



<https://alfordacademy.edublogs.org/parent-council>  
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## **MINUTES OF THE ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 (7.00 – 9.00 pm)  
Virtual - via Teams link only

### **Attendees**

Office Bearers: Dawn Brown (Chair), Joe Purkis (Depute-chair), Coralie Robertson (Secretary).  
Parent Council Members: Monica Iloya, Sharon Witherspoon, Tanya Viliene, Linda Purkis, Amy Wilson, Frank Sewell, Karen Leven, Sarah Lewis.  
Parent Forum: Elizabeth Lyon, Fiona Henderson.  
School Staff: Mrs Angela Wotherspoon - Head Teacher.  
Dr Matt Skellern - Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching).  
Mr Graham Scott - Depute Head Teacher (Pupil Support).  
Mr Stuart Cookson - Depute Head Teacher (Curriculum).  
Councillors: Cllr Iris Walker.

### **1. Welcome & apologies**

Apologies:

Parent Council members: Ingrid Huldal (Treasurer), Charlotte Millburn.  
Additionally: Jo Bagguley, Cllr Sarah Brown.

### **2. Review of previous meeting minutes and matters arising**

- Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> November approved by Joe Purkis, seconded by Monica Iloya.
- Matters arising are covered in the agenda items.

### **3. Treasurer's report**

Balance as of 21st January = £5,536.51

Last meeting changes:

Income: none

Outgoings: none

Pending: £417.00 for U15 Girls football kit  
£200.00 school library donation

Reminder: a total of £4027.32 is ringfenced from Co-op Outdoor Space project

Actual projected balance is £892.19

Note: Awaiting payment of Aberdeenshire Council funding

## Action

Donation for school library	Ingrid
Basketball Club asked for more details to consider donation	Ingrid
Arrange thank you gift for auditing accounts	Coralie

## 4. Sub-committee updates

### FUNDRAISING

- Social fundraiser – Race night
  - Venue – Golf Club (no fee, bar profits go to Golf Club)
  - Agreed Date – Friday 22nd March, 7pm to midnight incl setting up
  - Race night host - Chay Spence
  - Capacity – 60 or more
  - Possible food option included in ticket – pie, pint & first bet?
  - Alcohol license £10
  - Volunteers needed - 2 people to move horse, 3 people to take bets on 6 horses
  - How to sell tickets?
  - Advertising event & ticket sales – volunteers for poster design, printing
- Thanks to Dianne Forbes for her help and advice on running a race night.

### PARENT COUNCIL & PUPIL PARTNERSHIP

- Discussions about Outdoor Space project ongoing.

FAMILY LINK - No update.

HORIZONS - No update.

## 5. Head update

- TED Talk, Red Dot Day for Academy pupil. One of the 5<sup>th</sup> year pupils recently completed her own TED Talk on “Underappreciated women in STEM” as one of only 12 pupils picked from Aberdeenshire. TEDs mission is to inspire, educate and share ideas worth spreading.
- The Faculty of Science Logo competition was won by an S2 pupil with a logo that perfectly links Biology, Chemistry and Physics with the Alford Academy crest. The logo will now be used throughout the faculty.
- See Me See Change, staff and young people who have been trained to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination in our school have met to collaborate on the school action plan.
- BEBRAS UK Computing Challenge, 65 Certificates of Distinction, 58 Certificates of Merit and 111 Certificates of Participation were issued and students have been invited to enter the Oxford University Computing Challenge in January 2024.
- Minecraft Santa’s Challenge Computing Challenge, 35 teams from Business and Digital Education S1 to S3 took part in this competition from the Lovelearning Team. They had to design a new workshop for Santa with a defined criteria within a 2 minute recording.
- Christmas RGU Computing Trip, held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December with 65 pupils from the Business and Digital Education attending The School of Computing at Robert Gordon University to learn about subjects such as hacking, why computers are not all smart and AI. The pupils were a credit to the Academy.
- Writefest 2023, during November 2023, the Institute for Academic Development run WriteFest with the aim of bringing people together to raise awareness and celebrate academic writing.
- Study and Organisation Christmas Fair, S2 pupils held a successful fair.
- Community Café, the community café was popular and raised £60.

- Rotary Shoebox Appeal, 30 boxes were filled and sent abroad.
- Christmas Celebration and Review of 2023, previously called the Christmas Concert has become this new event which included the Orchestra, Folk Band, Drama Club's interpretation of A Christmas Carol, Vocal Group, Pipe Band, Gemma Glennie & the Kitchen Appliances, S3 Music, Fiddle Trio and Higher Music.
- Festive Service, with the school Chaplains.
- Festive Messages, messages were placed in the window of Alford Coop.
- Festive Support, care packages distributed to families before Christmas.
- The Pipe Band performed in support of the Red Hot Chilli Pipers at Aberdeen Music Hall.
- Prelims, are in progress with some disruption caused by the weather conditions. The invigilators have praised the pupils for their good behaviour.
- Staffing:
  - o Additional teaching staffing for Numeracy and RME have been appointed.
  - o Principal Teacher vacancy to hopefully be resolved for the Maths Department by Easter.
  - o Mr. Mayo has been appointed as Principal Teacher of PE & Health.

### **Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching) update**

- Prelims are going well.
- Invigilators impressed with behaviour.
- Tracking and mentoring for S4 onwards with report and feedback coming and discussion on the next steps.
- The Family Learning held before the prelims will be repeated before the exams.
- Progress will be reviewed to ensure pupils are at the correct level for exams.
- Alford Academy Lessons framework shared to show what lessons look like, Principles working with staff to implement this model.
- S2 reports coming this week, a further review will be conducted on the development of the reports with the same group that helped last time.
- British Science Week, from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of March will be exploring the theme of Time.

### **Depute Head Teacher (Curriculum) update**

- Working on course choices for next year, forms are made, working with colleges for their input.
- Seniors course choice evening on 7<sup>th</sup> February and S2 on 27<sup>th</sup> February.
- Career Fair on 15<sup>th</sup> February 6 to 8pm, leaflet going out tomorrow, invites will be sent to all including Primary and local community. Last year resulted in several apprenticeships.
- 27<sup>th</sup> January is Holocaust Memorial Day with a display in the library.

### **Depute Head Teacher (Pupil Support) update**

- S2 Parents evening on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February.
- S3 Parents evening in early March.
- Booking system about to go live.
- P7 transition has started.
- Information shared with Primaries and early information being gathered.
- Nurture training for some staff who will train others, Nurture room to be established for breakfast club. Policies and eligibility to be established. Room to provide quite space, time and attention.

## **6. Teacher shortages in Aberdeenshire**

- AW discussed article in the P&J, although factually correct there was no mention of the hard work the teachers put in and how the school is doing everything within its powers. AW commended staff for ensuring pupils were taught Maths and look forward to positive communication of progress on appointment of Principal teacher of Maths.
- The question was asked as to how the teacher recall during secondment works. AW answered it is a negotiation between the 2 Head Teachers, if it is considered business critical teachers can be recalled.

## **7. School Improvement Plan**

- This is currently available on School Website.
- Has been reviewed today by SLT and pleased with progress.
- Will be updated to show progress showing red, amber and green for progress and put out to parents, within the next week or so.
- Appreciated support from PC taking forward several areas e.g. uniform survey and reports.
- Reviewing mobile phone policy with behaviour group and welcome PC involvement. CR & JP volunteered.

## **8. AOB**

### **8.1 PSE**

- Communication to parents on sensitive topics in PSE agreed by GS, with the understanding that the curriculum is fluid and may change. Generally subject built up through the years to give more detail.

### **8.2 Questions raised**

- Home Learning on closed days. AW said decision to close school not taken lightly. Support for home learning is in place and the expectation is that pupils complete home learning with consideration to environmental conditions such as technology and power cuts. Will discuss with teachers as they should have this expectation and include expectation on adverse weather notice.
- The question was asked about extending the prelims further due to rescheduling for closed day to allow more time to study and spread-out exams. AW answered it is a balance and the school does not want to eat into teaching time. MS added the SQA exams can be day after day and agreed they want to get everyone back as soon as possible.
- Funding for the Race Night was requested, this will be reviewed. Extra help for the Race Night was requested, another email will be sent out. KL volunteered to help.

## **9. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 13th March 2024

## Parent Council meeting dates (2023/2024)

Tuesday 19th September 2023 – AGM & first PC meeting

Wednesday 22nd November 2023

Tuesday 23rd January 2024

Wednesday 13th March 2024

Tuesday 14th May 2024

Wednesday 19th June 2024 (P7 parents welcome evening)

## Parent Council Members 2023/2024 (Quorum 6):

Nicola	(S1)
Tanya Viliene	(S2)
Ingrid Huldal (Treasurer)	(S2)
Dawn Brown (Chair)	(S3)
Charlotte Milburn	(S3)
Sarah Lewis	(S5, S3)
Sharon Witherspoon	(S4)
Coralie Robertson (Secretary)	(S4)
Donna Gray	(S4, S3)
Linda Purkis	(S5, S3)
Monica Iloya	(S5)
Amy Wilson	(S5, S1)
Joe Purkis (Depute Chair)	(S5, S3)
Frank Sewell	(S6, S5, S3)

## Parent Council Sub-committee Members 2023-2024:

Fundraising	Amy Wilson, Sharon Witherspoon, Coralie Robertson, Dawn Brown
Parent Council-Pupil Partnership	Frank Sewell, Coralie Robertson
Family Learning	Ingrid Huldal, Dawn Brown
Horizons	Monica Iloya
Communication	Charlotte Millburn, Dawn Brown