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MINUTES OF THE ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 10th May 2023 (7.00 - 9.00 pm)
Virtual - via Teams link

Attendees

Office Bearers:	Ingrid Huldal (Chair), Joe Purkis (Depute-chair), Coralie Robertson (Secretary),
Parent Council Members:	Monica Iloya, Frank Sewell, Karen Leven, Tanya Viliene
Parent Forum:	Fay Mckay, Louise Mitchell, Linda Purkis, Fiona Woodhead, Amy Wilson
School Staff:	Mrs Angela Wotherspoon - Head Teacher Dr Matt Skellern - Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching) Mr Graham Scott - Depute Head Teacher (Pupil Support)
Councillors:	Cllr Sarah Brown, Cllr Jeff Goodhall, Cllr Gwyneth Petrie

1. Welcome & apologies

Apologies:

Dawn Brown (Treasurer), Charlotte Millburn, Sarah Lewis, Sharon Witherspoon, Fiona Henderson, Mr Stuart Cookson - Depute Head Teacher (Curriculum), Cllr Iris Walker

2. Review of previous meeting minutes and matters arising

- Minutes approved by Joe Purkis, seconded by Frank Sewell.
- Actions for Fundraising, Communications and Parent Council & Pupil Partnership sub-groups covered in item 4.
- Mrs Wotherspoon reminded staff to read out Daily Bulletin and this is now being done more than previously.
- Ingrid met with Mrs Wotherspoon to discuss the awards ceremony and covered in item 4.
- Charitable status will be covered in item 6.

3. Treasurer Report

Dawn is away travelling, and Ingrid is waiting for the bank to grant her access to internet banking, so a detailed Treasurer report will be provided at the next meeting.

A contribution for the awards ceremony, traditionally supported by the PC, was discussed at a meeting of the office bearers on 12th April. After considering previous year's contributions, it was agreed that the PC would contribute £1,800 for trophies and Amazon award vouchers with the rest of

the costs covered by the school. The office bearers felt this contribution would ensure there were enough funds for the PC to continue to support other areas of the school.

Post meeting update – Ingrid now has access to the PC bank account and provided the following updated bank information:

Outgoing – Library books donation – check cashed 24/4/23 £219.32 – Balance now £8280.25

Note to the accounts:

- £4027.32 is ring-fenced for the Outdoor Space Project
- £1800 to be paid to the Academy for the awards ceremony for 2022
- Balance once this is paid will be £6480.25
- Accessible balance = £2452.93

4. Sub-committee updates

FUNDRAISING

- Ingrid had a meeting with Mrs Wotherspoon in April, this meeting covered a number of different topics, one of which was to discuss working collaboratively with the school on fundraising. This would give the PC given opportunities to support school groups’ fundraising, such as the Eco Group’s Fashion Show, raising awareness of events amongst parents and the pupils to support some fundraising to contribute to PC funds.
- An application would be submitted for Marr Area funding.
- Tesco application was ongoing with more detailed information needing to be gathered, such as qualifying demand for the project and identifying benefits. Further work with the Student Council through the Parent Council & Pupil Partnership sub-group will support this.
- Looking at holding a race night mid-week in June at the Alford Golf Club with focus as a social event with some fundraising supported by sponsorship for raffle prizes. Thank you to Amy for offered to help organize the event.

Action

Submit application to Mar Area Funding	Fundraising sub-group
Submit a Tesco application for the Outdoor Space project	Fundraising sub-group
Details of Social Event to be passed to Amy	Ingrid

PARENT COUNCIL & PUPIL PARTNERSHIP

As many pupils on study leave, Frank met with Stuart for an update on areas of focus:

- Use of enclosed garden for outdoor study/work, perhaps pupils should consider a survey about how the space may be best used.
- Multi-use outside furniture, consider seating around basketball area and other areas of focus.
- Canopy for shading areas.
- Discussed support/guidance for pupils to develop a ‘dossier’ of options to support offers of funding.
- Stuart will approach pupils for further discussion after the exam period.
- Include new S1s with Student Council and voting on outdoor space equipment.

Action

Arrange meeting with Student Council	Parent Council & Pupil Partnership sub-group
Discuss installation and maintenance of outdoor equipment with Business Manager	Coralie

HORIZONS

No update due to study leave.

COMMUNITY GROUP LINK: ASN

No update due to study leave.

Asked Mr Scott how the school can support this group and engage parents.

Action

Mr Scott to advise how school can support Community Group Link: ASN sub-group.	Mr Scott
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COMMUNICATION

PC web pages now have drop down menu with different pages making it more accessible and clearer to navigate. Will work on rewriting some of the text and adding photos.

Action

Re-write some sections to make it friendlier and add pictures.	Communication sub-group
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5. Head update

- A group of HND Music students from NESCOL performed for S3 Music and Music Technology, National 5 and Higher Music pupils in addition to a couple of CLANS. Dr Paul Tierney from Aberdeen College spoke to the pupils about the Music and Music Technology courses on offer at NESCOL.
- The 2023 Alford Academy Performing Arts Showcase debuted this year to an estimated 300 people with performances in different parts of the building. Young Musician of the Year, last held in 2019, with the newest Young Musician winners, Stuart and James. Stuart won the competition with his self-written song, "Lucy's Song and James won runner up with his excellent skills on the piano.
- Pupils made use of microscopes donated by Neptune Energy in several projects in the Science Faculty.
- The Eco-group ran a Fairtrade Fashion Show and Fair promoting Fairtrade products, especially clothing and the issue with fast fashion and cotton production in developing countries. The Show also helped to promote a new scheme where donations of formal wear have been given to the school and these can be borrowed by any school pupils for any occasion within or outside school.
- S1 pupils took part in a Land-Based Careers event facilitated by Countryside Learning Scotland to introduce pupils to the diversity of rural careers by hearing from those who work in rural industries.

- A health and wellbeing family learning event with a focus on supporting S3-6s preparing for their SQA exams took place in mid-March. Four workshops focused on resilient thinking skills, healthy food choices, sleep and anxiety management and nutrition and exercise.
- British Science week, in the Science Faculty S1s were asked to make a diorama of an ecosystem.
- As part of the Foundation Apprenticeship Automotive course the pupils built kit cars at the Transport Museum, also driving them round the track to find the best lap time.
- The Eco Group had a visit from Aileen Salway, NE Scotland Biological Records Centre, talking about recording sightings of animals and donating a camera trap for them to monitor the biodiversity in the school grounds.
- On the S6s last day they enjoyed a breakfast, playing football and rounders along with a BBQ.
- Alford Golf Club are increasingly working with pupils on areas in admin, advertising, social media and hospitality helping with pupil's skills and confidence.
- The recent Business Breakfast with school partners was an opportunity to ask partners to share a video on how to support pupils into work and to make learning in the classroom relevant for work, using the Meta Skills and School Leaver Profile as a framework.
- Mrs Wotherspoon carried out presentation of the Performance Review with staff and all Faculty Heads.
- As part of the work of the behaviour group, we are looking at SEEMIS to log behaviour, the behaviour/relationships policy and how to communicate pupil's information to staff.
- We will be looking at calendar for staff for dates such as parents evenings.
- Work being done on activities days week commencing 22 May.
- New timetable starts on 29 May for S1-3 moving up a year and new S5/6 on Wednesday that week, we will communicate this to parents/carers later this week.
- Pupil Senior Executive interviews on 1 Jun with 10 applicants.
- Awards ceremony 27 Jun (previous S1-3) and 28 Jun (previous S4-6).
- Pupils will be taking part in Junior Rangers week next week.
- Link day for new P7s and link week commencing 12 Jun with P7 parents invited before the PC meeting on 14 Jun.
- Blazer fitting for senior pupils on 15 Jun.

Staffing:

- Probation teacher in P.E. will be permanent appointment from August.
- Recruited 2 part-time staff (equivalent to one full-time) for literacy and numeracy for S1-3 and one-to-one teaching.
- Mrs Hall, previously acting, is now permanent member of guidance staff. Will need to recruit acting post to cover her maternity leave.
- Maternity leave will be covered in Science.
- One year post being advertised to cover long term sick in Maths.
- Post being advertised in Business for staff moving on.

Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching) update

- Looking at SQA exams and other deadlines; exams halfway through and running smoothly.
- Staff deadlines for unit assessments.
- Learning and teaching group meeting to look at next year's priorities – observation lessons (not been able to observe each other teach due to Covid) what we want Alford Academy lessons to look like so pupils have a set format, working with behaviour group on expectation and Aberdeenshire Learning Framework.
- Professional learning developing online hub for staff to access SQA and Aberdeenshire courses.
- World Education Summit – staff to have access for a year.
- Looking at report schedule and would also like three parents of S1-3 to provide feedback on reports. Parents volunteering: Linda, Ingrid, Tanya, Coralie.
- Looking at information leaflet and evening for informing parents about additional assessment arrangements for exams.
- Hoodies and yearbook organised for S6s.

Action

Pass contact details of parents for reports feedback to Mr Skellern	Coralie
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Depute Head Teacher (Curriculum) update

(provided by Mrs Wotherspoon)

- Mr Cookson has been focussing on Timetabling with there being a lot of work to fit course choices with staffing.
- Mrs Wotherspoon and Mr Cookson with be giving a presentation on Alford Academy's School Leaver Profile at an event in Aberdeen on 25/5/23.
- Two staff have recently visited the XP school in Doncaster as part of the Exceleerate program looking at the relevance of classroom practice to the workplace. .
- Business breakfast – asked partners what skills would look like in their industry and how they can be introduced in school.
- Number of pupils taking Foundation Apprenticeships grown to 66 this year and will be 96 in new timetable giving pupils the opportunity of work experience.
- Next year offering Level 6 Engineering Apprenticeship (equivalent to Higher) over 2 years with support from Dundee and Angus College.
- Discussed Foundation Apprenticeships and asked for more information for parents and how it enhances pupils' pathways both for work or further study.

Action

Review information about Foundation Apprenticeships on school website	Mr Cookson
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Depute Head Teacher (Pupil Support) update

- First full year of in-person parents evenings with ongoing feedback to plan for next year.
- Graham has been focussing on P7 transition, working with cluster Heads, we have started the extended transition programme and had Tree of Knowledge day before Easter.
- Graham has also been working on programme for P7 Link Day on 19 May with opportunities to meet Guidance teachers, tour of school, P.E. activities and science experiments.
- Current P7 Intake is 142 (20 more than last year), now sorting pupils into Houses.

6. Parent Council charitable status

- Officer bearers had a meeting to discuss Parent Council becoming a charity in the form of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).
- Dawn Brown's role for the last ten years is in community development and to support charities and, as an office bearer, can bring her experience to PC.
- Officer bearers agreed that charitable status would be a good way forward to access additional funding not currently available to PC without becoming a SCIO.
- 3 officer bearers would become trustees and as first trustees would be checked by Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), subsequent trustees would not require this as will be elected internally.
- SCIO 2 tier option will be similar to current organisation of PC.
- With charitable status PC can use gift aid which would need to be tracked financially.
- Other PCs have become SCIOs.
- Charitable status will be voted on by PC members at the meeting on 14th June.

Action

Send out information about change to charitable status	Coralie
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7. AOB

7.1. Exams (return to pre-pandemic norms)

- Exams return to pre-pandemic with coursework put back in, e.g. science subjects will include coursework assessment.
- Discussed with Faculty Head with impact on planning.

7.2. Homework

- Discussion of S1-3 not had much homework.
- School revisiting homework policy, looking at what homework should look like and the link with home learning and homework.
- Research shows homework doesn't add much value.
- Can connect parents with schoolwork but needs to be managed and coordinated.
- Look at how to support parents so they can support homework.

Action

Additional discussion with parents regarding home learning/homework	Mrs Wotherspoon
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- PC communications:
PC sent out welcome letter to P7 parents via primary schools.
Plan to have PC representatives at parents evenings.
- Cllr Goodhall asked how can you tell the standards pupils in small primary schools reach compared with larger primaries?
- Mrs Wotherspoon advised that information is available from test results during primary school using National Standardized Assessments.
- Is it possible to assess how Covid has affected different years?
National Standardized Assessments showing some pupils with good attainment, but some struggled. Addressed through way teaching delivered, using technology in classrooms and consolidating learning at home.
Some years not had social experiences and trying to overcome this by offering activities days, Christmas dance. Shine report results suggest a more prominent effect on S3 pupils, particularly in areas of confident within the girls. S2 also impacted by lack of social engagement and inability to have link weeks and combined school activities. School activity trips and events will hopefully have a positive impact on this, will review in future Shine survey reports.
- Has the school reviewed the number of subject choices available in S3 since the number of subjects were reduced?
Performance review has showed that there has been greater attainment with the narrowing of choice at Broad General Education (BGE).

Action

Look at the number of subjects offered for S3	Mr Cookson
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Date of next meeting15th May (Monday) - EGM14th June 2023 (Wednesday) – P7 Parent Welcome

Dates of meetings in 2023/2024 dates TBC

Parent Council Members 2022 - 2023 (Quorum 6):

Karen Leven	(S1)
Tanya Viliene	(S1)
Dawn Brown (Treasurer)	(S2)
Lucy Greene	(S2)
Sharon Witherspoon	(S3)
Coralie Robertson (Secretary)	(S3)
Fiona Henderson	(S3, S1)
Joe Purkis (Depute Chair)	(S4)
Monica Iloya	(S4)
Sarah Lewis	(S4, S2)
Frank Sewell	(S5, S4, S2)
Donna Gray	(S5, S3, S2)
Denise Smith	(S6, S4)
Ingrid Huldal (Chair)	(S6, S1)
Charlotte Milburn	(S6, S2)

Parent Council Sub-committee Members 2022-2023:

Fundraising	Ingrid Huldal, Grainne Paton, Coralie Robertson, Dawn Brown
Parent Council-Pupil Partnership	Frank Sewell, Coralie Robertson
Community Group Link: Additional Support Needs	Rhona Stuart, Donna Gray, Lisa Moir
Horizons	Joe Purkis, Lisa Moir, Jan Whitfield, John Whitfield
Communication	Charlotte Millburn, Dawn Brown