

Aboyne Academy Parent Council

Minutes – Monday 29th January 2024

Attendees:

Office Bearers	Aboyne Academy	Parent Council Members	Parent Forum
Jenny Blair (Chair)	Michael Foy	Corri McHardy	Jon Entwistle
Rob Brooker (Treasurer)	Claire Drewitt	Lynsey Harris	Beckie Redmond
Rob Brooker (Deputy)	Alex Priest	Jo Ellson	Sam McNulty
Charles Dunbar (Secretary)		Natasha Pawlukiewicz	Stoma Frew
			Wilma McCutcheon
Councillors			Elaine Bruce
Sarah Brown			Liz Clarke
Apologies			
Pete Barker			
Lorraine Chesney			

1. Welcome and Apologies

Jenny introduced everyone to the Parent Council.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were approved.

During discussions between myself and Michael Foy over the last few months the issue of parent council minute retention has arisen. We currently share minutes from 2016 onwards. We feel that's a little excessive and we perhaps only actually require the last 2 or 3 years to be shared online. There is a full archive of parent council minutes held by the school should we ever need to re-visit.

Agreement to show last 2 years of minutes online with the Academy retaining full archive.

We will also need to revisit our constitution this year and make any amendments or additions there, so we'll set that ball rolling in Springtime.

3. Chairperson's Report

Action point 1 from last meeting. Christine McLennan (Education Support Officer for Parental Engagement and Learner Participation in Aberdeenshire Council) sent an e-mail to all parent councils in the Shire for me asking for sharing of experiences and thoughts on conversion of parent council to charity status. Mearns and Alford Academies have been in touch and happy to share their experiences of the pros and cons.

- Looking to set up a February meeting with AAPC members and to allow a discussion of the issues and an informed decision to be made on whether we pursue charity status. I'd like Christine to be part of that meeting as well.

Chair of Fraserburgh Parent Council has written to the Scottish Government about their issues attracting and retaining staff. I was happy to sign that letter as were all other parent council chairs in area. She is meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for education. I (and others) requested that in that meeting she also raise the transport funding model. This needs to be reformed as currently an unfair model - as discussed in our last meeting.

- She is very proactive and open to further discussion/support, so we'll watch that space.

I've been attending the Academy anti bullying policy working group. This group is aiming to update the anti-bullying policy. Already met with school pupils across the years, guidance teachers and another parent rep. Fed into how well we think the Academy deal with a range of issues. Highlighting a few areas where perhaps additional work could be done. For e.g. follow up with pupils when they highlight an incident or where something has happened which has made them uncomfortable.

- Next meeting 30 January for the anti-bullying policy working group.

I'll be looking at the home working policy for the Academy which is in its final stages of an update. Michael Foy covering more about this in his update.

Fundraising:

Action point 3 from last meeting. Christmas Concert raffle made £507.15. Many thanks to Jo Ellson, Lynsey Harris and Rob Brooker for helping me gather prizes, sell tickets and dealing with the money. As per action point 2 from last meeting. I sent a survey to all parents and carers in late November seeking interest in a wider fundraising group for Aboyne Academy. Budget pressures will be a feature going forward (as is the case across all council areas) and as such we need to increase our fundraising activities to support the school in delivering everything they and we want delivered.

- Presented some slides with the results of the survey and next steps (these are attached at the end of the minutes).
- First meeting of the fundraising group being organised. Jenny has asked if any members of the parent council would like to join that group.
- A hamper is going into the Corner House, Aboyne in late February/early March to be raffled off for the school. Given our large catchment area I'd like to do similar in Torphins, Ballater and Braemar. We'll try a few and see if it works well and brings some more money into us.
- Some discussion around teas and coffees. Parent volunteers (sometimes using pupils as well) to run teas and coffees at events going forward. Baking can be requested with proceeds to the parent council.

Notes

(RB) Plant sale and uniform swap and spring fair – RB is more than happy to co-ordinate the plant sale; tomatoes were in demand as the weather was good. The sale raised money and brought in a wider set of the community.

4. Headteacher's Report

Good evening. I hope you are all well. Thanks to Jenny, AAPC members and everyone who has come along this evening. Your support is much appreciated.

Thanks to Teacher reps this evening – Claire Drewitt (Guidance) and DHT Alex Priest.

I'd like to give you some general updates of what has been happening since we last met in November then focus on 2 areas for today – online learning for snow days and then Alex will give you an update on S1 CREW.

Successes

Lots of great things going on:

SQA prelim exams nearly finished. Thanks to Mrs Mercer and the big team involved.

Two S3 pupils recently won Chemistry quiz at Aberdeen University

Our “Build your future” team – 2nd at Pittodrie in a construction competition last week.

Whole of S1 out at “life of Pi” theatre trip this week.

Staffing Update

We still need more invigilators for April/May. Ideally not parents – do you know anyone?

Other staffing stable at the mo.

Laurence Findlay (Director) has been meeting with the SG Cab Sec about staffing issues in Aberdeenshire.

Proposed International trips

Ski trip (Austria) for current S1/2. March 2025

Watersports trip (Ardeche) for current S4-6 June 2025

Info to come out to parents shortly.

Parent survey

Usually goes out in February. DHT Rona Lindsey working on this. Would like AAPC to review before it goes out. I will send to Jenny to circulate.

Finance

Very challenging times for local authorities. We must transition to a future where the Council will have to fund a much older population in Aberdeenshire than at present. 6.9% decrease in school age children and a 28% increase in retired population by 2030.

Changing rooms/Toilets/PE facilities – no funding for non-essential capital projects at present. We can continue to develop ideas for the future of the building for the longer term.

House Council

House Council meeting this term. Plan to ask them what they would like AAPC to raise money for.

Vaping

Very much welcome the news that UK governments plan to ban disposable single use vapes. 22% of all under-18s - around 78,000 - are believed to have used a vape last year in Scotland.

50th Anniversary (May 2025)

Group forming. Will need AAPC representatives.

Weather feedback

Summary of 3 recent closure days and background to decisions. Late opening not possible for us.

Online learning for snow days

Last year on snow days, many pupils and parents had different ideas about engagement/participation and pupils have varying levels of ability to engage when sharing devices at home.

Staff were also finding it very difficult to post quality lessons by 10am each day for all their classes that day. There was sometimes far too much work for pupils.

The LTA group have been working on this. Future snow day plan was discussed with AAPC and discussion followed. More comms to come out around this later in the term.

Notes

(NP) commented that invigilators are required, and this is paid employment, training is provided could information be sent out? **Action: MF to send out the necessary information**

(BR) commented accessing devices on a snow day was an issue and how can we provide more support to young people? Also, while lots of people are working from home band width will be restricted.

CREW update

Crew is now in its 3rd term at Aboyne Academy. S1s have been developing relationships with their Crews through various weekly focuses including community weeks, wellbeing weeks and Charity weeks. S1s have also been developing their skills in Oracy, critical thinking and teamwork. The positive impact of Crew has been recognised by S1 pupils, staff and the wider community. Formative feedback has shown Crew to be 'fun' and 'friendly'. Referrals for S1 pupils has dropped by 20%. Classroom Teachers have shared pupils are confident to engage with talking tasks. This term Crews will continue to work with Horseback UK to continue to build on skills.

Notes

(BR) commented a school ceilidh would be great to showcase the talent in the school.

(RB) commented the hospitality children supported the teas and coffees.

Notes in relation to Transport

Transport contracts – parental feedback required. Discussion held about this, and feedback gathered. Chair to submit survey response.

5. Treasurer's Report

Rob Brooker – current balance is £942.86, waiting from the annual payment from the council subject to us being a PTA, work is underway to update the signatories on the TSB account.

The PTA have £500 to allocate to the school, this could be a good incentive for staff and pupils.

6. AOCB

Nothing to report

Attachments



Aboyne Academy
Fundraising Survey.ppt

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed to hold a meeting on 18 March, in person at the school.