



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2014

PRESENT:	Louise Elder	Chair	PSP member
	Dave Neillans	Vice Chair	PSP member
	Amanda Herriott	Parent	PSP member
	Caroline McKinnel	Parent	PSP member
	Janette Middlemass	Parent	PSP member
	Derek Simpson	Parent	PSP member
	Ian Smith	Parent	PSP member
	Liz Syme	Parent	PSP member
	Kim White	Parent	PSP member
	Mark Wyllie	Parent	PSP member
	Calum Blair	Teacher	PSP member
	Helen Brannigan	Teacher	PSP member
	Colin Dempster	Teacher	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Kay Boylan	Parent
	Fiona Dewar	Parent
	Gillian Greenshields	Parent
	Liz Syme	Parent
	Caroline Taylor	Parent
	John Wrinn	Parent
	Calum Paul	Head Boy
	Annabel Jackson	Head Girl
	John McMillan	Local Councillor
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

Louise Elder (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Linda Bowen, Greg Cookson, Julie-Clare Paterson, Councillor Tom Trotter and Provost Broun-Lindsay.

2. Minutes of Meeting of 5 November 2014

The minutes were approved without change.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Points

Website comments – Louise has been discussing who moderates website comments with Ian Smith.

Informal suggestion box – discussions are ongoing with staff and pupils.

Co-ordinate schools and PSP website information – Actioned by Louise, Kay Boylan and Mr Dempster.

Funding email – Actioned by Louise.

Interview date – Actioned by Mrs Ingham.

Contact Preston Lodge re app – Mr Dempster has contacted Preston Lodge for more information, but has not yet received a response.

4. Chairperson's Report

Area Partnership Meeting (12 November) – Louise gave an overview of the recent Haddington & Lammermuir Area Partnership meeting, during which discussions on “Opportunities for Children and Young People” were led by S4 pupils Hamish, Abbi, Lois and Emma. Both Louise and Mrs Ingham noted how impressive the youngsters had been and how well they had represented themselves and the school. Minutes of the meeting are available on request from parentcouncil@knox.elcschool.org.uk. Louise said that it was a big challenge to change the facilities and opportunities for young people within the area and that the PSP should support efforts to do so.

P7 / S1 Parent Focus Groups (13 November) – Louise had attended the recent focus group meetings on transition for P7 and S1 parents (see also Item 8 - Staff Member's Report).

S5/6 Question Time (24 November) – Louise mentioned the S5/6 Question Time event organised by Mr Flood for modern studies, economics and business studies students, which was a fantastic and very professional event that featured lots of engagement and challenging responses.

Training – The Role of the Parent Council (24 November) – Louise attended the recent East Lothian Council training course.

Sunday Times Top Schools – Louise congratulated Mrs Ingham and the staff on Knox Academy coming 49th in the recent Sunday Times Top State Secondary Schools in Scotland List.

Website – Louise thanked Kay Boylan for her work on revamping the PSP website. Kay, Louise and Mr Dempster have been liaising to co-ordinate the school and PSP website more to try to minimise duplication between the two. A FAQ (Frequently Asked Question) section has been added to the PSP website.

The Knox PSP website now has a new domain name: www.knoxparents.org.uk, which links to the previous Edubuzz page.

Knox Sport Hoodies – Louise noted how good Knox pupils look in their new Knox sport hoodies (which are blue, with the name of the specific sport down one arm e.g. hockey, swimming etc) and thanked Mr Wands (Sports Co-ordinator) for organising the hoodies. Mrs Ingham mentioned that these hoodies do not comply with the everyday school dress code.

Sports fixtures and club information- There was a discussion about how best to inform parents about school sports fixtures, particularly when they are cancelled at short notice. Not all parents and particularly younger pupils use social media, therefore Twitter and Facebook announcements do not work for all. Mrs Ingham agreed to discuss this with Mr Wands to find the best way to keep parents informed.

Action SI

5. Pupil's Matters – Annabel Jackson & Calum Paul.

UCAS – S6 pupils are currently finishing their applications and personal statements ready for submission to UCAS (Universities & College's Admission Service) early next year.

Answer box – S5 pupils had asked for an “Answer Box”, into which questions could be submitted anonymously with the question and answer being displayed on a noticeboard, perhaps in the library. A group of pupils are looking in to how to make this work.

Inter-house competitions – Pupils have asked for more ways to earn House Points, not just through sporting achievements, e.g. through other subject areas such as English (perhaps by writing a good short story or poem).

Recycling bins – S6 pupils have asked for recycling bins in their common room. It is hoped to have them in place for next term.

S6 Panto – S6 are preparing for their panto performance two weeks tomorrow.

Leadership Class – Knox pupils have been helping on a Thursday afternoon to provide hockey training to P6 & 7 at King’s Meadow. P4 & P5 pupils will receive the training next.

Fashion show – Some of the S6 Sports leaders organised a Fashion Show to raise money for East Lothian Special Needs Playscheme, which was a great success.

Fundraising – S6 pupils dressed up on Children in Need day in November and raised money for charity. Proceeds were split between Children in Need and East Lothian Foodbank.

House Captains – House Captains are being encouraged to update the website more, particularly with success stories from their house.

Pupil Council – the next Pupil Council meeting will be in January.

6. Head Teacher’s Report

Staffing – Mrs Ingham gave an update on staffing. Two new Biology teachers have been appointed, one permanent and one temporary to cover a secondment. A new teacher of Physics has also been appointed. Mrs Ingham thanked Kim White for her help with the recent interviews.

News/updates –

Self-evaluation – Mrs Ingham thanked Mr Blair for all his work on self-evaluation, particularly the P7/S1 Transition Focus Group and the Learning & Teaching Pupil Groups.

Charity events – In November, the school raised nearly £1000 for charity, with £300 raised for East Lothian Foodbank, which will go to provide selection boxes at Christmas time. The rest was raised for Children in Need. Last night’s Fashion Show raised money for East Lothian Special Needs Playscheme. Christmas Boxes are currently being filled by Tutor Groups with food for the local elderly and will be decorated this year along the theme of The Twelve Days of Christmas.

Christmas Concert – Mrs Ingham has been allocated fifteen tickets for this year’s Christmas concert, and apologised as that meant that not all PSP members could be invited. A drinks reception will be held in the school library beforehand.

S5/6 pupils – Letters have been sent out to parents of S5/6 pupils who appear to be struggling with coursework at the moment in order to catch potential problems early on.

Christmas Sparkle Dance – rules for dances will be sent home shortly and will also be available on the school website.

Valuables in PE (Physical Education) – a note has gone onto the school website to remind pupils not to bring wallets and money to PE, as cash has been going missing recently in the changing rooms.

Mental health issues – The important role of the school counselling service was acknowledged. The school counsellor, Sheena, will be invited to the January PSP meeting to speak to the PSP about the work that the counselling service does. There has been an increase in counselling requests from pupils recently and there is not enough capacity to accommodate all of the requests at present.

East Lothian Star Awards – Knox Academy has been nominated in the Community Partner category of this year's East Lothian Star Awards. The awards ceremony is tomorrow night at the Brunton Hall.

Self-improving schools visit – Knox is looking at self-improvement in partnership with St David's High and Newbattle High, Midlothian. Each school plays host to a visit from the other two and staff from St David's and Newbattle will visit Knox tomorrow.

Dates for the diary

8 December – S5/6 Parent's Evening

11 December – Christmas Sparkle Dance

16 December – Christmas Concert (2pm & 7pm)

18 December – S6 panto for parents

19 December – End of term

6 January -start of new term.

Councillor John McMillan left the meeting

7. Curriculum –

Timetabling – Discussions are ongoing amongst staff about how to timetable the Senior School. Currently, S4 is timetabled separately from S5/6, but this may change to provide a neater solution by running S4/5/6 classes together, where appropriate. This system has been used elsewhere and if it can be made to work, would be more efficient in terms of staff.

8. Staff Member's Report

Miss Brannigan - Human Rights Day next week – various activities are planned.

- 17 December - Annual S1 Nativity Scene competition.

Mr Blair - 13 November, Transition Focus Group – lots of useful information came from P7 & S1 parents.

- Learning & Teaching Policy Pupil Group – giving pupils a voice in discussions about changes to the Learning & Teaching Policy.

- Evaluation of PSE/Health & Wellbeing curriculum.

There was a discussion about PSE (Personal & Social Education), which was felt by staff to need a curriculum review. This has been discussed with pupils in order to get a good sense of what information pupils want and what information is helpful to them. It is intended to revamp some of the

issues covered in order to reflect modern life (e.g cyber-bullying). PSE was felt to be a good driver of ethos and values within the school. Anyone with more ideas on this, or who wishes to discuss it further should contact Mr Simpson (dsimpson@knox.elcschool.org.uk).

9. Parent’s Matters

S4 Parent’s Evening – Amanda Herriott thanked staff for the recent S4 parent’s evening, which she had found to be honest and positive, with all questions fully answered by staff. She said that the school were doing a wonderful job and this was seconded by parents at the meeting.

Dave Neillans noted that the acoustics in the school hall made it difficult to hear on parent’s night. There was a discussion about how parent’s night could be improved logistically. Derek Simpson offered to investigate how best to schedule appointments for parents and which rooms to hold appointments in and agreed to bring some options to the next PSP meeting for discussion. **Action DS**

PAT dog – Katrina Booth (a Knox parent) has offered to bring her PAT (Pets as Therapy) trained dog into school. PAT is a community-based charity which provides therapeutic visits from volunteers with their pet dogs and cats. Mrs Ingham and Mr Simpson were delighted and said this would be great. Louise will ask Katrina to email Mrs Ingham directly about this. Amanda Herriott said Ross High would also be very interested in receiving visits from a PAT dog and will forward contact details to Louise to pass on to Katrina. **Action LE/SI**

10 . Any Other Business

East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members (ELAPCM) – Ian Smith gave a summary of relevant matters discussed at recent ELAPCM meetings. He noted that each Parent Council can send two representatives and encouraged another PSP member to attend the next meeting on 15 December at 7pm in the Brunton Hall, Musselburgh.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 7 January 2015.

Action Points	Who	When
Discuss with Mr Wands how best to keep parents up to date with sports fixtures.	SI	For next meeting
Investigate options to improve logistics of parent’s night and bring options to the PSP for discussion	DS	Next meeting
Liaise with Katrina Booth about PAT dog visits to Knox	LE/SI	As soon as possible