

ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
Alford Academy
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MINUTES

Monday 18th January 2021

Virtual Meeting (Covid-19 Pandemic)

7pm – 9pm

1. Chair: Ingrid Huldal (Chair)
2. Minutes: Monica Iloya (Secretary)
3. Present:
Committee: Denise Smith; Joe Purkis; Penny Fuller; Coralie Robertson; Frank Sewell
Other: A Lyon; Colin Crombie; Fiona Parsons; Linda Purkis; Amanda Reid; Amy Wilson; Louise Mitchell; Isla Witherspoon
4. Apologies:
Committee: Sarah Lewis, Fiona Mitchelhill
Other: Ishbel Mollison
5. In Attendance: Senior School Team:
Moira Milne (Head Teacher); Lisa Lees (Depute Head Teacher); Stuart Cookson (Depute Head Teacher); Struan Gardner (Depute Head Teacher)
6. **Welcome and Apologies**
Ingrid welcomed everyone and Monica read out the apologies.
7. **Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**
The minutes were reviewed and agreed. Monica will change Ishbel Mollison's apology from 'Committee' to 'other'. Proposed: Joe Purkis; Second: Denise Smith

1. ACTION:

Denise to contact Aberdeenshire Council re the Parent Council Funding for this year and last year.

Update: Denise has submitted forms and payment for 2018/2019 is awaited. The 2020 funding has now been paid-in to the account.

2. ACTION:

Cycling on Campus - Councillor Latham will feedback on outcome of his communication at the council as regards this issue; Ingrid is going to chase up

Update: None but not relevant currently

3. ACTION:

Any parent council member interested in helping with the Parent Information Leaflet (Positive Relationships Policy) to get in touch with Mrs Lees direct or via Monica on the Parent Council email.

Update: Donna Gray and Ingrid Huldal have volunteered to help

4. **ACTION:** Partnership Working – if anyone interested in getting involved with Partnership working, please get in touch with Stuart Cookson or email Monica via Parent Council email address.

Update: No update

8. Treasurer's Annual Report

Bank account balance £2682.17

Money Awaited £914 (from council)

Easyfundraising £17.83 due to come in; Top 3 Easyfundraisers last year – Ingrid, Sarahm & Penny

Parent Council wish to encourage more parents to sign up for Easyfundraising.

9. School Updates

Head Teacher Update – Mrs Milne:

Staffing – New posts:

- Shona Bertrin – new Business teacher (started but working remotely)
- Gillian Mathewson – new Principal Teacher of Maths
- Jo Munro - 0.4 FTE Equity & Excellence
- Paul Walker 0.2 Pedagogy (Learning and Teaching)
- Lynne Gillan 0.2 Partnerships & Pathways

Teacher Vacancies – Technical(on-going) and ASL

School Activities/Highlights:

- Ex-pupil – made his AFC Debut
- Build Your Future construction challenge – S2s – Alford Team through to the final (this is being rearranged due to lockdown restrictions)
- S1 Pupil – Animal Hero Award for fundraising for Guide Dogs
- Rotary Interact Club – thriving club involved with fundraising eg cash for kids; food banks; await total amount raised
- Snowman Coding Competition for S1 & S2s with RGU
- S1 & S3 – messages of thanks for the community – displayed in Coop and in school
- Jo Munro – obtained £1685.35 from the Community Food Group for Christmas Hampers
- Advent Calendar House Challenge – Craigievar ahead at the moment; aiming to keep house competitions going during lockdown.
- End of Term Assembly & Quiz.
- All change again as we are back in lockdown due to the Covid Pandemic and back to home-learning from the beginning of Term.

Struan Gardner Update (Deputy Head): Learning and Teaching

- Access to devices and connectivity survey was sent out to all parents with a good response to the survey; the average internet speed is 20Mnps; the school used this information to prioritise need and devices have been issued as follows:

- Government funded devices: 86 Chromebooks; 6 MiFi dongles
- School Resources issued: 39 Chromebooks; 2 laptops; 1 iPad. The plan is to now evaluate the impact, monitor and review

Stuart Cookson Update (Deputy Head) - Curriculum

- Course Choice Consultation ongoing (New S4, S5 & S6)
- National progression awards and Foundation Apprenticeships were updated and new courses highlighted:
 - NPA Cyber Security L5
 - SfW Travel and Tourism L5 (Skills for Work)
 - NPA Sports Development L6
- E-sgoil “Lockdown Live” – weekly schedule 11 am S1-3 and 2pm S4-6 – communication has been sent out and more information will coming out about this. A great resource for pupils.

Lisa Lees Update (Deputy Head): Pupil Support

- Focus on supporting our Young People during this Period of Remote Learning
- Easy access to Guidance Teacher – on-line booking system available
- Daily Wellbeing check at registration – pupils asked on a scale of 1-10 as to how they are doing (those with concerning scores will be contacted by their Guidance Teacher)
- Full Wellbeing Survey also issued at agreed intervals – good response to this.
- 178 pupils supported on a 1:1 by the wider pupil support team – contact could be few times a week to every week/fortnight as needed.
- Resources developed include remote learning hints & tips; wellbeing support, assistant technology guides.
- Systems in place for identifying and managing poor engagement with home learning.
- Jo Munro very involved in supporting pupils/families – eg Financial Support information shared; eating well for less (hints, tips & recipes); parent information sessions – wellbeing, online safety, drugs awareness (these will be on-line); Uniform Bank being discussed

10. Sub-Group Updates

a) Fundraising

Marr Area Partnership application to the Community Food Fund, for funding towards festive food hampers, was considered and it was agreed to grant £1685.35 to Alford Academy Parent Council. This was organised by Jo Munro as per Mrs Milne’s update.

b) Parent-Council Pupil Partnership

Frank commented on wishing to take forward the important issue of MH; she had contacted the school and got the impression that the school were not in the position to utilize parent council at this stage; Lisa hadn’t been aware that there had been contact and apologized if she had missed a communication; Lisa reported that the

MH ambassadors are in place but we needed to be mindful that they are home working and will have their own needs. Frank and other group members will liaise with Lisa to take this forward.

ACTION: Monica will reconnect this group with Lisa to take this forward.

c) Community Group Link: additional support needs

No update

d) Alumni Project

No update

e) Communication

No update

11. AOB

- Connect Events timetable has been shared to parent forum/members by email. Ingrid planning to attend some. Others welcome to attend.
- Parent question about the digital survey as regards the Google Meets which are happening this term and how the digital survey was used to decide which pupils would get IT support and what the expectations on pupils was; Struan answered – there is no expectation to have the camera on during these sessions, but video will work even on low speeds; the check-ins were described – these can take variable forms – it could be video/audio or text via Google Classroom. The school are working their way through the hierarchy of needs as regards helping and supporting IT at home. School is aware that there may be technical hitches and kids/parents shouldn't worry if not able to attend the check-ins. Any concerns as regards the wellbeing check-ins are flagged up to Guidance to follow up who will also have information on pupil log-ins to Glow etc which is also monitored.
- Parent sought clarification as regards the daily Registration process and Class Check-ins. The registration is daily, but class check-ins vary depending on stage of school and the subject. Information has been sent out to parents/pupils. Staff area also signposting pupils to extension work as well but making it clear this is not mandatory. No new content will be covered in the check-ins; check-ins can be used for asking questions, checking wellbeing and also checking understanding of work.
- Another parent asked about the communication that was sent out as regards the daily registration as some pupils hadn't known about this new system and were upset when they received a message saying they were late checking in. Struan reassured parents that the system was not about penalizing pupils, but they will get a message if they register later than 10am. He read out the message which was felt to be clear with a supportive tone. Another parent suggested looking at the wording of emails coming to kids as some pupils are sensitive and such an email can upset them. Another parent felt that the message had been perceived as that their paper had been marked. The school will be monitoring and reviewing the messaging/system.
- A parent wanted to give some feedback to the school as regards the timeline between getting information about subject choices and the deadline for submitting forms

which was felt to be very short. Stuart responded and would be mindful of this feedback going forward; Moira reminded us that there is a suite of information passed on to pupils in school and to parents: last year, the initial information was sent out in December and there was a parent information session this year the consultation process began in January with choice forms and further information sessions planned for February and March.

- Another parent asked about the S2 Selection of Subjects for S3. Stuart replied that there will be information coming out soon and also an invite to a parents' information evening.
- Exams – Highers have now been cancelled in addition to the Nat 5s. Struan has had a meeting with SQA coordinators; they are planning for all eventualities; hoping to be back in school at some point this year but they are also making plans for gathering evidence remotely if needed; the focus currently is on learning and teaching rather than assessments.

Meeting Close: 20.35

ACTION POINTS:

ACTION: Partnership Working – if anyone interested in getting involved with Partnership working, please get in touch with Stuart Cookson or email Monica via Parent Council email address.

ACTION: Monica will reconnect the Parent-pupil partnership group with Lisa to take the mental health support forward.

12. Dates of next meeting

Tuesday 16th March 2021

Wednesday 12th May 2021

June 2021 – TBC (P7 Parent Welcome)

APPENDIX:

Parent Council Sub-groups 2020-2021: Members

Fundraising – Ingrid Huldal, Grainne Paton, Nicola Duncan & Petra Glennie

Parent Council-Pupil Partnership – Penny Fuller, Ishbel Mollison, Frank Sewell & Coralie Robertson

Community Group Link: additional support needs – Sheena Lawson, Rhona Stuart, Sarah Lewis & Donna Gray.

Alumni Project: Inspire Young People - Joe Purkis & Donna Gray

Communication: Charlotte Milburn

Parent Council Members 2020 – 2021: Quorum 6

Sharon O'Mant	(S1)
Coralie Robertson	(S1)
Fiona Henderson	(S2)
Joe Purkis (Vice-chair)	(S2)
Sarah Lewis	(S2, S4)
Grainne Patton	(S2)
Frank Sewell	(S2) (S3)
Denise Smith (Treasurer)	(S2, S4)
Monica Iloya (Secretary)	(S2, S5)
Nicola Sedgwick	(S2)
Donna Gray	(S1, S3, S5)
Sheena Lawson	(S1, S4, S5)
Ingrid Huldal (Chair)	(S4)
Charlotte Milburn	(S4)
Penny Fuller	(S6)
Richard Stroud	(co-opted member)