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## **MINUTES OF ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025

### **Attendees**

Office Bearers: Dawn Brown (Chair), Joe Purkis (Depute-chair), Coralie Robertson (Secretary)  
PC Members: Linda Purkis, Tanya Viliene, Karen Leven,  
Parent Forum: Crystal Anderson, Anne-Marie Little, Ian Forbes  
School Staff: Mrs Angela Wotherspoon - Head Teacher  
Dr Matt Skellern - Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching)  
Mr Stuart Cookson (Depute Head Teacher – Curriculum)  
Mr Graham Scott - Depute Head Teacher (Pupil Support)  
Councillors: Cllr Goodhall, Cllr Kloppert, Cllr McKail, Cllr Walker

### **Apologies**

PC members: Suvidha Narayanan (Treasurer), Charlotte Milburn, Rowena Ruden, Lindsey Duncan, Emyr Bell, Ingrid Huldal  
Councillors: Cllr Brown, Cllr Blackett

### **1. Review of previous minutes and matters arising**

- Apologies for late circulation of minutes.
- Previous minutes proposed by Crystal Anderson and seconded by Dawn Brown.
- Following the AGM RR has had to step back from the Treasurer role and SN has put herself forward.
- Funds being held on behalf of Together for Teens to be transferred out of PC account asap (agreement no longer required).
- All PC members are Trustees and covered through Trustee indemnity insurance – 3 quotes obtained, insured through Markel for £62.72 for Trustee indemnity insurance and Professional indemnity insurance. Accident Log book required for insurance.
- Public liability insurance and Employers insurance (including volunteers) provided by Zurich and paid for by Aberdeenshire Council.
- Required to provide register of Trustees – info will be recorded and kept securely for 6 years.

#### **Actions carried forward:**

- Small group of parents to work with Student Council and SLT to review PC funding for Awards Ceremony (JP).
- Produce a Risk Register for PVG (DB).
- Send out survey to parents on PC communications (DB & CM).
- Request to the community to support curriculum resource. AW happy for this to be done - will check wording (AW & CR).



- Provide Register of Trustees (CR)
- Provide Accident Log book (CR)

## 2. Treasurer's report

<b>Balance as of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025</b>	<b>£9684.26</b>
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Income	£0.00
Outgoings	£0.00

<b>*Balance after ringfenced projects</b>	<b>£3,906.94</b>
<b>*Ringfenced projects:</b>	
£4,027.32 Co-op funding for Outdoor Space project	
£1,700 Together for Teens	

Funding requests:

Arts and Craft/ Baking/Graphics and Character Design clubs - £164.85

- Funding for resources for lunchtime clubs to be run by senior pupils. Pupils benefit from the clubs and senior pupils gain their Leadership Award.

Outdoor learning materials - £100

- Kelly kettle, wood carving knife and para cord to support pupil's outdoor learning.

Outdoor Space Project

- S3 project-based learning to improve outdoor space.
- Shared pupil's plans for area outside canteen.
- Canopy for outside cover and outdoor seating.
- Create space to encourage pupils outside and outdoor learning.
- Supported by school to make the most of funding as costs for delivery and installation by external companies very expensive.
- Funds raised through community via Co-op.
- Project can be funded up to £5,000. PC will look at additional funding through grants.

PC members agreed to support the school with the following funds:

- Arts and Craft/ Baking/Graphics and Character Design clubs - £164.85
- Outdoor learning materials - £100
- Outdoor Space project (Co-op ringfenced funds) - £4,027.32

Action:

Look at grants for additional £972.68 for Outdoor Space project (CR).

### 3. Winter Food Support for Families Receiving PEF Assistance

- Funding to provide bags of essential food staples to school families who currently receive Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) support.
- Support around 40 families with a food bag each month over 5 months of winter. Each bag contains a selection of staple items costing about £20.
- Question raised about Government supporting families. Government provides support to certain pupils, but many families still struggling.
- School provides toast with ASDA funding and supports school uniform and the community larder.
- DB agreed to contact other PCs and local MSPs to raise concern of schools and PC funding 'plugging gaps'.
- PC Members approved funding request of £2,000 for winter food support for families.
- Question raised about PC contact with other schools. Close contact with other PC Chairs of 17 Aberdeenshire Academies.

Action:

Contact other Academy PCs and MSPs about funding to support pupils and families in need (DB).

### 4. Sub-committee updates

Fundraising

- After supporting school funding request PC account balance approx. £1,600.
- Consider further funding requests before future fundraising to ensure this is focused.
- School lottery reviewed at next meeting.

Communications

- RR joined the Communications sub-committee.

Actions:

Review need for fundraising and option of school lottery (CR).

### 5. Head update (Mrs Wotherspoon)

- School opened to community for 10 year anniversary.
- S1 parents evening – parents invited to tour the school, including displays from the old school.
- AH evening – presented to the cohort and received well.
- Bronze awards for Rights Respecting School – great success from pupils who lead this project
- Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) Bronze Ambassador Award.
- Horizons – S5/6 mock interviews.
- Higher History – trip to Stirling
- Horizons – Tuesday speaking to Seniors.
- Aberdeen Football Club – Mindset – Day spent with the pupils and staff. A chance to hold the Cup trophy!
- SQA assembly.
- Remembrance Day – pupils read poems linked to the war. Tony Walsh (poet) shared the poem for the school to use. Pupils accompanied by a piper to the village. Some pupils given permission to attend school in their military uniforms to honour Remembrance Day.
- Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) final – groups presentations were impressive. The winning group was for local asthma charity which will be awarded £3,000.
- S2 Sector Awareness Days – scientific focus.

- Children in Need – great costumes from pupils and Seniors dressed as British icons. Lunch challenge of the Dr Cs. £300 raised for Children in Need.
- S6 raised concerns about Study spaces. Met with SLT to discuss what could be done to support them. Library being used for study to counter the disruption caused by some pupils around the open spaces/corridors. Pupils are welcome to come in to study during Prelims but space is limited especially as many areas used to accommodate exam Additional Assessment Arrangements.
- Teaching long service – number of teachers recognised for long service to the Authority.

#### Staffing:

- Currently no teaching vacancies in the school.

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

- S2 reports completed and will be shared with parents.
- S3 Scottish National Standardised Assessment (SNSA) this week provides information for teachers on how well children are doing in literacy and numeracy and to help guide learning and teaching. The assessments are also designed to produce national-level information about children and young people's progress for teachers' use in school and the Scottish Government at national level.
- Tracking system is being used to support pupils progress and any interventions that may be required.
- SCQF Bronze awards – support for youngsters to deliver assemblies.
- Prelim preparations:
  - o Transition for invigilators with change to those who are organising (chief invigilators).
  - o 10 interviews next week to provide more capacity.
  - o Prelim/study leave 8<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan. Timetables shared by end of the week with links to support study and maintaining mental health.
- Additional Assessment Arrangement (AAA)s – letters going out to parents for those who require Assessment Arrangements for Prelims/exams – individual timetables will be shared.
- Study Leave time reduced to 2 weeks this year to allow quicker return to teaching. For this some subjects undertake internal assessments before the Christmas break.
- QUAD schools (Westhill, Banchory and Aboyne) – first joint in-service day at Alford with focus on moderation in the Broad General Education (S1-S3).

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

- Residential trips already out to parents for consideration.
- Day trips – pupils will find out tomorrow.
- Payment plans will be set up for Feb onwards with online through iPayment.
- Foundation apprenticeships – work placements for pupils across Aberdeen & Shire with new companies and industries.
- Hospitality - pupils working with local businesses including Country Flavours and Chloes and complimented on their work by staff and local community.
- Opportunities for pupils to work with nursery/primary school
- School recognising pupils involved in extracurricular activities through awarding House points.
- Sector awareness days for S2 pupils to choose sector for project-based learning in S3.
- S6 Horizons - Driving Experience with Police Scotland to identify the hazards of driving. Further session with Police Scotland will also discuss keeping safe when out.

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

- Parents Evenings – S1 October and S2 last week (72% attendance). S5/6 next week.
- Guidance team available different evening with 10 min online appointment – trialling this format.
- Mike Scotland gave assembly on mental health. Returning Wednesday for a community event supported by Together for Teens.
- Planning with Cluster for Transition for next session.

## 6. SQA Results

- Key measures – pupils in S4 achieving 5 or more Level 5 qualifications. 70% Alford Academy pupils attained this level of qualifications.
- National Progression Awards and Foundation Apprenticeships are at Level 6 and are accepted in place of Highers at further education - parents/pupils must check the requirements for specific courses.
- Alford is seeing great progress and success with the Foundation Apprenticeships.
- AW – referred to support offered in school by staff and how support is delivered through, for example, study sessions.
- 3 or more qualifications at Level 6 – AW advised the percentage figures as based on the school role in S4. Alford Academy pupils above Aberdeenshire Council and national levels.
- 5+ - Alford Academy pupils above Aberdeenshire Council and national levels although below where the school was in the previous session.
- Numeracy at Level 5 for S4 – this year the school has made improvements from last session but is not yet at the same level as the Aberdeenshire Council and national levels. Maths is now fully staffed.
- The tracker should allow staff to highlight pupils that may need intervention.
- Literacy at Level 5 for S4 – below the National and par with Aberdeenshire Council. Improved from last session. Tracker will support in identifying the pupils to be offered L5 Literacy.
- 8 subjects at National 5 with percentage of pupils with A-C above national results – e.g. Apps Maths, Business, Chemistry, English.
- 10 subjects at Higher with percentage of pupils with A-C above national results - 100% pupils in Higher Admin achieving A-C.
- Alford Academy offers many opportunities for AH subjects and pupils perform well.
- AW talked about range of needs to support young people to achieve and English and Maths are now fully staffed.

## 7. AOB

### Mobile phones

- Question through the Aberdeenshire Academy Chairs regarding any policy changes.
- Recent meetings with staff to discuss any issues.
- Consultation would be required if school decide to 'ban' mobile phones.
- Concerns regarding costs associated with pouches and security of pupils' property.
- Highlighted that the mobile phone issues seen in school often arise from mobile phone use at home.
- Not possible for Aberdeenshire Council to tell schools to take a position on mobile phones as this is devolved directly to schools from Scottish Government.

### Toilets

- Following change to legislation, school is working to find a solution to the mixed toilets in the school which will be communicated with parents as soon as possible.

## 8. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 21st January 2026 (online only)

**PC meeting dates 2025/2026:**

Tuesday 23rd September (AGM)  
Monday 17th November 2025  
Wednesday 21st January 2026 (online only)  
Monday 16th March 2026  
Tuesday 16th June 2026 (P7 parents welcome meeting)

**Parent Council Members 2025/26 (Quorum 6):**

Lindsey Duncan (S1)  
Suvidha Narayanan (S2)  
Rowena Ruden (S2)  
Emyr Bell  
Crystal Anderson  
Tanya Viliene (S4)  
Ingrid Huldal (S4, S2)  
Dawn Brown (S5)  
Charlotte Milburn (S5)  
Nicole Scherer-Dickson (S6, S2)  
Linda Purkis (S5)  
Joe Purkis (S5)  
Frank Sewell (S5)  
Coralie Robertson (S6)