

ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
Alford Academy
Greystone Road
ALFORD
AB33 8TY



www.alfordacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk
alfordaca.pc@outlook.com

MINUTES (DRAFT)

Tuesday 16th November 2021
Virtual Meeting (Covid-19 Pandemic)
7.00 pm

1. Chair: Ingrid Huldal (Chair)
2. Minutes: Monica Iloya (Secretary)
3. Present:
Committee: Joe Purkis, Denise Smith, Dawn Brown, Coralie Robertson, Fiona Henderson, Frank Sewell, Grainne Patton, Lucy Greene
Other: Jane Gomes, Fiona Parsons, Linda Purkis, Amy Wilson, Joanne Reid, Melissa Fisher, Nicola Sedgwick, Sarah Copp, Sharon Witherspoon, Susie Young
4. In Attendance: Senior School Team:
Angela Wotherspoon, Struan Gardner, Stuart Cookson, Graham Scott
5. **Welcome and Apologies**
Ingrid welcomed everyone to the virtual Parent Council Meeting.
Apologies:
Committee: Charlotte Millburn
Other: Marrienne Crombie
6. **Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**
 - 2.1 **ACTION: Parent Council-Pupil Partnership:** Coralie will liaise with Stuart to arrange a meeting with the Student Council
Update: Coralie has sent some available dates to the school and is awaiting to hear which date would be suitable
 - 2.2 **ACTION: Community Group Link: additional support needs:** The Group will arrange a meeting with Graham Scott and Fiona Murray to discuss further
No Update

2.3 ACTION: Alumni Project: Inspire Young People: If anyone is interested in getting involved with either the Alumni Project or the Horizons Project, please email the parent council at alfordaca.pc@outlook.com

Update: No volunteers as yet

Changes to Minutes: MM has updated dates of future meetings and child year groups of council members.

Minutes: Proposed by Joe Purkis and Seconded by Denise Smith

7. Treasurer's Report

£3315.56 in Bank Account

£62.16 raised last month via EasyFundraising – a reminder to all parents to sign up for this as an easy way to raise money from on-line shopping

8. Head Teacher's Update

Mrs Wotherspoon gave an update covering the following:

Staffing Changes:

- The current drama teacher Louise Lennon is taking up a new permanent post so will be leaving shortly; school advertising currently for both English & Technical posts which are vacant. Graeme Scott now in post as Depute Head and Kirsty Henderson Young has replaced him as Craigievar Guidance Teacher.

School Activities/Achievements:

- As part of the S5/6 Horizons, the Army visited – career opportunities were discussed, and they also ran some team building activities. This was a fun day which built pupil confidence.
- Geography Fieldwork trip to the River Don researching from its source at the Lecht and at Alford
- A Macmillan Coffee Morning raised £273.71. This was organised by the Interact Club and took 6 weeks to plan which included risk assessments.
- 1.5 Degree Film Award won by an Alford pupil and the film was also shortlisted for COP26. It will be entered in to the National Film archives and is a great achievement. Ingrid asked that the link to the film be circulated to the wider school community and Angela will arrange this.
- World Mental Health Day – staff wore Yellow as did the Mental Health ambassador pupils to raise awareness
- Interact Club got presented with the Rotary Club Shield – the Interact Club have been active throughout the pandemic.
- Rotary Shoe Box Appeal – 50 boxes have been filled to be sent overseas; the school also donated £100 for shipping costs.
- Remembrance Day Activities: £80 raised from poppy sales; different activities during last week including reading of poems, piper played lament and other music, laid wreaths at the War Memorial and there was a display of kindness poppies
- S1 Maths – As part of Black History Month, pupils watched the film “Hidden Figures” and did further research in to these amazing black women scientists
- The Eco Group are raising money for #Team Seas. They are going vegetarian for 1 week and Mrs Niven is going vegan for 1 month to raise awareness.
- S3 Excelerate Career Expo (ongoing partnership with the Wood Foundation) – pupils have been researching different work sectors and on 23.11.21 pupils will pick 3 sectors and hear more about these work sectors.

- S6 Virtual Mock Interviews with 8 real employers took place today – there has been positive feedback from pupils and the employers; they are planning a similar event with S5 pupils.
- Flame of Hope Awards – Angie Shearer has won this award. She has been a volunteer fundraiser for 20 years starting with the Relay for Life when aged 16. With her family, she has raised £1million.
- Uniform – there has been a focus on pupils wearing school uniform following the October school holidays. This is improving but still some work to be done.
- Punctuality – there is now a warning bell at 5 minutes to 2pm to help pupils get to their classes on time after lunch.
- Staff are working on the school quality indicators as the school is mindful that an inspection is likely at some stage.
- Pupil Council have undertaken a successful bid for money from the Scottish Government for £1000 to promote health and wellbeing in the school and plan to develop the courtyard.
- YPI (Youth and Philanthropy Initiative) – there will be online finals this year in December. Pupils are working on their YPI. The winner will win £3000 to their nominated local charity.
- Ecogroup – have been delivering lessons around COP26; they are also involved in a crisp bag project – crisp bags will be collected, washed, dried and will then be sent off to be made in to blankets for the homeless. More information will be sent out from the school to advertise this project.
- Prelims – the school are hoping that they can deliver normal in-house prelims with invigilators (some external and some internal) in January; the school are hoping to reintroduce exam leave for S4-6 next year; the draft prelim timetable is out to consultation to staff. Prelim Dates: 7-24th Jan 22.

9. Parent Council Sub-groups 2021 – 2022 – Updates

9.1. Fundraising:

This group are hoping to arrange a meeting soon to discuss fundraising ideas.

The Outdoor Space Project is ongoing – they await feedback from pupil council on the proposal which aims to raise £15000 to improve the Outdoor Space at the school

Co-op Community Funding – the Outdoor Space project team successfully applied to the Coop to be one of their Community Fundraising projects this year. It is important to get everyone involved to help raise money for the school when shopping at the Coop. To get involved, you need to be a Co-op member (very easy to apply and only costs a £1) and then you need to nominate the Alford Academy Outdoor Space as your preferred project and the Coop will donate money to this every time you buy something in the Coop and scan your card. £45 has been raised already and the fundraising has just started.

The group are also looking to bid for Tesco's Community Fundraising projects (blue chips in store).

9.2. Parent Council-Pupil Partnership

No update

9.3. Community Group Link: additional support needs

No update

9.4. Alumni Project: Inspire Young People - Joe Purkis

Stuart reports that 5 ex-pupils have come forward to help with this project; Stuart will work with Joe to increase the reach for getting volunteers for this project.

9.5. Communication

In the school, Heather and Maureen are working on moving the main website information on to the blog and that will then become the main school online presence which will make accessing information easier.

Charlotte is awaiting to hear back from Struan as regards how she can get involved with updating the Parent Council webpages. Struan has offered to add links for things like Easy Fundraising and the Coop links.

9.6 School Uniform Recycling

No update – we are aiming to repeat at the end of the academic year; Angela will DW Joe Munro to see if there is a need for an earlier collection.

10. AOB

- Nicola Sedgwick introduced herself to the Group in her role with the Community Council and she wants to open channels of communication once again with the school; Nicola was asked to contact Angela directly as she will be very happy to work with the Community Council.
- Mental Health – a parent asked for an update on where the school were as regards mental health saying she welcomed that the school are raising awareness on Mental Health issues to both pupils and staff. Two senior pupils were trained last year as Mental Health ambassadors and are raising awareness in the school; Jo Munro is working in this area too. The school are aware that S2 has had difficulties as a group having had their transition to Secondary School disrupted by the Pandemic and are looking to see how to best support this year group in particular. The school plan ongoing surveys to monitor pupil wellbeing as these have worked well during the Pandemic for identifying pupils who are struggling. Frank Sewell in her role in the Parent-pupil partnership has offered to help the school in the past but this was paused until the Mental Health ambassadors were trained. Angela will discuss with Graham as to how best to take this forward. Graham gave a summary of current support available at the school. PSE is the forum for Universal Mental Health and Wellbeing support. The Aberdeenshire Council have funded online Mental Health support via Kouth & Together All. There is a counsellor at the school but currently only works there 1 day per week; the plan is to increase counselling capacity next year. There is CAMHS training called “Liam” which is based on CBT principles and some staff members will be getting trained in Liam. The School Nurses are already Liam Trained.
- Parents Evenings – the school held a S1 parents’ evening last week which was virtual; overall this was a positive experience from staff and parents although there were a few technical issues for some. The school will learn from this in planning future parents’ evenings. Each appointment was 5 minutes long so parents and teachers had to be focused. It was felt that they will need to build a break in for teachers next time as it was intense. The school are seeking formal feedback, but it is likely they will use this format going forward. There was an 86% uptake from parents which is the highest take up since they started the booking system. One parent said it worked well for his family and it was great to meet teachers and said ‘well done’ to the school for making it happen. Another parent said it was a bit like speed dating but felt it worked well. Appointments were on a first come first served basis. Parents could pick and choose appointments or get the system to book everything for you. Graham & Angela stressed that the school admin support was amazing to get it all up and going. Another parent gave feedback that she hadn’t received the link in her email so she didn’t get all the appointments she would have wished, and some teachers had cancelled; she asked the school to consider additional appointments virtually given these issues. Angela reported that this would be difficult as any changes need to be agreed with staff/unions through the working time agreement and the working time directive which have already been agreed.
- Pupil Reports - Another parent fed back that she would prefer to get teacher feedback rather than the pupil feedback as she did not find the recent pupil feedback helpful. The school are aware that the new

system is helpful for some but not everyone but feel the new system does give more feedback over the course of the year than the old system.

Meeting Ended 20.55

ACTION POINTS:

1. Pupil film – link to film to be circulated to wider school community. **Action:** Angela
2. Send links for EasyFundraising and Co-op Fundraising to Struan. **Action:** Monica/Ingrid
3. Angela to discuss with Graham as to how best to involve the Pupil Parent Partnership in supporting Mental Health Awareness and Support. **Action:** Angela/Graham
4. Angela to discuss with Jo Munro to see if there is a need to collect school uniform for recycling during the school year. **Action:** Angela

Date of next meetings:

Monday 17th January 2022

Wednesday 11th May 2022

Tuesday 15th March 2022

June 2022 – TBC (P7 Parent Welcome)

APPENDIX:

Parent Council Sub-groups 2021-2022: Members

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, Sarah Lewis & Donna Gray.

Alumni Project: Inspire Young People - Joe Purkis

Communication: Charlotte Millburn & Fiona Woodhead

School Uniform Recycling: Amy Wilson, Sarah Lewis, Charlotte Milburn, Ingrid Huldal & Monica Iloya

Parent Council Members 2021 – 2022: Quorum 6

Dawn Brown	(S1)
Lucy Greene	(S1)
Sharon O'Mant	(S2)
Coralie Robertson	(S2)
Fiona Henderson	(S1, S3)
Joe Purkis (Vice-chair)	(S3)
Sarah Lewis	(S3)
Grainne Patton	(S3)
Frank Sewell	(S1, S3, S4)
Denise Smith (Treasurer)	(S3, S5)

Monica Iloya (Secretary)	(S3, S6)
Nicola Sedgwick	(S3)
Donna Gray	(S1, S2, S4)
Ingrid Huldal (Chair)	(S5)
Charlotte Milburn	(S1, S5)