



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2013

PRESENT:	Vicky Cole	(Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Greg Cookson	(Vice Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Derek Simpson		Parent	PSP member
	Donald Smith		Parent	PSP member
	Ian Smith		Parent	PSP member
	Kim White		Parent	PSP member
	Mark Wyllie		Parent	PSP member
	Kath Anderson		Teacher	PSP member
	Callum Blair		Teacher	PSP member
	Colin Dempster		Teacher	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Linda Bowen	Parent
	Louise Elder	Parent
	Amanda Herriot	Parent
	Alison Hunton	Parent
	Janette Middlemass	Parent
	Mairi Neillans	Parent
	Julie-Clare Paterson	Parent
	Rev John Vischer	Parent
	Lucy Wrinn	Parent
	John McMillan	Local Councillor
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Broun-Lindsay, Andrew Greathead and Dave Neillans.

2. Minutes of 22 May 2013

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.

3. Matters arising from the minutes – see item 4

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

Recommended book list – Mr Swinney produced a paper copy of the recommended book list for distribution before the summer break. This will be published on the school website shortly.

Email address – Derek Simpson will now be contacted via his Knox email address.

Funding for Parent Council courses – Most East Lothian Council courses for Parent Council members are free. Where courses do incur a cost, this can be funded via the PSP budget, once agreed with the Chair.

Pupil Council – The dates for this year's Pupil Council meeting have not yet been finalised, but Mrs Ingham will forward them to Vicky Cole as soon as she has them. Mrs Ingham has invited the new Head Boy and/or Head Girl to attend a future PSP meeting. **Action SI**

Greg Cookson & Mark Wyllie came into the meeting

Feedburner – Ian Smith has set this up to work from the PSP website and it should be working now. New parents at the meeting were invited to pass their email address on to Ian, so they could be added on to the email list. Once the link to sign up for email alerts (which are sent when the website is updated) is available on the PSP website, Ian will tell Mrs Ingham, so she can publicise it to all parents. **Action IS / SI**

PSP meeting dates – Meeting dates for this year have been agreed and the room booked with FES. Dates of this year's meetings are (all Wednesdays): 2 October, 30 October, 27 November, 8 January, 5 February, 26 March and 21 May. These meeting dates are advertised at the bottom of each PSP meeting agenda and will be advertised on the PSP website. **Action MB**

Modern Languages funding – Mark Wyllie is still tracing this information and will forward it to Mrs Ingham. **Action MW**

5. Pupil's Matters

Mrs Ingham has had a good initial meeting with the new Head Boy and Head Girl. Due to the outstanding quality of candidates, two depute Head Boys and Head Girls have been chosen this year.

Councillor McMillan came into the meeting

6. Head Teacher's report

STAFFING:

Mrs Hubbard (Learning Support) has retired after 12 years at Knox.

All expected Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) have arrived and are settling in.

Three members of staff in Behaviour Support were given permanent positions at the end of last session.

Staffing is very tight this year, due to budgetary constraints. There is very little money available to provide for supply teaching cover for absent staff. Junior classes are being prioritised for cover by existing staff; however there may be occasions where S5/6 classes are left to work independently. Mrs Ingham said this was driven by necessity rather than desire and that Higher classes would be covered, wherever possible.

NEWS / UPDATES:

Open Golf – Pupils did very well helping at the Open Golf Championship this summer at Muirfield. The organisers had praised the pupils' work ethic and politeness. Mrs Ingham thanked everyone who had made that possible.

Kids Witness News (KWN) – Further to Knox’s second consecutive UK Grand Prix win at the annual Panasonic Awards this summer; Panasonic have announced that they will no longer be running the KWN competition. This is very disappointing; however the school hope to continue the documentary-making experience for pupils in some other way in the future.

S1-3 Activities Week – The staff have agreed that the annual Activities Week will go ahead next year after all. Due to the introduction of the new National exams next year, it is likely that there will not be as much S4 exam leave, so S4 will be in school during the Activities Week, unlike previous years. However, the staff were keen to continue with Activities Week, despite the extra workload; so it will go ahead in the week beginning 26 May 2014. Brochures for activities will be sent home with pupils soon, with overseas trips amongst the options.

PROGRESS / CURRICULUM:

SQA results - Mrs Ingham gave a detailed summary of the pre-appeal SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) exam results for S4/5/6 pupils at Knox this year. Mrs Ingham feels there is still room for improvement, although she noted that there had been some stunning results by certain pupils. There will now be a process of self-examination, where the school will look to see how they can improve further in future.

Julie-Clare Paterson noted that study and exam skills were as important as knowledge of the subject to pupils sitting exams. Mrs Ingham said that exam and revision skills were taught throughout the school from the junior years and were reinforced at assemblies leading up to the exam period. Alison Hunton suggested a series of S4 events, one per term, to reinforce exam skills.

The school continually chart the progress of pupils to check that they are on track to achieve what they are capable of. The school try to feedback to parents as soon as possible if pupils are underachieving, before it is too late.

Councillor McMillan spoke about the school’s strong values and leadership and focus and noted his support. Vicky Cole said that the school could count on the support of the PSP.

Physical Education (PE) – The Scottish Government has made it statutory that schools provide 2 hours of PE per week in S1-S4, as of August 2014. Currently, S1 and S2 have 2 hours of PE per week; whereas S3 and S4 have 1 hour per week. Although an increase in PE would be desirable in principal, the current school timetable and new curricular requirements in S3 and S4 under Curriculum for Excellence do not allow the time for this. The statutory requirement states that the extra hour has to be taught by a PE teacher and it has to be within normal school hours (extra-curricular activities do not count, as they are not compulsory and so not all pupils attend). Therefore, in order to achieve the extra hour in S3 and S4, the school would have to cut time in other lessons. All parents at the meeting agreed that it would not be in the pupils’ best interests to cut lesson time in other subjects to achieve this new requirement. The PSP noted their support for the school if they chose not to implement this statutory requirement in S3 and S4.

STRATEGIC ITEMS:

WE R KNOX – Mrs Ingham noted the new black and white badges that pupils have been given which reinforce the firm set of three values the school are adopting: Wisdom, Engagement and Respect.

What can the school do to help support and inform parents? – Mrs Ingham thanked the PSP for their support over the past year; her first year as Head Teacher. The school is trying to work out simple strategies for the school to support parents, and also for the parents to support the school. She asked

parents for any ideas as to how the school could do this, and noted the huge untapped resource that the parent body represents.

Mr Simpson said that Mr Swinney (who spoke on this subject at the last PSP meeting on 22 May), was looking for volunteers for paired reading to improve the reading skills of S1 children identified as needing extra support. This would involve half an hour per week over, say, 10 weeks at a regular time and day. Parents who are interested in getting involved should contact Mr Simpson (dsimpson@knox.elcschool.org.uk).

Other help that parents and others in the wider community could give would be assisting in the school library, or help with foreign language practice with pupils. Parents are also sought for help in observing candidate teachers at interviews. None of the above requires parents or helpers to have PVG checks, as volunteers would be supervised at all times by school staff.

Linda Bowen left the meeting.

7. Staff member's report

Commonwealth Moves – Knox pupils will be involved in a performance and presentation at the Brunton Hall tomorrow night: "Commonwealth Moves: One Year to Go".

Mr Dempster has produced posters to illustrate the school dress code.

Photograph "mugshots" of staff members have been put up on the new noticeboard close to reception for the benefit of visitors and new pupils. Thanks were expressed to KASG for funding the noticeboard S6 and staff will spend a weekend away at Dalguise, Perthshire in the middle of September.

Mr Simpson expressed the school's thanks to Colstoun House, Haddington, for their incredible generosity in partnership with the Prince's Trust to provide work experience for pupils in events management, cooking skills and horticulture. Mr Simpson also thanked Councillor McMillan for his help in arranging this. Through new ventures like these, the school hopes to offer a range of new experiences for pupils in order to provide an appropriate education for everyone. Mr Simpson agreed to give a future update to the PSP about this.

Action DS

Ian Smith mentioned a recent discussion at ELAPCM (East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members) about a parent representative becoming a member of the East Lothian Council Education Committee. In order for the parent rep to become a voting member of the committee, Councillors would have to change the appropriate standing order. Councillor McMillan agreed to look into this.

Action JM

Councillor McMillan left the meeting.

8. Parent's matters

School calendar - Kim White asked if the school calendar (the list of events and dates at the school) was still available to parents. Mr Dempster said it could be found on the school website.

Mobile phones – A set of guidelines for mobile phone use in school is being drawn up by staff. Once finalised, it will be distributed to pupils and the message will be reinforced at school assemblies. It was noted that consistency between staff members was key and it was agreed that the wider parent body would be involved by putting the details on the school website.

Website update subscriptions Mr Dempster said there had been a number of new subscriptions for website update alerts since the start of term. Parents praised the school on their fantastic website, but

noted that it can be difficult to find the link on the website to subscribe for updates, as it is situated at the bottom of the page. Mr Dempster will look into this.

Action CD

School photos – School photos will be taken for S1 and S6 pupils. If there was a desire for it, S3 and S4 could be given the opportunity for photographs, but there would have to be enough parents willing to buy the pictures to make it cost effective for the photographer.

Roll cap - Due to the roll cap, several out of catchment pupils had been unsuccessful in achieving a place at Knox for S1 this year. Guidelines had been followed and there was nothing the PSP could do to change this.

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

10. Any Other Business

Mrs Ingham will invite Bev Skirrow (Knox Business Manager) to attend the meeting on 30 October to give an update on the school finances.

Action SI

Speakers:

Vicky Cole encouraged PSP members to consider if there were any staff speakers that they would like to invite to give a presentation at a meeting this year. It was felt that an update on the ePortfolio scheme would be of interest. Mrs Ingham agreed to invite Mr Greenaway to attend at some point to do this.

Action SI

Other ideas were for a member of staff to keep a diary of what they do in a day and come in to speak about this to the PSP, or a talk about changes in teaching and curriculum following the introduction of the new Curriculum for Excellence.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 2 October 2013.

Action points	Who	When
Forward Pupil Council meeting dates to Vicky Cole.	SI	Once the meeting dates have been set.
Inform Mrs Ingham when the link to sign up for email alerts for updates is available on the website so she can publicise this to parents	IS / SI	As soon as possible
Advertise PSP meeting dates for this year on PSP website.	MB	As soon as possible
Forward information on modern languages funding to Mrs Ingham	MW	As soon as possible
Investigate whether the ELC standing orders can be altered to give a parent member of the Education Committee voting rights.	CIlr JM	As soon as possible
Make the link to subscribe for alerts when the school website is updated, more prominent on the website.	CD	As soon as possible
Invite Bev Skirrow to speak to the PSP at the meeting on 30 October 2013.	SI	As soon as possible
Invite Mr Greenaway to attend a future meeting to update the PSP on ePortfolios.	SI	As soon as possible