

ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
Alford Academy
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Minutes

Monday 17th January 2022
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, Charlotte Millburn, Fiona Henderson,
Coralie Robertson, Dawn Brown, Frank Sewell
Other: Linda Purkis, Susie Young, Fiona Summers, Louise Mitchell,
Marianne Crombie, Kerry Porter; Katrina Mackay; Amy Wilson;
April; Fiona Parsons, Sharon Witherspoon
4. In Attendance - Senior School Team:
Angela Wotherspoon, Struan Gardner, Stuart Cookson, Graham Scott

5. Welcome and Apologies

6. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

ACTION POINTS:

- 2.1 Pupil Film – link to film to be circulated to wider school community.
Update: This was done
- 2.2 Send links for EasyFundraising and Co-op Fundraising to Struan
Update: This was done
- 2.3 Angela to discuss with Graham as to how best to involve the Pupil Parent Partnership in supporting Mental Health Awareness and Support.
Update: Angela advised that this will be addressed in her Update
- 2.4 Angela to discuss with Jo Munro to see if there is a need to collect school uniform for recycling during the school year.
Update: Jo feels this would be helpful and school uniform sub-group will liaise with her

Minutes - Proposed: Denise; Second: Coralie Robertson

7. Treasurer's Report

Denise reported that the Parent Council payment is in from Council

Parent Council Bank Balance: £3785.81

£53.08 due in from Easyfundraising

8. Head Teacher's Update

Angela reported a busy start to the new term with senior pupils doing their pre-lim exams at present.

Winter Newsletter went out in December with lots of information on what has been happening in the school and is available on the school website:

<https://alfordacademy.edublogs.org/blog-news/>

Notable events:

- Bear Grylls Unsung Hero Award to S3 pupil Theo
- British Physics Olympiad
- DressCode Halloween Coding Competition
- Lathallan Piping & Drumming Competition
- Choc-Elite – Chloe from Chloe Creations came in to the school and showed some pupils how to make chocolate, which they then sold and made some money for charity

Staffing Update:

- PE Mr Lawson appointed to part-time Depute Head post at Portlethen; school will be advertising to replace his sessions
- Drama post going to be readvertised but is covered so far
- A new English teacher will be starting soon who has done a probationer post at Alford Academy in the past
- There is a successful applicant for the Technical post but this is not finalized as this teacher has other options to consider
- An 18 hour post in the Library has been successfully appointed to

Other items:

- Prelim Feedback – Struan has done a lot of work on the prelim planning with positive feedback
- Awards Ceremony – the school is looking at what this might look like and Angela will feed back about this at the March meeting.
- Excelerate Programme – Angela and Jenny Reece-Jones will be visiting the Doncaster Excelerate school in February.
- Storm Arwen – the school closed early on the Friday; Angela wanted to thank staff – it was all hands-on deck and their efforts were outstanding; the school was then closed on the following Monday and Tuesday; Angela and the SLT came in to school on the Monday to assess the situation – Janitors and Catering staff were also in and did an outstanding job. Senior pupils returned on the Wednesday and the rest of the school came back on the Thursday. Angela was very proud of the school community's response to this serious event.
- Attainment Reviews – these will be undertaken with the heads of each department post-prelims.

- Angela is also working on the School's Performance Review and she will feedback on that at the next meeting.

Depute Head Updates

Stuart Cookson:

- Horizons Project Review (S5 & S6) – mixed views from parent feedback. Stuart went over the aims of the Tuesday Horizons Project. All pupils are encouraged to be thinking about their future career plans.
- Topics covered have been from suggestions from pupils.
- Previous topics have included - Mock interviews, First Aid Training/CPR/Defib; Team Building/Problem Solving/Confidence Building; Car Finance/Maintenance; YPI-Charity Visits
- Future Topics - Applying to SAAS; BHF/Blood Donor/Health; Proposed College Visits; Foundation Apprentice Work Experience
- Tuesdays can also be used for Online Course/Training and personal study time which can be in school or at home
- Pupil Feedback – over 50% in both groups felt Horizons was valuable overall; S6 rated it more highly than S5 pupils
- Parent Feedback – also mixed and slightly lower than the pupil feedback; again there was higher scores for S6 than S5 pupils.
- The school will be reviewing the Horizons project
- DWI Coordinator – Amy Maitland is now in post – she will be helping to build up relationships with external partners
- Course Choices – A preliminary survey has gone out to parents/pupils to get an idea of what staffing may be needed for next year; the formal course choice form will go out Feb/March 22; there will also be a virtual course choice evening
- S3 Curriculum Change Feedback – Stuart will seek feedback from pupils as regards the changes that was made last year
- There was a parent question on teaching “Revision Skills” and the school is planning to look at this area.

Graham Scott:

- YPI (the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative) Presentations have taken place - A presentation for NEEDS (a local Eating Disorder Charity) was the winning Team and they have won £3000 prize-money for this charity; YPI was done on a Tuesday as part of Horizons so that worked well as pupils did not have to take time out of formal classes. <https://ypiscotland.org.uk/>
- Parents Evenings – Dates all set: S4 17.2.22; S5/6 23.2.22; S2 1.3.22 and S3 15.3.22 – these will be Virtual
- Wildhearts Webinars – free mental health webinars – Graham has looked at this and feels okay to be sent out to parents. ACTION: Monica to forward the Wildheart Webinar email out to the Parent Forum via the school

Struan Gardner:

- Prelims – Struan feels that pupils are coping really well overall and this is a result of a combined effort of input from parents/staff & invigilators. There was uncertainty right up to a few days before the prelims start as to whether they could go ahead with the Covid situation. Prelim planning has been an incredibly complex process.
- Prelim Pupil Absences – around 6-9% prelims were missed due to pupil absences and these will be rescheduled
- A survey was sent out today to parents to get feedback on prelims.
- He feels that the Study Leave policy is working for some pupils but not all
- Parent Feedback/Questions – the Chair thanked Struan for the personalized approach that was taken to planning the prelims which was appreciated; another parent voiced that the communication & planning from the school around the prelims has been excellent and has helped reduce anxiety; another parent said the prelim planning had been fantastic; she asked about exam marking – Struan clarified that this is being done locally; prelim evidence could be used if necessary if the main exam was missed for whatever reason but this would be the exception; exam marks will be released after the prelims have finished. There will be formative feedback on the prelim results after they are all completed.
- SQA timetable is available and they will start on 24.4.22 and the plan is that these will go ahead this year.

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

9.1. Fundraising:

- Coop Funding £207.93 so far – please remember to sign up for this
- Easyfundraising – remember to use this too when you are buying on-line.
- Links for both are on the school website
- Virtual Balloon Race – the sub-group is going to meet to discuss and plan this event

9.2. Parent Council-Pupil Partnership

- Coralie met with the Pupil Council in the library – they are very keen to work with the Parent Council; the pupils are busy doing Questionnaires and Surveys and will collate the responses; they will be happy to share the results with the Parent Council; canteen food was brought up – there was a lot of grumbles about this and they are going to think about how to take their concerns forward whilst recognizing catering is through the Council; study areas were also discussed with a desire for more opportunities to plug in devices (the school are looking at study areas); the outdoor

space project was discussed – they have plans for the triangle courtyard area. They undertook a big ideas feedback in the summer which included things like having a covered outdoor seating/ Coralie was really impressed with their enthusiasm.

- 9.3. Community Group Link: additional support needs – no update
- 9.4. Alumni Project: Inspire Young People - Joe Purkis
 - no update from Joe; Stuart reported that he has 6 alumni so far; this is a work in progress
- 9.5. Communication
 - Charlotte – no update; she will aim to take this forward with Fiona
- 9.6 School Uniform Recycling
 - The school is keen to support this initiative; Jo Munro is the school contact ? use community room; planning meeting – to be arranged and invite Jo. **ACTION:** Group to plan next steps as regards the School Uniform Recycling Project and invite Jo Munro to help

10. AOB

- Community Council wanted to let parents know about this new website: <https://www.enjoyalfordandddonside.com/> and there is an associated app.
- Covid letters – it can be unclear which pupil is the Covid contact if you have more than one child at school; Angela advised that the school needs to be mindful of protecting confidentiality when corresponding with parents; Angela advised that Covid numbers are low currently; pupils encouraged to do twice weekly lateral flows and there is good availability for these tests through the school for twice weekly testing.
- P7 – S1 Linking of Parents – there is a staff meeting tomorrow to look at P7 transition – Fiona offers to be Parent Rep if needed for helping with transition
- There is a clash with the next meeting planned for 15.3.22 as this is the same night as the S3 Parent evening. It was agreed that we change the date to Wed 23rd March Meeting.

Date of next meetings:

Wednesday 23rd March 2022

Wednesday 11th May 2022

June 2022 – TBC (P7 Parent Welcome)

ACTION: Monica to forward the Wildheart Webinar email out to the Parent Forum via the school

ACTION: Arrange a meeting to plan next steps as regards the School Uniform Recycling Project and invite Jo Munro to this meeting

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	(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)