



Aberdeen Grammar School  
Parent Council Meeting

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021  
7pm – 8:30pm Microsoft Teams

## Minutes of Meeting

Parents: Margaret Davidson (Chair), Moira McIver, Tania Davidson (Treasurer), Anne Boylan (minutes), Alan Dennison, Lisa Collinson, Angela Lyon, Pauline Carrol, Erica Taylor, Amy Bender (present for part of meeting), Liz Halliday, Graham Mutch, Konstantina Martzoukou, Morag Evans, Rhona Gibson, Iain Gibson, Jennifer Scott, Carmen (surname not provided) and Patricia Irvine

Teachers: Ms Murison (Head Teacher)

Councillors: Tom Mason, Jenny Laing

Apologies: Hayley Barr, Emma Mair, Amy Bender, Angela Stewart, Eileen Hayward  
And Cllr Bill Cormie

### Welcome

Margaret welcomed everyone to Aberdeen Grammar School Parent Council online meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

### Approval of minutes of meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Minutes from 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were accepted without further alteration and were proposed by Anne Boylan and seconded by Alan Dennison

### Outstanding Actions

- Google Suite Training – Margaret is still waiting for Aberdeen City Council to run another course. She has attended a Google Sites training session which explained how to build a Parent Council website.
- Obtaining the views of the Parent Forum – this will become a regular agenda item from the start of next term.
- The Aberdeen City Council social media policy has been shared with PC members as agreed.
- PC section on school website – Margaret was to ensure that this section is kept up to date by forwarding minutes to Mr Martin. The most recent approved minutes were emailed to him on 26<sup>th</sup> May and should be on the website soon. Other ways of communicating with the parent forum are being considered – e.g., social media and/or our own website.

### Head Teacher Report and Feedback

#### Staff changes:

Ms Murison announced the appointment of Mr Ross Allan to the senior management team as Depute Head Teacher. He will take up his post at the start of the new term in August and will be a champion for extra-curricular activities. She thanked the PC for their support in helping with this important appointment.

#### Provisional results:

Capturing demonstrated attainment has been the key focus for this session, with staff



undertaking duties normally carried out by the SQA at this time of year. This is a different approach to last year where results were based on 'inferred attainment'. AGS has adopted a structured approach for the benefit of all pupils. This has involved pupils sitting SQA practice papers, together with a lot of targeted revision and feedback so that pupils can improve. The aim throughout has been to enable pupils to demonstrate the best work that they can.

Every pupil will have a thorough assessment of their marks including checks for exceptional circumstances (e.g., medical), and clerical errors. Final moderation of work and sampling by the SQA are the next major steps. Provisional results will be published the week beginning 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Any concerns about results should be discussed with their PTPS in the first instance and not the subject teacher.

One advantage of knowing provisional results before the summer holidays is that this will help prevent course choice changes in August which used to happen based on SQA results. The appeals procedure has been published on the SQA website today (2<sup>nd</sup> June) and all senior phase students have been issued with an information booklet. Ms Murison has also written to all parents with this information. Final results will be issued by the SQA on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

Ms Murison praised the way the pupils conducted themselves throughout the period of consolidation of learning and assessment. She also praised the staff for the approach they have taken to providing feedback following assessments and the support they have provided in terms of revision and making every effort to capture demonstrated attainment for pupils.

#### P7/S1 Transition:

A virtual program is in progress, co-ordinated by Deputy Head, Anne Bell. P7 pupils will come into school in the last week of term in their P7 class bubbles to meet staff face to face and have a tour of the school. Some outdoor activities have also been organised.

#### S6 leavers:

Small-scale events will be held in the garden in small groups. Ms Murison said that she was very proud of the S6 pupils for the way they have conducted themselves this year.

#### Building works update:

Refurbishment of the toilets will go ahead this summer.

The refurbishments to the swimming pool changing rooms and the kitchen will start in June 2022.

The 'French School' is now part of the school estate but will need upgrading before it will be 'fit for purpose'. The school are also looking to rename it. Phone lines, IT network and fire alarms etc. need to be installed. The space is being considered for use for PE, Science & Technology, Support for Learning and vocational provision.

#### School improvement plan 2021/22:

Ms Murison told the meeting she is hopeful that things will get back to normal in the coming year. She wants to rebuild the extra-curricular activities like performing arts and sport and looking for pupils to provide ideas for activities.

Ensuring high quality learning, teaching and assessment will continue to be challenging with 2 m social distancing being a limiting factor. The school will build on the digital development work carried out by Dr Gibson.



Margaret added a comment with feedback from the APCF meeting. ACC are working towards opening up after-school activities run by parent volunteers as soon as guidelines allow, and it is safe to do so. The priority for ACC is to avoid Covid19 cases in schools, and parent volunteers need to undergo training on Covid19 mitigations/procedures before these activities can take place safely.

The Alternative Certification Model form of assessment this year is a very different approach to the pre-Covid19 model. This may lead to the SQA changing the assessment approach in the future with more continual assessment.

The goal for AGS is to have sector-leading attainment. The new curriculum model in S3/S4 with 8 subject choices will be developed. Additional literacy/numeracy sessions will be offered in S1 to help P6/P7 pupils catch up on work missed due to the pandemic. Wellbeing of pupils and staff will also be prioritised; one member of staff will be dedicated to Wellbeing for the coming year. Pupils will be consulted on which aspects of school life mean the most to them and what they would like to see re-established (including extra-curricular activities.)

#### Music Service:

Ms Murison held a meeting with ACC and the Head of the Music Service to discuss the huge concerns expressed by parents and pupils about music instructors being moved away from AGS. Parents and pupils were particularly concerned that Mr MacDonald (brass instructor) was to be moved away from AGS and that the highly successful Concert Band would therefore cease to exist. The school staff were also worried about the negative effect of stopping the Concert Band on the many young people who benefit greatly by taking part. It was also emphasised that taking part in the Concert Band and other music ensembles are very important additions to the depth of learning in music.

Ms Murison was very pleased to report that the discussions with ACC and the Head of the Music Service had reached a positive outcome and that Mr MacDonald would now stay at AGS where he has built up a strong working relationship with many pupils over a number of years. Pupils in feeder primary schools will also continue to have tuition.

The next step is that all music students should receive a letter from the Music Service to explain what is happening, and Ms Murison should be informed, in advance, if there are to be any other changes, so she can comment. In addition to pupils taking music for SQA exams there are also many students working at Grade 8, and the expectation is that in-person lessons for all pupils receiving tuition will recommence in August.

Ms Murison has looked at all pupils receiving music tuition at AGS (currently 153) and checked the provision for each individually. A review mechanism for music tuition will be put in place and Ms Murison will meet with the music tutors every term. Tina Mackay and Ms Murison will feed back to the Music Service if the new arrangements are not working.

Jen Scott thanked Ms Murison for addressing the concerns of parents so effectively. One concern had been that Mr MacDonald would be spread too thinly across other schools, and she was reassured that AGS pupils would not be disadvantaged.



Margaret also reported back from the APCF meeting on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May to explain the rationale behind the proposed changes to the music service:

Shona Milne, the Quality Improvement Manager with responsibility for the Music Service attended the APCF meeting and advised that the changes would allow music tuition to be available in all schools. At present, this isn't the case. The new model will offer a core level of access across all schools and a flexible part where additional allocation can be provided where needed. The digital offer will remain and will include a website where pupils can practice basic skills using videos by their tutor. The new model can provide music tuition for 2000 pupils while the current model, which is under capacity, supports 553. At present a lot of pupils give up after their year of free tuition and the expectation is more will continue if lessons are free. Margaret had asked if this included free instrument hire as pupils are generally required to provide their own instrument and the cost of these can be a barrier. The Council will look into this under the Cost of the School Day. The service has a limited number of instruments to loan out at present.

All pupils will receive face to face tuition, and none will be all digital. Group lessons will be provided for pupils within broad general education with one-to-one lessons being provided for those doing SQA courses. Senior phase pupils will be prioritised and continue to receive their current level of support.

The Music Service will continue to support extra-curricular activities and are also looking to develop their extra-curricular offer further. The Music Centre will continue to operate; however, they may look at a local model because they understand that it is not necessarily convenient for pupils to get to Northfield Academy after school.

### **Treasurer's Report**

- Tania has not received any bank statements recently and has not been able to see if the cheque for £500 issued to the school as a contribution for the school app has been cashed yet. A replacement cheque will be issued if the old one has expired.
- The accounts have been audited by Jill Dutch and were approved unanimously at the meeting. **Action:** Margaret to sign the audit checklist so Tania can pass them to ACC.
- The bank balance after the cheque has been cashed will be £410.53.
- Tania will hand over to Alan Dennison at the AGM.
- Tania was thanked for 10 years of service as PC Treasurer.
- Cllr Jenny Laing thanked both Tania and Margaret for their long-term commitment to the PC at AGS and at Skene Square.

### **Approval of audited PC accounts for 2020/21**

The Aberdeen Grammar audited accounts for 2020/21 were approved by all present at the meeting.

### **PC Constitution**

- A comprehensive review of the constitution took place at our last meeting and the agreed changes were made. PC members received a copy of the constitution including all the proposed changes and were asked to confirm that it accurately reflected what was agreed. Those who responded confirmed this to be the case, with no-one disagreeing. It is now ready to be go out to the parent forum for consultation at the start of the new term. **Action:** Margaret to issue it along with the invitation to attend the 2021 AGM.



### **Key feedback points from APCF Meeting:**

- Gael Simpson from ACC advised that those within the senior phase have worked extremely hard to complete their assessments as part of the alternative certification model and staff are undergoing rigorous assessment and moderation processes to ensure the outcome of these assessments are robust.
- There will be a secondary school estate review in the next academic year and the team responsible will provide a statement at the November Education Operational Delivery Committee. The parent reps will provide updates. Cllr Jenny Laing told this meeting that Covid19 has made a big impact on the school roll which is set to increase across the city. Some children are moving from private to state education, families are leaving the city and school building work by developers is on hold.
- The primary focus of the National Parent Forum of Scotland has been the Alternative Certification Model.
- Changes to the Music Service were discussed; see Head Teacher report which includes feedback from the APCF meeting.

### **Changes to the Music Service:**

Covered within Head Teacher report

### **Feedback from Google Sites training:**

- Margaret attended the Google Sites training and it seems like a very straightforward platform to build a website on. St Joseph's PC have used it to create their new one and it looks very good. Margaret asked if there any PC members who would be willing to become involved in building a website for the Parent Council; no-one volunteered at the meeting. There will be help available from the Google Sites expert at Aberdeen City Council.

### **Meeting dates for 2021/22:**

The meeting dates, which are subject to change depending on the school academic calendar, are:

Wednesday 22nd September 2021 (includes AGM)

Wednesday 17th November 2021

Wednesday 19th January 2022

Wednesday 23rd March 2022

Wednesday 1st June 2022

### **AOCB**

- The parents all thanked Ms Murison for all her efforts in getting a positive outcome for the music tuition offered at AGS.
- Moira McIver suggested that the Parent Council write to the AGS teachers and leadership team to say how much we appreciate the very hard work they have put in this year and to thank them for all the extra work carried out at weekends and in the evenings. All agreed. **Action:** Margaret and Moira will organise this.