

Aberdeen Parent Council Forum  
Meeting for Parent Councils

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019  
Town House, Aberdeen

## Minutes of Meeting

PC Reps: Margaret Davidson (Aberdeen Grammar / Chair), Aurelie Irving (St Joseph's / Minutes), Rick Samsom (Cults Academy), Donna Clark (St Machar Academy), Eric Aasterud (Aberdeen Grammar), Kelly Gordon (Loirston Primary), Mike Dalziel (Skene Square Primary), Jill Hubbard (Kingsford Primary), Abeer Eladany (Aberdeen Music School, & Dyce Academy), Angela Wigham (Ferryhill School) and Catriona Allan (Harlaw Academy)

Co-opted: Tony Rafferty (APCF/NPFS).

Other: Lynn Scanlon (ACC)

Apologies: Colm (Aberdeen Grammar/NPFS/EODC), Victoria (Airyhall Primary), Rachael (Broomhill Primary), Mhairi (Lochside Academy), Erica (Ashley Road), Nicola (Dyce Primary) and Louise Bruce (Brimmond Primary/EODC)

### 1. Sederunt and Apologies for Absence

Colm (Aberdeen Grammar/NPFS), Victoria (Airyhall Primary), Rachael (Broomhill Primary), Mhairi (Lochside Academy), Erica (Ashley Road), Nicola (Dyce Primary) and Gael Ross (ACC)

### 2. Announcements

None

### 3. Intimation of Any Other Competent Business

None

### 4. Declaration of Interest

None

### 5. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment. They were proposed by Angela Wigham and seconded by Catriona Allan.

### 6. Outstanding Action/Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

- Primary School rep – the APCF is still looking for a new primary rep for the Education Operational Delivery Committee. There are 5 meetings per year and the expectation is that the rep will also turn up for APCF and committee pre-meeting.

The papers need to be read in advance of the APCF meeting so they can be discussed as APCF decides how the vote will go forward. Jill Hubbard (Kingsford) nominated herself and Tony seconded her. All present were in agreement that she should take on the role and thanked her for agreeing to do it. **Action:** Margaret to ask Louise Bruce to get in touch with Jill to do a handover.

- Communication apps- GDPR issues with Class Dojo are still being looked into. Schools have the freedom to use whatever apps they wish as long as they are GDPR compliant. Each school decides what is best for them and in some cases the method of communication varies between classes in the same school. If schools were to use the same apps there may be savings to be made; economies of scale. Within their working time agreements, schools set their own priorities which means that different schools allocate different amounts of time to communication with parents. This may affect their choice of app and how it is used.
- Digital placings requests - ACC helpdesk now have correct phone number for signposting.
- Poverty-proofing pledges – emailed to Margaret and shared with PCs.
- PC funding - Margaret did not email Donna to ask when PCs should be getting their funding as post meeting it became clear that PCs that has submitted their accounts had received their funding. In some cases Treasurers had not checked that the money was in and in other cases they had not notified the Chair the money had been provided. Donna is still waiting for audited accounts from a large number of PCs and these have not therefore been paid.
- All those in attendance at the meeting passed on their sincere thanks to Lynn Scanlon who was attending her last meeting with us. She has ably supported the APCF over the last few years and has been an important source of information whilst also facilitating our communication with the council. She will be leaving her post in April. Gael Ross, Quality Improvement Manager – Leadership of Change (on secondment) will now take over as APCF link.

## 7. Aberdeen City Council Update

- Update on PEF Allocation 2019/20 – ACC now has it's 2019/20 funding. They had hoped that with digitisation (automatic registering for Free School Meals for all on benefits), that they would have gained a significantly larger amount of funding this year. The digitalisation took longer than expected, however they still secured an additional £65,000. All the pupils are now registered and should be taken into account next year by the Scottish Government's funding system.
- Budget Proposals 2019/2010 – savings have to be made and areas identified to achieve them are:
  - Increase P1 number caps in 7 primaries in deprived areas from 18 to 25 in line with other schools in the city.
  - Stop paying for taxis to Gaelic School
  - Remove unfilled vacancies for Educational Psychologists. The council is not managing to fill the vacancies but has kept money aside for them which will now be used elsewhere.
  - Reduce EAL service/change how it is delivered
  - Redesigning the Music Service

Some of the savings will need to cover part of teacher pay rises too as the Scottish Government will only be covering part of it.

- Workforce Planning Update - empty posts at the moment: 47 Secondary, 56 Primary; ACC has been to Canada and recruited 4 secondary and 14 primary teachers (50% uptake of those interviewed). They meet the criteria for GTC registration and will hopefully be in post after the summer. The council are now using Timeplan, an organisation that employs and deploys teachers. Dundee have been using this service for years.
- Placings Requests – update on digitalisation of process. It is being used by parents to apply mainly for places in P1, P7-S1 and out-of-zones. There have been a few complaints due to difficulties in accessing certain things. It has taken out the interpersonal effect and parents are having to re-apply after each failed attempt. In the past, where a parent's request was unsuccessful, they would receive a call from a Quality Improvement Officer who would help them identify a suitable school to apply for. Jill reports that lots of parents at Kingsford are finding it great. The problems seem to arise when applying for an out-of-zone place. APCF members are wondering if the new system will lead to an increase in appeals later this year.
- Poverty Proofing the School Day – a new team is in place led by Caroline Johnstone (seconded). She has agreed to create a leaflet for parents about what can be done within the guidelines in terms of fundraising.
- Child Friendly City – ACC remains committed to achieving this. It involves services across the city e.g. NHS, Police and ACC working together to ensure the needs of children are met and the city is safe for them. ACC is working with Unicef and is trying to be the first Scottish City to be accredited. Examples of what makes a city child friendly include having areas within the city where children can safely gather and services sharing information to ensure children receive the help they need promptly

## 8. Education Operational Delivery Committee Update

The pre-meeting has taken place and there was one agenda item for discussion which is the proposed increase in capacity of many of the cities primaries, based on a new formula from Scottish Government. A small number of schools will see a decrease in their capacity. The new formula takes into account any spaces in schools that can be used for teaching. There are no savings associated with these changes.

Concern was raised as many present felt their school was already struggling with the numbers they have and could not believe their school's capacity might go up. There was also concern where capacity was being reduced as it will make it more difficult for parent to secure a place there. Finally concern was raised that schools which were found to be below standard on suitability are likely to see an increase in their maximum capacity.

EODC meeting notes are on the website for parents to see. Parents and schools should raise any concerns with their elected members as a matter of urgency (meeting is on THURSDAY 15th, before going to full council). **Action:** Margaret to share the link to the information with PCs.

<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=620&MId=6198&Version=4>, actual report on

<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s94630/School%20Estates%20Review%20Scoping%20Report.pdf>

It was agreed that the APCF reps would pass on the group's concern to the Education Operational Delivery Committee. These relate to increased rolls, increased class capacities and the effect this will have on children's learning. They will also on behalf of

the APCF ask questions regarding the financial benefits of doing this as it would appear that there aren't any.

### **9. National Parent Forum of Scotland Update**

The Government is trying to pass a number of pieces of legislation, e.g. childhood smacking ban. At present the wording used in this is not specific enough. Children have much stronger views on their rights these days and are better educated on them. There is now a child's commissioner (Bruce Adamson), whose views are well listened to, is independent and is taking things forward fast.

The teacher's pay deal includes 2 extra in-service days. This is likely to have an impact on the ACC school holiday consultation and its outcome. It is unclear at present whether the pupils will get 2 extra days off or if the number of days of school will remain unchanged to meet the minimum number of days a child should be in school over the year

School inclusion meeting – very poorly attended this time. In general, there are not enough resources, not enough staff training, not enough staff. Aberdeen and the North-East are generally under-funded, per capita, compared to other central belt local authorities due to a perception that the north-east is wealthier and the weight of political sway in the southern side of Scotland.

At the last meeting, we spoke about the lack of a review of inclusion. Colm reported to Margaret that ACC has now agreed to a review, though we are currently not aware of a timeline for this.

### **10. Treasurer's Report**

Cost to insure PCs and PTAs was £6,278.10 last year and will be £4,630.60 this year.

The new policy is with Royal Sun Alliance and the documents will arrive after 1 April. A brief discussion took place around the need for PCs to do risk assessments ahead of any events in order to be covered. No extra expenditure, £928.50 left as before. No funding from ACC to APCF this year.

### **11. AOCB**

None

### **12. Future Meeting Dates**

- Monday 13 May 2019
- Monday 16 Sept 2019
- Monday 11 Nov 2019