

ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
Alford Academy
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Minutes
Wednesday 13th November 2019
Alford Academy
At 7pm

Chair: Ingrid Huldal (Vice-chair)
Minutes: Monica Milne (Secretary)
Present: Committee: Penny Fuller (S5), Sarah Lewis (S1, S3),
Nicola Sedgwick (S1, S4); Richard Stroud (Co-opted)
Other: Linda Purkis, Amy Wilson, Angela Findlay, Frank Sewell,
Gloria Malcolm, Louise Mitchell, Councillor Latham
Apologies: Committee: Colin Turnbull (Chair), Denise Smith (Treasurer),
Jane Veitch (S1, S3, S6)
Other: Petra Glennie, Jo Purkis Liz Strachan, Anne Glennie,
Fiona Mitchelhill,
In Attendance: Moira Milne (Head Teacher)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Ingrid welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies as above.

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

2.1 Bullying Policy - Mrs Lees emailed out a copy of the Draft Policy to the Parent Council Members asking for feedback and aimed to finish the policy by the October holidays:
Update: School received some feedback from parents following the last meeting; the Bullying Policy is now live and was sent out via the blog this week

2.2 Application for Grants – Denise Smith to update group on progress

Update: Denise Smith not present– item to be added to the next agenda

ACTION: Application for Grants – Denise Smith to update group on progress

2.3 “Inspire Young People” project. Group to report back on progress. Ingrid Huldal/Moira Milne/Colin Turnbull/Joe Purkis

Update – The team have had 5 completed Questionnaires which will be added to the Alumni data spreadsheet; the team felt the Questionnaires worked well; the project team will meet again to plan the next steps; Moira Milne advised that she has a group of senior boys who have volunteered to be involved with this Alumni Project; Moira suggested a joint meeting with the project parents and the pupils; the aim of the project is to create a database of former pupils who would want to work with the school to inspire pupils – eg a hall of fame type idea which has worked elsewhere; it is hoped that people on the Alumni will reach out to pupils for career advice/mentoring etc.

ACTION: Ingrid will arrange with Joe/Moira a time to come in to school to discuss with the pupils who have volunteered.

MINUTES: Proposed by Penny Fuller; Seconded by Louise Mitchell

3. Treasurer's report

Main Account £6500 (end September 2019); Denise (Treasurer) unable to attend this meeting – a report to be presented at the next meeting.

4. Head Teacher's report: School Improvement Update

Staffing Update:

- Physics – there were no applicants for the vacant Physics post; Moira reported that there are experienced specialist supply staff covering.
- Technical – Mr Eden is covering currently and this is working well.
- RMPS – a teacher is on Maternity Leave; a provisional appointment has been made.
- Maths – the school has increased the number of Maths' teachers; Mrs Warren is a new appointment and started on 30.9.19.
- Active Schools – Kerry Barlow is now back from maternity leave and is job sharing with Jennie Robertson and both are pro-active in their roles.

Other:

- YPI Launch – Young Philanthropist Initiative – this is sponsored by the Wood Foundation; the pupils involved put forward a proposal to bid for money for a project.
- MVP – Mentoring for Violence Prevention – some pupils have been trained up in Peer Education of younger pupils – the main message is 'don't be a bystander'; this is an ongoing project and is undertaken in the Skills Development lesson.
- Fresher's Fair – this was held for 1st Year Pupils – all the school clubs had a stand and it was well attended.
- House Assemblies – these are going well and are led by the House Captains.
- Health Awareness – there were staff v pupils football matches – both pupil teams won; it was great fun and helps to build positive relationships in school.
- An S2 pupil appeared in Countryfile recently – this was played at Assemblies prior to Children in Need this week with her parents' permission and it was felt to increase awareness through the S2 pupil's story.
- S2 Science classes had a successful visit to the Grampian Transport Museum.

- Sponsored Walk – this is the main annual fund raiser for the school and Moira reported a disappointing figure raised this year of £4962; the school role is currently 680 so this equates to around £7 raised per pupil; the bus costs still need to be paid out of this figure; the school plan to re-look at this activity – possibly do it every 2 years instead of annually. Fund raising teams (pupils and parents) will look for other ways to fund-raise for the extras that the pupils benefit from which are not covered by core school costs eg travel to activities.
- Horizons Fortnight – Future Pathways – careers’ talks were held at lunchtime (parent volunteers) which went well with good feedback.
- The U13 School Boys Football Team is doing well
- Northern Star Business Awards 2019 – Moira applied for this Award and was very pleased to get a Highly Commended for the ‘Mackie’s of Scotland and Alford Academy’ partnership work; this was held recently at P&J Live. This partnership supports learning about e.g. sustainability, product development and also work experience/Foundation Apprenticeship.
- There are 3 Alford Pupils in the North of Scotland Girls Football Squad.
- S2 Science Talk – Dr Jonathan Swindler from Heriot Watt University visited and delivered an interesting talk to S2 pupils.
- Careers Evening – this was a very successful evening where lots of companies/organizations attended; pupils were commended on their behavior by the visitors.
- Student Council – this is working well and has new members this year which includes boys.
- Belgium Music Trip – this was a great success; the Orchestra/Folk Band and Pipe Band held a concert/rehearsal on the Thursday evening before the trip which was well received; and the pipe-band wore their new kilt outfits for the first time. They all played at several venues with the pipe band also playing at the Menin Gate; the school have had positive feedback from 5 different sources saying how well behaved the pupils were on the trip.
- Mock Trials – a team went to the Aberdeen Sherriff Court to take part in Mock Trials. The Alford Team came 3rd overall.
- AFC Youth Academy – 2 pupils are now training with AFC.
- Armistice Day – the Rotary Interact Club organized this school event; the Flanders Field Poem was read out over the tannoys for everyone to hear.
- Nashville Visit – Moira and 2 colleagues undertook a recent Study Visit (Moira applied to go; this was funded by the Wood Foundation) to look at the Academies of Nashville. The Nashville schools worked with the local Chambers of Commerce and set up Career Academies in response to local industries’ feedback that school leavers were not necessarily work-ready for local job opportunities; the visitors attended workshops and a launch in the Nashville Music Centre about how the program had skilled up pupils in the area. They also visited schools - high Schools in USA are different – equivalent to our 3rd Year to 6th Year. Moira feels Alford Academy are on the right track with local initiatives, but more can be done. The Wood Foundation is also funding a Business Community Support Officer for each of the schools involved. The 4 local schools involved are Alford, Banff, Kemnay and Portlethen. This is an ongoing initiative and the next visit is to

Newcastle to find out more about how to provide “Project Based Education”. Then in February, they will visit Doncaster XP which is a new school.

5. Parent Council Sub-groups

The meeting members looked at the current Sub-groups to plan a way forward. As not all sub-group members were present, sub-groups were not finalized and this will need to be re-visited at the next meeting. It was felt that there was lack of clarity as to the role/function of some of the sub-groups and it would be helpful to know this before the next meeting; it is hoped that this may encourage other members to become involved.

Fundraising Group – David Wylie is no longer on the Parent Council which has left a gap as regards Fund-raising; Sarah McGregor has agreed to lead on Easy Fundraising; no-one present felt able at present to commit to being on this sub-group and there is a need to get more volunteers in order to take this sub-group forward; many members present said they would be willing to help the sub-group and lots of ideas were generated. Amy Wilson had said she would be willing to help with fund-raising but does not feel she has capacity currently to commit to the sub-group.

Parent Council-Pupil Partnership – Liz Strachan has stepped down from this group. Penny Fuller is happy to continue with this group, hopefully with ongoing support from Sarah McGregor who is also in this group.

Inspire Young People – Ingrid Huldal, Joe Purkis and Colin Turnbull will continue with this project.

Community Group Link: Additional support needs – Sheena Lawson and Rhona Stuart were previously on this group and we need to check if they still wish to be involved; Sarah Lewis has offered to join this group.

Volunteering – David Wylie & Sarah McGregor led on this group; it was agreed at the meeting that this sub-group could now close.

Community resources to enrich school education – Penny Fuller, Sarah McGregor & Nicola Sedgwick led on this group; it was agreed at the meeting that this sub-group could now close.

ACTION: Monica will email the members of each sub-group to check they still wish to be involved and to ask that the group members liaise with Moira Milne to agree a remit for each of the sub-groups which should then be written down and shared at the next meeting.

6. Parent Council Health Check

- This was postponed until the next meeting as there was no time to discuss this item

7. Other:

- **Litter in the village:** Nicola Sedgwick, who is also chair of the Community Council explained that a local “Litter Rep”, who is passionate about the issue, came to the Community Council meeting the previous evening to discuss the litter issue in the village; vandalism in the village was also discussed. It was agreed that Nicola would take this to Parents Council for further discussion. Moira gave an update – police have not been in contact with the school over the recent vandalism incident in the village; Moira is clear that it is a minority who are littering/vandalizing. Moira sends her assurance that school is taking this issue seriously. Her Senior Team are out and about aiming to be visible; staff and pupils have been out picking up litter. The

school have had an active Eco-group in the past and are restarting this as an active school group in the hope that peer pressure will help with this issue. Councillor Latham also gave an update. He remembers that Police have put in temporary CCTV in the past as a deterrent which was effective. He advised that Ailsa Cunningham, Landscape Advisor at the Council would be an important person to help with these issues. A parent suggested that sending out a positive message on the Blog about litter could be helpful. Using the Greta Thurberg/Environmental Impact was also discussed as a way of addressing the issue. Green Flag group – it was suggested that involving this group with the issue of littering may also be helpful. Moira feels there is a need to get the message out from out-with the school as this will be a more effective way of addressing the issue. The school is responsible for pupils during school hours and there are problems happening out-with school hours. It was agreed that Nicola Sedgwick in her role with the Community Council will contact Ailsa Cunningham (Landscape Advisor at Council) to see what else can be done; Councillor Latham will also discuss the issue at Council Level.

- **School transport** – some improvements since the beginning of term eg the pick-up's issue is resolved. Concern was voiced by one parent that this problem happens every year; Councillor Latham felt that the issue was worse this year as a new bus contractor had been appointed. One parent brought up the issue of unsafe crossings for pupils after coming off the school buses. It was agreed that Parents with concerns over the school transport can email the School with evidence and the school will pass on these concerns to the Council Transport Department, they can also contact the Transport Department directly and/or feedback concerns via the Parent Council.
- **Unsafe cycling on campus** – one parent reported hearing about a small child who had been knocked over by a cyclist on campus; she did not have exact details of when this happened; Moira advised that cycling is not allowed on campus; she also advised that there is no designated cycling entrance in to school. It was agreed that this was at odds with trying to get pupils more active.

ACTION: Councillor Latham will take this forward at the council aiming for enabling an environment conducive to safe and considerate cycling. In the meantime, Moira will reissue a message as regards cycling which is not currently allowed on campus.

- **Volunteering opportunity at Tullynessle Hall** – Gloria Malcolm advised that she had emailed the school asking about the possibility of a Duke of Edinburgh Volunteer to help with promoting the work of Tullynessle Hall; this email went to Guidance; she was asked to email again, and Moira will pass on to the DoE Team.
- **Fundraising Ideas** – There was lots of discussion as regards potential Fundraising ideas eg Duck Race (Midmar did it; also the Rotary do one); also Fashion Show a possibility; could use Lecture Theatre as a venue for a talk/event and sell tickets. However, it was agreed that we would need to establish a functioning fundraising sub-group in order to take any of these ideas forward.

AOB:

- Penny Fuller has received a letter from the Student Council asking for money for Xmas Lights for the School £40 – it was agreed to donate this money from the Parent Council.

8. Dates of next meeting

Tuesday 21st January 2020 7pm

Monday 16th March 2020 7pm

Tuesday 12th May 2020 7pm

Wednesday 17th June 2020 8pm

Close at 9.10 pm

ACTION POINTS:

ACTION: Application for Grants – Denise Smith to update group on progress.

ACTION: Ingrid will arrange with Joe/Moira a time to come to the school to discuss with the pupils who have volunteered.

ACTION: Sub-groups - Monica will email the members of each group to check they still wish to be involved and to ask that the group members liaise with Moira Milne to agree a remit for each of the sub-groups which should then be written down and shared at the next meeting.

ACTION: Litter in the Community:- The school will continue their focus on educating pupils and monitoring litter. Contacts with local Aberdeenshire Officers will be made to look into other potential strategies.

ACTION: Cycling on Campus - Councillor Latham will take this forward at the council aiming to enable an environment on campus conducive to safe and considerate cycling. In the meantime, Moira will reissue message as regards cycling which is not currently allowed on campus