

Trinity Academy Parent Council - AGM 2022 – Chair’s Report

October 2022 – time for our Annual General Meeting, and as my younger son will leave school next summer, it’s time for me to step down as Chair after three years. Here are a few reflections on Parent Council activities in the last 12 months.

Meetings – Parent Council has met 6 times during our year (Oct 21 – Sept 22), continuing to do so online, apart from dipping a toe back in the water for one in-person meeting in April, once meeting restrictions began to ease. All meetings have been open to the wider Parent Forum (all parents and carers) alongside Parent Council members (24 agreed to be PC members at the start of the year).

It’s a balance to strike between accessibility for all, opportunities for parents to see inside school, and meetings which encourage relationship building as well as attendance. Based on that it’s proposed to alternate meetings (in person and online) in the coming year.

Discussion areas at PC meetings – the Parent Council meetings have largely remained a space for discussion and Q&A as the year continued to be affected by external factors; ongoing COVID restrictions impacted on school life from staff absence to wider pupil experience (clubs, trips), as well as assessments and exams and these items were all ones where parents looked for information, explanation and reassurance. The Parent Council meetings offered a space where these matters could be discussed with the headteacher, along with a wide variety of other issues as varied as the S1-S3 school experience, pupils’ use of mobile phones, work experience, the future of extra-curricular sport, school league tables, and many other areas.

Additional parent input – our ‘Parent Bank’ of volunteers has 20 parents across all year groups willing to take part in one-off groups or comment on written documents. In the last year, opportunities to contribute comment supported the school’s thinking and developments, came through one-off meetings about extra-curricular sport, and on written statements on school excursions and on the current and future school website.

Meanwhile a group of 11 parents offered valuable comment on the planning and communication around Phase2, ensuring that a focus on site safety and the ongoing good quality of education were understood to be priorities at the same time as the new school building is designed.

Parental involvement in school life – Parent Council has promoted other opportunities for parents to be involved in areas including extra-curricular sport, Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme support and Career Clinics – with this last example, we now have offers from 12 parents representing diverse careers who have taken time to be recorded talking about their work and what led them to do it, as resource for the school to use in supporting pupils considering future career options.

Parent Council also undertook a process of contacting former pupils, gathering over 20 ‘positive destination’ stories of the different paths which pupils have taken on leaving school, along with information on where they are now and what they hope to do next. These former pupil profiles have been provided to the school as a resource for the careers support at school.

Communication – we continue to use a number of channels to communicate with parents; our Parent Council member list and a large wider group reached by the e-bulletin, the Trinity Families facebook group, the school app, the Trinity Academy Parent Council website and twitter feed. Even with all of these options we know that we still don’t reach everyone which is a challenge. We attended a stall at September’s open evening for S1 and S2 parents to ensure that these parents who are newer to the school had an option to sign up for information on an ongoing basis.

Fundraising – fundraising has had a low but constant profile this year, primarily through Lisa Cardozo’s steady work in keeping the 50/50 Club going. The 50:50 Club is a monthly lottery where 50% of the income goes to the winning member and the remainder goes to the school to help buy equipment or finance activities for the pupils. Information can be found here.

<http://www.trinityparentcouncil.org.uk/5050-club/>

The Trinity Academy Charitable Trust (TACT) remains in operation. It can offer a more helpful vehicle for fundraising (as a charity gift aid can be claimed on some items and on donations). TACT has had a quiet year but in the last few weeks, has donated the majority (£2100) of its current funds to support costs relating to the start-up and operation of the school’s new Breakfast Club.

At the start of the autumn term, two parents initiated hosting a tea/coffee/cake stall on Saturday mornings at the newly opened Bangholm facility with funds raised to go towards supporting the school’s sports activities. This is a really great way of building stronger community around the new facility at Bangholm and alongside the weekly school home sports fixtures.

Thanks to Dave Henderson for his work as Parent Council Treasurer this year and to Morag Burnett who has agreed to take over this role. Thanks also to TACT trustees Steve Hodgson (retired), Michael Carey (TACT Treasurer), Nicola Winchester and Liz Blair. Being a trustee is one of a number of volunteer roles we are keen for some new people to get involved in, in the coming year.

Parent Council funds during the last year have been given to the school to support different initiatives; Live n Learn sessions (£1200), support for sports / cost of the school day (£1500), anti-poverty ‘float’ (£500) (total £3200)

Representation / Lobbying – in the past this section would have taken up a chunk of the chair’s report but not this year. The good news is that this year saw the fruits of previous lobbying as the Bangholm Sports Centre opened and as plans for Phase2 developed. A lot of credit needs to go to the two previous Parent Council chairs, Andrew MacMillan and Liz Blair, whose significant work helped to highlight the need for investment in the school and rally support for this in a way which ultimately led to the developments of this year (Bangholm) and years to come (Phase2).

Thanks – my thanks go to people behind the scenes who have helped generally or me personally in various ways through the year – Morag Reid, Matthew Perren, Lisa Cardozo, Helen Anderson, Liz Blair, Fiona Campbell, Morag Burnett, and the many parents and carers who’ve taken part in the small group discussions which have greatly helped the future work of the school.

I’d also like to say a big thank you to Nick Burge and to the senior leadership team at the school who have been very supportive throughout my time as Chair. Since he began as headteacher, I’ve found Nick really keen to communicate with parents, proactive in dealing with many issues, and keen to respond to other ones flagged up. He is often the one ensuring the next meeting with me takes place, to check in on various issues and developments and I’ve hugely appreciated this.

What’s next – the answer to that lies with the parents and carers at Trinity Academy and how they want to see the Parent Council take shape from here. There is a lot of interest from parents in school life, offers from many to be involved in some way, and potential for an even stronger school/family community to grow.

Mike Nicholson, Chair, Trinity Academy Parent Council trinityparentcouncil@googlemail.com

Info on Parent Council Membership

Looking ahead - would you be part of the Parent Council?

The Parent Council loses a few members each year as children move on from Trinity Academy, so we always need some people who are willing to attend our meetings (~6 a year) and comment as and when required about issues affecting the Parent Forum.

(our meetings are open to the whole Parent Forum, but we need some parents willing to formally be part of Parent Council in the event of any decision making).

If you would be interested in being part of the Parent Council in the next year, please email trinityparentcouncil@googlemail.com and note what year group your child is in. Many thanks

Parent Forum (everyone) / Parent Council (voluntary role representing the Parent Forum)

1. The parents of the pupils in attendance at Trinity Academy constitute the **Parent Forum** of the school.
2. The **Parent Council** is a body to represent **the Parent Forum** and carry out the functions as set out in the Parent Council constitution and in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.
3. The objectives of the **Parent Council** are:-
 - To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents
 - To promote partnership between the school, its pupils, all its parents and wider community
 - To report to all parents
 - To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils, including appropriate fund-raising
 - To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of pupils.
4. The **Parent Council** members will be selected for a period of one year after which they may put themselves forward for re-selection if they wish. Any parents of a child at the school can volunteer to be a member of the **Parent Council** by submitting a note of interest to the Chair of the Parent Council. Any parent can nominate a parent for the **Parent Council** providing their nominee has given his/her agreement.