

Work is continuing on resources which will support parents to support their children. For example useful links are being shared on the school blog.

A focus group will meet next term to discuss how to better support parents.

Pupils knowing about opportunities in school, was discussed. Feedback from parents suggested that some teachers were not reading the daily bulletin to students. Moira shared that the vision for the new campus was to share information on the 7 screens throughout the campus and to increase pupil responsibility to read them. To assist parents, it was suggested that daily information could be made available on the website/blog.

ACTION: Moira Milne to look into how to share daily information with parents.

10. Actively seeking views – feedback and next step

Again parents are sharing that the school could improve seeking parental views.

Moira shared her plan to again involve the Parent Forum in discussing school improvement. The format of Parent Forum events was discussed. Parent Council members suggested using a company such as tree of knowledge to facilitate these events.

What is the best way to involve parents? – Suggestions were to starting with brief presentations that progress into bigger sessions at careers information evenings.

A.O.C.B

Tara brought to our attention the 'Festival of Architecture'. This event takes place in Aberdeen during the month of April and will visit the rest of the Shire during the year.

For more information please visit www.foa2016.aberdeenarchitects.org or contact Catherine Mckeown - President ASA c.mckeown@bmjarchitects.co.uk

The date of the next council meeting follows a meeting for the new S1 parents, whose children are due to start in August 2016. To encourage new parents to join the Parent Council, a half hour meet and greet session between the two meetings will take place. David Wyllie will prepare an rsvp invitation for catering purposes.

ACTION: David Wyllie to prepare invitation

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm and Colin thanked everybody for coming.

Date of next meeting Tuesday 14th June 2016

ACTION POINTS

ACTION: Moira Milne will continue to investigate costs and benefits of homework app.

ACTION: Supporting learning –: 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: Moira Milne to find a solution to the games hall floor and the cost of bag racks.

ACTION: David Wyllie to prepare an invitation for the new S1 parents & a Request for Funding form for students.

ACTION: Moira Milne to look into how to share daily information with parents.

