

Aboyne Academy Parent Council

Minutes – 18th March 2024

Attendees:

Office Bearers	Aboyne Academy	Parent Forum	Parent Forum
Jenny Blair (Chair)	Michael Foy	Rory Duff	
Rob Brooker (Treasurer)	Claire Drewitt	Abigail Turley	
Rob Brooker (Deputy)	Rona Lindsay	Lorraine Chesney	
Charles Dunbar (Secretary)	Bengt Evertsson	Natasha Pawlukiewicz	
		Sam McNulty	
Councillors		Alisdair Brodie	
Sarah Brown		Fiona Walmsley	
Apologies			
Cori McHardy			
Geva Blackett			
Anouk Kloppert			
Jon Entwistle			

1. Welcome and Apologies

Jenny introduced everyone to the Parent Council. Apologies as above.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were approved.

3. Chairperson's Report

Anti Bullying Policy

Progress has continued and the first stage of the anti-bullying policy is complete. The school are now working on the next steps and then we'll re-visit.

Parent Survey

Parent Survey went out following feedback from members of the parent council – thanks to those who responded with feedback.

50th Anniversary

50th anniversary of Aboyne Academy representatives are myself and Lynsey Harris from the Parent Council and Becki Redmond and Sam McNulty from the fundraising group.

Transportation

Following the last meeting and discussion around the transport contract I sent a formal letter to the transport team on behalf of the parent council.

Thank you to all who took the time to e-mail their thoughts in and to members of the parent council who gave feedback on the draft letter. I included anonymised copies of all the e-mails as well as the

formal letter. A receipt has been received however we are to receive a formal reply – Jenny will follow up.

Fundraising

Initial meeting of the fundraising group has been held. The school have been requested to come up with a wish list from both pupils and staff for fundraising to focus on, the emphasis on what would make a real difference e.g. Mearns Academy (700 pupils) raised 25k in the last year. Aboyne Primary are aiming for 35k but we'll pick this up further under fundraising.

Aboyne Primary made contact and suggested a co-organising of major events. I've rejected that as we have a much larger catchment area and are three times the size of the primary so such an arrangement would be unlikely to make those involved happy! Instead we'll synch fundraising calendars and offer stalls at each other's events free of charge and commission. It will be good for us to have a presence in the primary at such key events and is something we may seek to replicate across other feeder schools in the future if successful.

Charity Status

I contacted parent council members last week to suggest a pause in looking at pros and cons of converting the parent council to charity status. It has come to light that the Council Public Liability Insurance provided free of charge to parent councils isn't applicable if you become a charity. Christine McLennan in discussion so we can re-visit when this is resolved.

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.

Teacher reps this evening, Bengt Evertsson (Languages), Claire Drewitt (Guidance)

Acting DHT Rona Lindsay also joins us this evening to provide information on Project Based Learning.

Recent successes include:

Haydn Guy – Level 6 Foundation Apprentice of the Year. Huge achievement.

Principal Teachers training day at Glen Tanar in February, Senior Phase Art exhibition, Cairngorm Project Based Learning Showcase, S1 Crew Horseback Sessions.

We have also enjoyed welcoming staff from other academies in Aberdeenshire and Moray.

Staffing Update

Invigilators – still short of some! Please contact us asap if you know anyone! Ideally not current parents.

Ashley Easton (Acting DHT) will return from maternity leave on 25th March. She will return part time (0.6 FTE). The 0.4FTE hours have been advertised. Interviews are last week of term.

Paul Askew Blain (Maths) will be leaving us at the end of term.

Laura Murray – active schools will finish at end of term. Michael Murray will increase to full time.

International trips

Trips going ahead - Ski trip (Austria) for current S1/2 (March 2025), Watersports trip (Ardeche) for current S4-6 (June 2025). Both trips may be heavily oversubscribed. A waiting list will be developed.

Parent survey

Thanks to Jenny/Rob for reviewing it before going out. Closes today. Will discuss feedback at next meeting and share actions with parents.

Fundraising

House Council discussing ideas for AAPC fundraising on Wed/Thurs this week.
Staff discussing this at staff meeting tomorrow evening.

SQA Exams

Lots of hard work going on by pupils and staff. We are still finding that support sessions are poorly attended. The results last year were very good, but this still causes me concern.

Grading

“In 2024, we will therefore consider any impact on learners completing coursework for the first time, as part of their SQA assessments, in our grading decisions.”

Exceptional Circumstances

“The Examination Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service (EECCS) will continue to be available this year, meaning those learners with exceptional circumstances can have alternative assessment evidence reviewed to help determine their grades”

Appeals

“Learners will be able to appeal any of their final grades by requesting a review of their SQA-marked assessment components. In keeping with last year, the service will continue to be free and available for learners to access directly. Alternative assessment evidence will not be required and SQA appointees have told us that this will ensure fairness for all learners.”

School Attendance

This national issue across UK as attendance rates are dropping. Our attendance rate is very good but possible signs of a 1% fall over the last 5 years. We have very good attendance data.

Keen to be proactive and keep on top of this. The research is very clear that attendance at school is one of the biggest factors in success. Non-attendance has serious implications, which increase when combined with poverty and other adverse childhood experiences.

We have a very tight attendance process, which generates the data about who is at school and not and that gets followed up each day by the deputies and guidance teachers. We are developing a wider attendance strategy around this which will further support it. It won't be something I'm sending out to parents but you might see more parental comms which promote good attendance over the coming months.

Friday 10th May

Possible drama performance in the theatre. Could AAPC do Raffle and teas/coffee's if this goes ahead?

Project Based Learning Programme

Rona Lindsay provided information on a different approach to learning via a series of projects. These projects are delivered with business partners e.g. Cairngorms 2030 project. Catherine Cormack is the link to these business partners – key part being the projects are delivered in partnership. The programme is now in its 2nd year, and so far 21 staff members have been trained. Currently there is a graphics project running supported by 42 Studio. The programme is learning outcome focused and aims to develop student's softer skills. Recently parents were invited to attend the Art Fare and feedback was provided to students via post-it notes which was well received.

Notes

Comments were made by parents highlighting the importance of homework. This is an area school are reviewing. Everyone in agreement that Show My Homework worked well for Aboyne Academy. We are currently unable to access this due to GDPR issues. Parental views on homework being gathered via recent parent survey.

5. Treasurer's Report

Rob Brooker – current balance is £952.82; when we receive the wish list from the Academy we will be able to prioritise projects and start passing funds to the school for those projects.

6. AOCB

6.1 Fundraising Group Update

An update was provided on the inaugural fundraising group meeting, comments summarised as follows:

- Lottery scheme – lots of options however we would have to apply for a license via the council – this would enable the development of options around a lottery scheme and raffles. Action Jenny Blair to draft up a proposal.
- 18th May – Plant Sale and School uniform swap shop proposed, plan is to integrate with the Primary event. Volunteers should contact Rob Brooker directly.
- Christmas Fair and Concert – potential future events.
- Golf event – parents had suggested a golf event.
- Ceilidh – potentially in September would be a good opportunity to showcase talent within the school (including teachers). Tarland hall could be a good venue.
- Bingo – potential idea.

- Advertising and Selling pupils art – was discounted as pupils require their art for their portfolio's.
- School Uniform Sale – Jenny Blair is happy to co-ordinate a second hand uniform site on an ongoing basis which would also cover study materials other items relating to school life.

School Tour

The attendees at the parent council meeting were given the opportunity to view improvement areas within the school – specifically boys and girls changing rooms and the toilet facilities.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed to hold a meeting in June.