

## Minutes of Trinity Academy Parent Council 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Liz Blair acted as Chair (standing in for Mike Nicholson who was unable to attend).

Liz opened the meeting by welcoming all to this face-to-face meeting, the first since March 2020.

11 parents and Mr Burge in attendance

### 1. Headteacher update and Matters Arising

Mr Burge welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming to the meeting.

**Staff update.** Currently 107 staff. In-house Leadership team conference for staff Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April and Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May

**Infection control/COVID:** Masks were no longer compulsory but the school is encouraging everyone to wear them when moving around. Some pupils (around 1 in 5) were continuing to wear their masks at all times. Windows and doors will continue to be kept open when appropriate to increase ventilation.

**Excursions:** there will be some year group trips planned for this term and throughout 2022. One of those being considered is a beach trip at the end of term for S1 pupils. Aware that many pupils have missed out on trips.

**Bangholm:** the project is on track with handover planned for 13<sup>th</sup> June. A video update will be sent on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April **ACTION Mr Burge to send video update as part of HT weekly update**

**Phase 2 building work:** one challenge relating to this is the decant arrangements. The budget provided must cover both the costs relating to decant arrangements as well as the costs of the building work, so a balance needs to be achieved between these. The design team will provide a plan this term on some proposed decant ideas. This was raised by the Parent Review Board as a key concern.

**Last day of term for senior pupils:** The behaviour of a small group of pupils on the last day of term spoiled this day for the other pupils. This included throwing eggs at the public and other pupils and setting off smoke grenades in the school building. With the exception of the fire alarms most pupils days was not particularly impacted but it doesn't excuse the behaviour of an absolute minority. There could be a role for Parent Council in the future helping to support communication around the end of term.

**Timetable change:** planned for 6/6/22

**School roll:** will increase to 961 (above the cap at 950)

**Vision and Values:** extensive work on this led by Caroline Bannon with pupil input. Feedback on this will be sought from parents and carers in due course.

**Curriculum review:** some elements relating to Phase 2 curriculum review are still to be decided. However, the focus for this coming term will be on skills development ahead of the change of timetable next year.

#### **Q & A:**

**A question about the budget for the school building work and whether it takes the need for a decant into account:** Mr Burge pointed out that the build project budget covers all tasks relating to the build, including the decant. Money allocated for the project has been increased to reflect the increase in raw material costs. The only option for the decant is to use the school car park. The swimming pool building will be removed to provide some more space.

Mr Burge noted that he would check the issue of using the budget for the decant arising from this because of Trinity's more complex decant issues.

**A question about which departments will need to decant:** This was not confirmed but it was likely that Modern Languages, Art, parts of Business and Administration, some offices, and Dining areas. The final decision on departments to be moved will be taken once there is greater clarity about how all buildings will be configured at the start of the decant. The aim will be for minimal disruption.

**A question about impacts of COVID on pupil experience of school:** some concerns raised relate to the poor cumulative school experience for some of the pupils, for example S1-S3 pupils, who have had cancelled trips and activities and faced classroom disruption. Questions about how the school can re-engage with these pupils and enrich their school experience. Mr Burge replied that the challenges experienced including staffing shortages meant it had been necessary to focus resources on senior pupils and schools across the city had taken the same or similar approach. Going forward there would be more scope to focus on the needs of junior pupils, with a main priority being to enhance the classroom experience for pupils. A number of strategies will be taken forward: maximising the time available for learning and preparing pupils for learning (e.g. by restricting downtime/mobile phone usage); focussing staff time on teaching. No supply teachers have been booked for the foreseeable future. Alternative learning activities such as 'Human Utopia' and 'Live N Learn' should now be easier to manage, allowing larger groups of pupils to come together for these. Other activities including international experiences for senior pupils eg Erasmus, have just been given approval by the council and are now being discussed. Another activity being discussed is a night under canvas for S2.

**Problems experienced during last day of term:** one parent asked what the school could do to tackle this issue. Mr Burge pointed out that pupils had been informed of the problems and that the police had been involved in relation to one pupil. He added that 7 new CCTV cameras were being installed in the school (although this is not directly in response to the events on last day of term). The issue will be discussed going forward, including what future 'end of term' events should look like. Parental engagement is key to these discussions and PC has an important role to play including comms.

**ACTION PC to engage with school on this issue in due course**

## 2. Matters arising from previous minutes

**P7 Transitions:** Proposals had been that P7 transition days will be in-person events and approx. 3 weeks before end of term. Liz B asked if there was a proposal to invite P7 parents to the school and if the PC could contribute to an information sharing event as has happened in previous years.

**ACTION** Mr Burge is to check and confirm the specific details with Kath Stewart

**Bangholm/Phase 2:** a small group of parents have now volunteered to be involved in the Parent Review Board for Phase 2 development and have been involved in 2 meetings already. They will meet at the school on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May to hear from the project design team and provide feedback to support future communication with all parents.

**Study support during Easter holidays:** the uptake for this had been low, as was also the case for Trinity Achieves (the after-school support programme). There are concerns that the pupils who really need this support are not those who are coming forward, however there was positive feedback from the pupils who did attend. One parent asked whether parents were fully aware of this service. Mr Burge replied that it was well communicated and that the service will continue to be offered by the school despite low uptake.

**Career choice/parent involvement:** several parents have volunteered to get involved with career clinics, whether in person and/or via Teams. Details have been shared with Bryan Campbell who is keen to progress this.

**Former pupil stories** – Liz B is going to share these with Mr Burge and discuss next steps.

## 3. Breakfast club

Mr Burge explained that the school currently runs a breakfast club, aimed at a small number of vulnerable pupils who benefit from a 'soft start' to the school day. Although this has been working well, feedback from the PSLs (Pupil Support Leads) was that more families might possibly benefit from this service due to increasing financial difficulties being experienced by many families. Proposed timings 730-810am. Whilst funding for the service is not considered to be a big issue, it may be more challenging to provide staff, who would need to be there to provide set up and for supervision. It was noted that in other schools, breakfast clubs are staffed by parents/carers/volunteers. Funding issues were discussed: whilst start-up costs were thought to be minimal, the issue is more about running costs and operational arrangements. Options for additional funding include support via corporate programmes, Parent Council funds and the Trinity Academy Charitable Trust. Options for staffing include volunteers (Volunteer Scotland; S6 pupils; D of E volunteers, community volunteers).

**ACTION** Mr Burge agreed to consider these options and consider how the parent body might support the project, particularly in relation to engaging with the local community and will put together some wording to advertise the ask in relation to this

## 4. School trips

Liz Blair started the discussion by saying that school trips had been a good feature of Trinity Academy and had provided enriching and life changing opportunities for pupils. This was endorsed by other parents. Feedback had been given to the previous headteacher that many parents at that

time felt that of the many school trips offered at that time, many were not inclusive. A response to this was to establish a S1 trip to Lockerbie outdoor centre for all S1 pupils.

Mr Burge explained that as school life returns to normal post Covid, consideration is being given to re-introducing trips. In terms of the type of trips that may be offered in the future, Mr Burge listed some issues to consider for future trips: how trips relate to the educational experience; how to ensure there is capacity available for delivering trips (and the impact on the classroom focus); staff time in organising trips and the costs of running the trips.

In the immediate future, Mr Burge confirmed that provision of trips will include day trips in context (i.e. relating to educational learning). There is also some support for other trips including to activity centres such as Lockerbie. However, longer and more expensive trips are currently not being considered for introduction in the immediate future, although these may be considered for introduction in coming years. Mr Burge also explained that UK-based 2-3 day trips will require a lot of time and effort to organise. Trips under the ERASMUS initiative will still be possible.

Some questions from parents included how staff viewed school trips - Mr Burge reported that staff views were mixed. Another question was how to level up on trips, making them more aspirational. Mr Burge replied that, while all of this is up for discussion, the immediate focus had to be on how to ensure smaller and more local trips could go ahead given the uncertainties around funding. Previously applications were made to Trust funds to support fully funded places for all pupils. Going forward, Mr Burge pointed out that there needs to be clarity on the rationale for a school trip, an agreed set of criteria to use, and consideration of how trips are managed in relation to the rest of the school calendar. He will consider all of these issues in discussion with staff.

#### **5. Working Time Agreement**

This item will be covered at the next meeting.

**ACTION Add to next month's agenda**

#### **6. Parent Council (current role, structure, communication – looking ahead)**

It had previously been noted that work was needed around making parents aware of the Parent Council role and how they can engage with this. As part of this, it was agreed that a one-off meeting should be convened to discuss the Parent Council role and engagement. There will be a call out to Parent Council members and those who have volunteered for the parent bank to ask if anyone wishes to participate in this meeting.

**ACTION – Mike to convene this meeting**

**Date of next meeting – Monday June 6<sup>th</sup> 2022**