



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2012

PRESENT:	Vicky Cole (Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Greg Cookson (Vice chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Sally Cunningham (KASG rep)	Parent	PSP member
	Andrew Greathead	Parent	PSP member
	Dave Neillans	Parent	PSP member
	Donald Smith	Parent	PSP member
	Ian Smith	Parent	PSP member
	Kim White	Parent	PSP member
	Kath Anderson	Staff	PSP member
	Colin Dempster	Staff	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Rob Greenaway	Teacher
	Alison Hunton	Parent
	Julie-Clare Paterson	Parent
	Ludovic Broun-Lindsay	Local Councillor
	John McMillan	Local Councillor
	Tom Trotter	Local Councillor
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Mark Wyllie.

2. Minutes of 5 September 2012 – the last minutes were approved with one amendment - Sally Cunningham's name was missed from the list of those present at the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the minutes – see item 4

4. Chairperson's report and action points from the last meeting

Pupil focus groups - Mrs Ingham will speak to the PSP about this at the next meeting.

Action S1

Knox News – Knox News will in future be issued four times a year in a significantly reduced format. The majority of information for parents will be available on the school website. Knox News will concentrate on issues of interest to the P7s/new S1 intake who are new to the school, with references to where further information can be found on the website. Knox News will be printed double sided to reduce cost, and copies will be made available at the school reception, and at the John Gray Centre (Haddington Library).

Careers event – parents and staff agreed that this idea was still worth pursuing; however it would be time consuming for those involved in organizing it. The possibility of working with another school (such as Dunbar Grammar) to pool resources was felt to be a good idea. There was support for doing a simple careers evening

or afternoon, where volunteer parents could come into school to talk about their career and the training they underwent. Library resources were also discussed, with the inclusion of information about careers post-university, and careers without university suggested. Mrs Ingham will forward Jennifer Jones' (Knox's career's officer) contact details to Vicky Cole. All parent reps are encouraged to contact Vicky Cole with ideas, so this event can be planned and organized.

Action VC and All

S3 curriculum maths concerns – Mrs Ingham has passed on both the concerns and the positive feedback from parents at the last meeting to the Maths Dept staff, and teaching staff will be contacting individual parents as and when required.

Broken hand driers in boy's toilets – have now been fixed.

PSP meeting summary – it has not been possible to post a summary of PSP meetings on the PSP website, as Edubuzz is still not working and so the PSP website is still down. It is expected that this will remain a problem for the next few weeks. Mrs Ingham will email parent reps with a further update on this, as soon as she hears more.

Noticeboards – some of the school noticeboards have been updated, and Donald Smith has passed on further comments to Mrs Ingham on this matter, who will action them.

Action SI

5. Profiles and ePortfolios

Vicky Cole introduced Mr Greenaway (Acting Principal Teacher PE), who has been developing the ePortfolio system at Knox. Mr Greenaway has spoken to the PSP in the past on this matter and he was here to give an update on progress. There has been national recognition of this innovative new method of recording a pupil's learning journey, with Knox's ePortfolios being celebrated as an example of good practice.

The new Curriculum for Excellence has involved a shift towards youngsters gaining skills to make them employable, rather than simply gaining exam results. The emphasis is now upon process rather than product. As part of this, all S3 pupils are required to produce an S3 profile. The profile is used to direct the pupil's thoughts about where they want to go in their learning journey and to provide a snapshot of their learning.

The ePortfolio has been developed to form the basis for the pupil's S3 profile. It provides a window on the learning journey of the child by storing examples of the pupil's best work and allows pupils to write posts and upload photographs to celebrate achievements both within and outwith school.

The ePortfolio is a private space, designed by the pupil and is based on a Facebook-style template. The space can be accessed only by the pupil, their teachers and parents using a unique username and password. It allows an individual dialogue between staff, pupils and parents through the comments which staff and parents can write within the pupil's ePortfolio. This allows parents and staff to give a "remote" celebration of the pupil's achievements, without embarrassment. Comments given by staff are only positive and suggestions such as improvements to spelling or grammar are not made, although support to learners is provided as required. Since it is private, it allows pupils to give honest comments about themselves and their learning experiences, without fear of looking "uncool" to their peers.

The ePortfolio is hosted on an intranet site, so is not available on the internet and cannot be accessed via internet search engines. The ePortfolio is housed on the GlowScotland intranet site, so is not susceptible to the same problems that have been recently experienced by Edubuzz. It cannot be accidentally deleted by pupils or parents.

Within the ePortfolio homepage is a list of sub-categories relating to the subjects that pupils study at school (eg expressive arts, languages, literacy, maths etc). A tagging system allows pupils to make links between different curricular areas, for example when a skill learnt in one subject can be applied in another (eg symmetry which would be relevant to maths, CDT and art). A coloured logo system is being developed for use within ePortfolios as well as within Powerpoint teaching presentations by staff. The logos are based on the "Thinking Skills Triangle" and will feature a specific colour and letter combination which will be used to

highlight the different skills needed for tasks within a lesson (eg creating, evaluating, analyzing, applying, understanding, remembering etc). Ian Smith raised the issue of colour blindness potentially affecting affected pupil's use of the logo system. Mr Greenaway will consider this, but it is hoped that the letter used in the logo would help.

The ePortfolio is owned by the pupil and they dictate what goes into it. Staff will try to encourage pupils to use their ePortfolio, but ultimately at this stage, how much it is used is up to the pupil themselves. Staff do not dictate to pupils what should go on the ePortfolio, as it needs to be authentically produced by the pupil to reflect them and their learning journey. Writing the profile should not become a burden to pupils.

The ePortfolio was piloted with the S2 year group in February 2012, in preparation for the production of their S3 profile this academic year. Further development of the ePortfolio is identified as a priority once staff are confident that it is working smoothly. It is hoped to extend the ePortfolios to S1 and the senior school in due course. The long-term aim is to roll the system out to Knox's cluster primary schools. This would be very valuable to staff as it would allow them to get to know the new P7/S1 intake early on; or potentially even before they start at Knox. It will also be valuable to senior pupils completing UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) applications in the future and also for job applications. Feedback received from school staff has been very positive. ePortfolios do not replace pupil reports.

Mr Greenaway handed out a copy of the Knox Academy S3 Profile Guidance Pack to all at the meeting, for information. Vicky Cole thanked Mr Greenaway for the time he had taken to attend the meeting and prepare his presentation, and for the huge amount of work he has done to develop ePortfolios. The PSP would like to hear how the system progresses in the future.

Further information on ePortfolios is available on the school website at www.ka-net.org.uk/eportfolio. A sample ePortfolio can be viewed at <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/el/ePortfolioDevelopmentblog/>.

6. Pupil's matters – see item 7, School Council.

7. Head Teacher's report

Annual report - Mrs Ingham circulated a copy of the school's Annual Report for parents to digest at leisure and said she was happy to receive any questions on it. The report will be available on the school website in due course.

Literacy Plus – the 8 or 9 volunteers will begin working in the school next week. If any other parents or carers are interested in becoming involved, please email Mrs Ingham (singham@knox.elcschool.org.uk).

Dress code – pupils have been offered a dress-down day if the day to day dress code improves. The school council is planning to do a questionnaire on the dress code.

School Council – Issues discussed at the recent School Council Meeting:

School aims: The School Council were very happy with the School Aims outlined in the Annual Report.

Social Seating: The social seating within the school is not up to scratch; Mrs Ingham is looking into the possibility of providing bean bags as an affordable option to improve the seating provision. Youngsters are not keen on opening up classrooms for additional social areas; they prefer the larger open areas within the school.

Food Court: Pupil's comments regarding queuing in the food court have been taken on board.

Ethos – each of Knox's three houses are in the process of choosing an individual mascot, slogan and theme tune.

Haddington Vision – Mrs Ingham and Mr Flood attended the Haddington Vision event on Monday night in the Corn Exchange. Mrs Ingham noted how proud she was of the pupils who volunteered to help and did a lot of good work on the night. Councillor McMillan noted that members of the Haddington Vision steering group had also been very impressed with the Knox pupils.

Staffing – Mrs Ingham gave an update on staffing.

Examination appeals – are expected to be completed by early November.

Events –

UCAS evening was reasonably well attended.

S6 weekend to Dalguise – pupils were praised for their behaviour by the staff at Dalguise.

S1 Settling-In Evening was well attended.

S2 Land Yacht Challenge will be held on 8 & 9 October.

“Challenge” period 3 on 12 October.

Councillors Broun-Lindsay, McMillan and Trotter left the meeting.

8. Staff member’s report

Miss Anderson noted that there was an over-subscription for the S3 Bronze Level Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme group, which is about to start. 24 places were available, but 39 pupils had applied. It had been agreed by staff that the successful pupil’s names should be chosen randomly by being drawn out of a hat. This was done at the PSP meeting so it could be clearly done in a fair and above board manner. Vicky Cole expressed thanks to Knox staff for getting DOE going again.

9. Parent’s matters

PSP parent reps – there are spaces for two additional parent PSP members. The meetings are open to all, but parents have to be PSP members to be able to take part in votes, or to take part in the interview process for senior staff at the school. It was agreed that the vacancies should be advertised and Mrs Ingham offered to do so in the next Knox News.

PSP staff reps – there is one space available for a staff representative. Mrs Ingham suggested this place could be filled by a different member of the management team on rotation. Vicky Cole believed that this would require a change to the PSP Constitution, which would have to wait till the AGM in February.

DHT interviews – Long leet interviews for the Deputy Head Teacher’s post will be held tomorrow (4 October). No PSP parent reps are available to attend, so Sally Wilson (a Knox parent, who is also Chair at Yester Primary School and has had the relevant Recruitment and Selection training), was co-opted onto Knox PSP, so that she can attend the interview panel and represent the parent forum. All were in agreement with this and Sally was nominated as a co-opted member by Vicky Cole and seconded by Kim White. Greg Cookson will attend the Recruitment and Selection training tomorrow evening.

Mrs Ingham will be undergoing training with Val McIntyre (East Lothian Council’s Education Dept) to enable her to train parent reps to take part in the interview process. Parents noted how hard it was to attend interviews when they are held during the day and involve working parents using a valuable day of annual leave to attend. Parents felt that it was important to attend interviews; and that they were being disenfranchised by the current system. The issue has been raised verbally with the Education Authority, but the PSP feels very strongly on this matter and will raise it formally in writing with East Lothian Council. **Action VC**

ELAPCM –

Ian Smith attended the last ELAPCM meeting on 6 September. Two items had been submitted by Knox PSP for the agenda:

1: Knox will soon be hosting a P7 Open Evening. What is the current out of catchment area policy for Knox? The usual staffing and accommodation criteria do not appear to have been applied this year.

2: Our Chair reports that a promise has been made to make next year's process open and transparent. What changes will be made to achieve this?

These items were not, in the end, discussed at the last ELAPCM meeting due to time constraints at the meeting; but they will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting on 8 November at Preston Lodge. Ian Smith will attend again for Knox PSP.

The P7 Open Evening is to be held next Tuesday (9 October). Val McIntyre (ELC) has said she will email Vicky Cole to advise what to say to P7 parents at that meeting.

School handbook – this will be added to the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

Action MB

10. Correspondence – has been emailed to all parent reps.

11. Any Other Business

Fundraising – Sally Cunningham noted that Ross High are running a sponsored walk for the whole school on a Friday morning and asked if this would something that KASG (Knox Academy Support Group) could do at Knox. Mrs Ingham was supportive of this, but noted that it would have to be carefully timed, to avoid “charity fatigue”. Mrs Ingham will contact Mrs Bartholomew (Head Teacher at Ross High), to ask how the event went and how much money was raised. A general discussion followed about the lack of funds for the maintenance and upkeep of school equipment, particularly in PE.

Action SI

Absence – Donald Smith asked what the process was for submitting school absence notes. Mrs Ingham advised that pupils should give absence notes to their Form Tutor, who will make a note in the class register and sign the letter to show they have seen it. The letter then goes to the school office, where the staff record the information using the Seemis system.

Date of Next Meetings:

31 October, 28 November 2012; 9 January, 6 February, 24 April and 22 May 2013.

Action points	Who	When
Mrs Ingham to talk to the PSP about the pupil focus groups.	SI	At next meeting
Discuss careers event ideas to find a way forward.	All interested parent reps.	As soon as possible.
Update the noticeboards in the main foyer	SI	As soon as possible.
Write to Education Authority regarding the difficulties parents face in attending staff interviews during working hours.	VC	As soon as possible.
Add school handbook to next agenda	MB	For next meeting.
Contact Mrs Bartholomew (Ross High) re fund raising	SI	For next meeting.