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Meeting Minutes – Trinity Parent Council 3rd December 2024

Present

Online: Bence Solymar, Ranald Swanson, Catherine Kidd, Rosie Hunter, Helen Langan, Faith

In Person: Nick Burge, Headteacher, Paul K Jeffrey, Chair
Lesley Kelly, Colin Duncan, Lorna Morgan, Clare Sharp, Laura Lewis, Judith Mackinlay, Tilly Sheridan, Ellen Tasker, Angela Jackson-Barnes

Apologies

Helen Kettle, Kirsten Dunn, Morag Burnett, Manuela Molendini

Minutes of Meeting

Welcome from Paul. Apologies and record of attendees was taken and recorded formally

Headteachers Report

Updates:

Headteachers updates are now to include updates on professional aspects of school life.

Mr Burge also reported the sad news that an ex-pupil of the school was killed recently.

New school update and related issues:

Demolition is continuing and it is planned that the tower will be gone by August.

A request has been made to the contractor for ‘quiet days’ during school exams that will take place in the main school building. These were agreed and implemented during last summer’s exams.

Prints of a painting of the original TA building (by a former pupil, Graham Mercer, now deceased) will be made available to buy as postcards and posters.

TA magazines dating from the 1930s will be used as inspiration for a new magazine/book about TA life. This will be created by Bethany Robb and a group of staff. Reclaiming the TA stage – customised bricks from the school stage will be available to buy. This will help support the school show, including the additional costs of using Broughton school as the venue.

Events and news:

New school tracking system – a number of parents had submitted queries about the new tracking report in relation to the format and understanding how current and target grades are set. Mr Burge pointed out that the system is council-wide and that we are unable to change this. However, the school can decide what goes into the covering letter accompanying the tracking report. Mr Burge has been gathering views through the questionnaire to better understand how families have been responding to the new system. If parents have queries please get in touch with Mr Burge.

365 homework logging system – this has been rolled out to S1 and S2 pupils, and will be extended to S3 in February 2025.

Prelims – all of these are taking place before Xmas, which is in line with parental and pupil feedback on timing of the prelims. This earlier timescale has a number of benefits including possible improved wellbeing for pupils and the chance of getting the results earlier, allowing more time for support to be in place before the full exams.

Communication for young people with additional support needs – all S1 pupils with ASN have met with learning support staff. Parents and carers will have received a letter to say that the meeting took place and describing the supports that are in place for their child. Throughout the school, where specific supports are being used, families will be informed via a letter. This process should be completed by Christmas for all year groups. Parents are invited to contact Mr Burge directly if they have any issues or queries.

Shared classroom experience – the Senior Management Team, along with a quality improvement officer and a curriculum leader representative have attended classes to observe the classroom experience. Specific feedback is offered to individual teachers and summaries of the observations will be shared with all teaching staff during the January in-service day. Curriculum Leaders will now take on the maintenance of quality assuring learning and teaching ahead of the next whole school shared classroom experience taking place in September next year.

Curriculum Developments

Learning for sustainability and Meta Skills are beginning to be integrated into learning and teaching across the school.

S1 Curriculum development – there is a move to include more interdisciplinary learning into the S1 curriculum and TA will participate in a 6-week pilot project to test how this will work. It will involve all S1 pupils, in August 2025, choosing a common project, which will draw on some of the themes relating to learning for sustainability.

Communication with families:

The school communicates with parents in various ways.

Recent surveys have been used to gather parental views, which have received some positive feedback.

The school app provides another method of relaying school information and dates for events via the calendar tab, although parents have experienced issues with using the app at times.

Mr Burge acknowledged that the school receives numerous requests for communications to go to parents and appreciates the impact this can have on parents. Suggestions for how to make communication more manageable for parents are welcome. Parents are reminded to look at the school website which will hold all school-related information. Links to the website will be included in future communications.

Some questions/comment from parents on HT report:

There was discussion around the timing of the new tracking report, which was felt to be too late for S4-6. An earlier report would be more helpful.

‘Cause for concern’ letters were also discussed. Parents who had received these commented that the style of these letters did not convey a clear account of the issue relating to their child; they did not include important context that should be taken into account; and that the title of these letter was unhelpful. Mr Burge thanked parents for raising these issues as he had had not previous feedback about this system. The purpose and content of these letters will be reviewed. He will take forward in discussions with Mr Todd and may also ask for input from a parent group.

There was discussion around the use of language in school communications, and that this needs to be accessible for all parents. It was suggested that some parents might have expertise in plain English and accessible communication that they might offer to the school.

MS TEAMS information – some discussion of the variation in how information is presented in pupils’ MS TEAMS folders for different subjects. Mr Burge noted that shared classroom observations indicated learners were navigating TEAMS very well in school, that creativity and initiative from staff was welcome and that different approaches between subjects pre-dates the use of online platform, now that all information is in one place these differences are more obvious. He is aware of challenges for parents and carers trying to support home learning and will work with staff to remedy this.

School space for S5/6 pupils – some parents were concerned about the lack of a common room for S5/6 pupils. Mr Burge acknowledged that a constant space for S5/6

pupils does not currently exist and has not been available for several years. Pupils are free to use other spaces including classroom spaces and information about which spaces are free throughout the week is shared with learners. Although it cannot always be in the same place, there is space available for pupils to revise and to complete course work during the day. Pupils are welcome to be at home for study periods if they wish.

Additional Support Needs – update from Judith Mackinlay

- A session for parents was held at Bangholm, attended by 7 families.
- This session gave parents a chance to share their experiences and provide feedback on how to further support pupils with additional support needs and their parents.
- A meeting was then held with Nick Burge and Dee Scott, the newly appointed Depute Head with responsibility for ASN.
- Areas of discussion focused on clearer communication between school and home how to reach all parents, not only the most vocal.
- A follow up meeting with Dee Scott will happen in January. One intended aim is to create a platform for sharing information and support. One suggested method is developing the current online padlet so that parents, carers and staff can access and keep it up to date.
- Kirsten Dunne will attend an area meeting for parents of pupils with additional support needs.
- Family Chat at Bangholm will be organised for the spring and summer terms.
- Dee Scott will be invited to attend the next TAPCC meeting.

News from TAPCC Chair

Paul announced that he will be stepping down as Chair and thanked everyone for the support he has received during this time. Judith (Vice Chair) will step up to Chair in the interim period. Parent council members are grateful to Paul for all his work on leading the group.

AOB

A parent made a plea for some parent council funds to buy hockey kit for the senior boys hockey team (they currently have no kit of their own). Paul asked that a request be emailed to him, copying in Mr Burge and the TAPCC.

A reminder of the importance of sending communications to parents (with photos where appropriate) to inform them about where money raised has been spent.

Work is currently taking place for a re-brand of the TAPCC website, and a meeting with Fi Campbell is being arranged.

Meeting Closed

The meeting was closed by Paul with thanks given to all attendees.