

Aboyne Academy Parent Council
Minutes of Meeting – Wednesday 30th October 2019

Aboyne Academy

Attendees:

Office Bearers	Parent Council Members
Rob Brooker (Chair)	Gail MacTaggart
Natasha Pawlukiewicz (Secretary)	Charles Dunbar
	Lorraine Chesney
	Gill Bannister
Lorraine Scott (Head Teacher)	Susan Nicoll
	Suzanne Sant Angelo
Pupil Council reps for part of meeting Calum Ronald and Ralph Silcock	Sarah Leahy

Apologies

Apologies were received from Julie Mitchell-Mehta, Mo Cormack, Ashley Easton and Cllr Gibb.

1. Minutes and Actions from Last Meeting (13 May 2019)

The minutes were approved.

Action from AGM: email those who couldn't make it as to whether they wanted to stay on - done.

2. Chairpersons Report

Nothing specific to report.

3. Treasurers Report

Bank balance is currently £170.12. Julie can get a float to Xmas fair.

4. Head Teacher Report

Staffing:

Our new physics teacher has left after only one term to return to industry. Mr Webb has taken up a position in the central belt. Mr Webb came to Aboyne as an English probationer in August 2017. Mr Webb organised and took part in the successful exchange trip to Martignas before he left.

There are currently two probationer teachers. The English probationer is a flexible route probationer who was successful at interview for Mr Webb's vacancy and will be recruited permanently following GTCS full registration. The Chemistry probationer makes up for the deficit in physics. Mr Banfield has a physics qualification and has also picked up some of the classes to support Mr McCann.

The Modern Languages Faculty Head will start her maternity leave in November. An acting Faculty Head has been appointed from another school and will join us at the start of December. We have also recruited another permanent Modern Languages teacher who will join us as soon as the necessary paperwork has been completed.

HE vacancy has now been readvertised several times with no applicants.

Mrs Leslie will become the Morven Guidance teacher when Mrs Law goes off on maternity leave in November. A replacement PE teacher has been recruited who will start with us in January.

We also have 5 student teachers in the school this term.

Sponsored Walk

This was a great success and the weather was very kind to us. Lucky draw for 10 pupil sponsorship forms to take place.

Looking Outwards

Working with Alford and Westhill academies looking at their faculties: analysing improvement plans, sharing ideas (Faculty Heads).

School Building

Unisex toilets – have to be available in every school (LGBT agenda). Drama - were 2 toilets: there is now one for unisex staff and one unisex pupil toilet. The disabled toilet close to the games hall has also been made a unisex toilet.

Faculty attainment reviews

Faculty Heads have developed good self-evaluation processes and the attainment reviews have clearly demonstrated where improvements need to happen.

Authority Developments

The Wood Foundation has allocated money to 4 secondary schools (Alford, Portlethen, Banff and Kemnay): Staff from these schools will be visiting Tennessee in the USA to look at excellent practice over there plus they will get an extra business support officer for a 36 month period to support developing the young workforce agenda.

Town Twinning

Thanks to Martignas Twinning Association who contributed a substantial figure along with a grant from Erasmus to offset costs of trip. Facebook has photos on twinning association page. [Charles to feedback thanks to twinning association.](#) [Rob to put link to twinning association pages on AAPC Facebook page.](#)

5. Pupil Council Report

Ralph Silcock and Callum Ronald from Morven and Clachnaben Houses gave a report on behalf of the Pupil Council. Items suggested by Pupil Council for improvement

- Water fountains: most not good. Can use home economics taps but only one end of school. Could do with getting one fixed, possibly a new one.
- Bus timetables: arrive 8.20/30. Too long before school starts. Even 5/10 minutes. New companies – different drivers come on different days so lacking continuity.
- Maths resources are low, textbooks, science as well, S3/4. Most of school time is using textbooks. Jotters are rationed. Chrome books – can't print from them. Have to go to art or use a teacher's PC.
- Printing – students can print any amount but are unable to do so, yet teachers have limited amount. Teacher budget for printing could be looked into.
- Music – instruments – not enough, out of date.
- Textbooks and water fountains are a priority.

Successes

- Learning Plaza great, especially during exam time.
- Sponsored walk great success.

- Children in Need
- Thanks for renovating the toilets.

6. Update from Hayley Lockerbie, School Librarian

Been here a year – role is half public, half school. Instigated book groups, e.g. manga – this helps with reading and drawing.

Hurricane book group – adults meet at same time across the country and discuss via twitter with authors, publishers etc. Young adult version about to start with Aboyne in pilot. 6 schools across Scotland involved.

Information literacy: S1/2/3 World Book; S5/6 Advanced Highers English, History, Geography, Biology referencing, and finding academic info. Doing a style guide for the school re citations etc.

Hosted work experience pupils, training on Cool Computing (pupils providing guidance on how to use IT, e.g. tablets), Torphins CC keen to run this in Torphins, senior pupils will be paid. Braemar also interested.

Events, activities, trips – springtime concert, cakes from HE, Librarians quiz

Ad Higher English visit to Sir Duncan Rice library

Tuesday – has been set as digital detox day in the library, i.e. no phones etc allowed.

World Book Day – focussed on murder in the library with interactive murder mystery.

Readers on the Run – summer reading challenge. Launch good but low completion rate.

FMRC and Book Talks. “What I’m reading” signs for all staff. S1 and S2 get fortnightly visit to the library.

Bookstagram: what they read and why they like it.

Aiming to make the library a trusted and safe space for pupils and breaking some of the stereotypes.

Plans for graphics and design, science links, transition for P7s, library forum: volunteer library assistants.

7. Buses

Feedback has been received (via Facebook, Wilson Forbes). Traffic commissioner has granted permission for them to park buses overnight in area near Logie Coldstone; this doesn’t address issues of daytime parking.

Facebook feedback received: South Deeside pupil, driver comes from Inverurie and back again meaning over 9,000 miles travel over the year. Also concerns buses getting in too late, rush for children. No buffer at exam time (although see also comments above from Pupil Council).

Cllr Gibb had sent queries to council (see email): a response has been sent back but this gives no clarity/reassurance.

Unsure as to what we to do as PC – need a focal point to discuss this with the council. May be best to channel this via Paul. Would be good to discuss directly with Paul about what we can do and how to move it forward.

We also need to start tracking concerns from the Parent Forum to check whether the service is improving.

Adverse weather may arrive soon: school needs to be open as much as possible, and on snow days this might mean starting at 10am so pupils get to school safely in light conditions after roads have been treated. There is now limited local bus intelligence to know how good or otherwise the roads are. There is a need to ensure a quick turnaround times for school closures. Premier coaches have indicated that they will take 45 mins to reach the school.

Would be good to undertake scenario planning to ensure responses during snow day or evacuation etc will be adequate.

Don’t know how long contracts are for. Need to find out.

If there are problems, parents need to inform the PTU on the day; parents have to have the number to hand to complain.

APPC needs to accumulate info.

Actions

Circulate to PF the number for the PTU so that problems can be flagged by parents on the day they occur: also ask PF to email AAPC so that we can keep a log – **Rob to circulate message to PF.**

Contingency/scenario planning for bad weather. Desktop exercise involving bus providers – Lorraine to pursue.

Rob to meet with Paul and discuss how to take this forward and what options we might have. - Rob

8. Social Media and Communication

Facebook being used which is good. Training offered via AC PC connect. On 7th November comms and social media training in Inverurie, 6.30-8.30 Inverurie Academy. Rob to check if we could skype into it.

The school is in process of updating clubs and activities information; when this is done it will be passed on to the PC to promote it.

9. Parent Review of School

Lorraine – would like to get feedback from parents/carers on how the school is doing. School could be inspected by HMI soon: they send questionnaire out to parents to find out about the school. Would like to improve parent responses to school questionnaires.

Getting a good handle on parent views is important but the big question is how to go about this: send out taster questionnaire or use another format?

Suggestion from AAPC - do blanket homework for whole school in which kids interview their parents. Lorraine would like to work with a small group to come up with some clear questions. **Charles, Gail, Gill, and Suzanne have volunteered.**

10. Fundraising

Saturday 30th November is Christmas Fair and Thursday 12th December is School Concert.

Children's hamper is popular but needs to be age specific. Arts and crafts? Stationery?

Need prizes for Fair (hampers) - **Rob to mention in email that goes out to parents.**

Manning the stall on the 30th - Susan, Lorraine and Tracey Stanton, Natasha, Gail (co-ordinate) can help out.

Lynn will wrap the hampers again. If anyone has old hampers etc please get in touch.

11. AOB

- Planning application for skate park. Variable responses online. Wait until planning decision.
- Dr Holden, Support Services Co-ordinator, has been off since beginning of year. Such an important part of school staff (especially re buses) but will be off for a long time yet – Laura Miller has taken on the Acting role.
- Road meeting in April: needs to be followed up. Lollipop lady won't help as people won't use the crossing. School would have to pay for lollipop lady, not Council. **Gail to follow up with Paul Gibb.**

- Suggestion for post-Christmas clothes swap organised by Pupil Council to raise money.
Lorraine to ask Pupil Council.

12. **Date of Next Meeting:** mid-January, Learning Plaza, Aboyne.