



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2013

PRESENT:	Vicky Cole (Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Greg Cookson (Vice Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Sally Cunningham	Parent	PSP member
	Andrew Greathead	Parent	PSP member
	Dave Neillans	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

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	John McMillan	Local Councillor
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Miss Anderson, Mr Dempster, Alison Hunton, Councillor Broun-Lindsay and Councillor Trotter.

2. Minutes of 9 January 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

Careers event – Mrs Ingham suggested the idea of holding a series of careers talks for pupils, rather than one big careers event, as previously envisaged. A big event would be time consuming to organise, and may limit how many speakers could attend on one occasion and would be unlikely to be sustainable in the long term.

Instead, a series of careers talks could be held with three or four speakers, who could speak to a group of around 20 youngsters (who would be supervised by Knox staff). There could be two "sittings," with one group of S3/4 and one group of S5/6. The talks could be filmed (with the agreement of the speakers, but with no pupils filmed) and then made available on the school website for other pupils to view, both now and in future years. It was felt that this approach would be more manageable to organise and would be at a suitable scale to meet the needs of the youngsters. It would also be more sustainable in the long term, and the information received would be able to be used year on year. Speakers should be from a range of jobs/careers, both academic and skills-based. Another idea was to invite youngsters who have recently left school back to talk to pupils, to give them an idea of what they have experienced since leaving school (e.g. university/college application process, what university/college is like, how apprentice schemes work).

It was agreed that this style of careers event would be a good way forward. The PSP will advertise for speakers who would be willing to be involved. Those who give work experience places to pupils would be a good place to start, as well as interested parents and friends. Parent reps are also asked to advertise this amongst family and friends. Those who are interested should pass their contact details to PSP reps for forwarding to Mrs Ingham, or contact Mrs Ingham directly. The school will take it from there. **Action All**

Dave Neillans came into the meeting.

Charity fatigue – Mrs Ingham has spoken to Mrs Bartholomew about “charity fatigue” after the recent large-scale sponsored walk event at Ross High School. Mrs Bartholomew said that since the sponsored walk, there has been less money available from parents to fund extra things such as theatre trips or sports events and some of these events have had to be cancelled as a result. Sally Cunningham said that KASG (Knox Academy Support Group) have a few new fund-raising ideas which they would pursue instead of a large scale sponsored walk.

Literacy Plus – Mrs Ingham will invite Mr Swinney to speak to the PSP in due course. **Action SI**

Dress code picture – Mr Dempster is in the process of organising this. Mrs Ingham noted that the dress code was going well. Some pupils have been attending school in hoodies, due to the cold weather, but have been prepared to remove them when asked. Donald Smith noted that there seemed to be some inconsistency between different staff as to how strict the dress code was enforced. Mrs Ingham advised the school were promoting consistency between teachers.

Letter to Don Ledingham – Vicky Cole has written to Mr Ledingham (ELC Executive Director of Services (People)) about ELC’s response at a recent ELAPCM meeting to questions regarding roll capping and transparency. She has received an email response to say that the matter was now being referred to Darren Nightingale, the new Head of Education, but has heard no more. She will contact Mr Nightingale to see if she can obtain a response to her letter from him. **Action VC**

PSP membership – Sally Wilson has contacted Vicky Cole to say she will be standing down as a PSP parent rep due to other commitments. Vicky Cole noted the PSP’s thanks to Sally for her help in the recent Depute Head Teacher interview process. Following Sally’s resignations, there are now 2 parent places and 3 staff places currently vacant on the PSP.

Declaration of interest – Discussions have been continuing regarding the wording for a declaration of interest statement to go at the top of each agenda. This will be finalised as soon as possible and confirmed to the clerk, Mary Benson. **Action VC**

Constitution – Vicky Cole and Ian Smith have checked the PSP Constitution and can see no reason why a member of the teaching staff cannot be a parent member of the PSP; however the Constitution does state that East Lothian Council staff cannot be an Office Bearer (i.e. the Chair or Vice-Chair).

5. Pupil’s matters

Pupil Council – Donald Smith said that he had enjoyed reading about the Pupil Council meeting on the school website. Mrs Ingham noted that the Pupil Council were a “phenomenal bunch” this year. Vicky Cole asked if the Pupil Council would like a PSP member to attend a meeting to ask if there is anything they would like to be raised at the PSP meetings. Mrs Ingham felt this would be worthwhile. Sally Cunningham expressed an interest in attending for the PSP. Mrs Ingham will email Sally a list of Pupil Council meeting dates to see when she could attend. **Action SI**

6. Head Teacher's report

News –

Burn's Supper – Mrs Ingham noted how well the recent KASG Burn's Supper had gone and how proud she had been of the pupils involved. She expressed her thanks to all who took part. Sally Cunningham said KASG had made over £500 profit.

Venus at Scottish Parliament – Mrs Ingham had attended the Scottish Parliament last Tuesday evening to see Ms Brown get her certificate for Professional Recognition in Creativity from the GTC (General Teaching Council). The school's show choir 'Venus' had been asked to perform three songs for the audience.

Snowy weather – during the recent snowy weather, an extra-curricular activity had been running, although many people had thought it hadn't. Mrs Ingham apologised for any inconvenience and said that lessons had been learned for next time.

Post Appeals – The post appeal results are now in. Mrs Ingham gave an overview and said there was still some work to do.

16 + Leaver's Destinations – have been released and are an improvement on last session.

Rotary Competitions:

- *Young Musician* - Knox pupils Louis Harrodine and Jaimee Pickard are competing on 27 February.

- *Young Chef* – Knox pupils Charlotte Smith and Findlay Wallace did extremely well, but sadly will not be progressing further in the competition. Martin Kelly (Chef at Malmaison Hotel) who was judging sent a very complementary email to Mrs Ingham about them. Mrs Ingham noted her thanks to Gordon and Amelia Boyd, who transported the pupils on the day, and to Mrs Jackson (Home Economics), for the organisation.

S4/5/6 Prelims – are now complete. The school is now looking at setting final targets and getting senior pupils properly coursed.

Targetted mentoring – is getting up and running with fifteen S4 youngsters.

Councillor John McMillan came into the meeting.

S3 Course Choice – the school is trying a new approach by allowing free choice (i.e. no option columns)

S3 Profiles and ePortfolios – are to be completed by 1 March online and paper copies will be sent home to help with course choice.

Evaluation Visit 1 – Looking at "Improvements in Performance" and "The Curriculum" – Mrs Ingham gave an overview of this evaluation by the Education Authority's QIOs (Quality Improvement Officers). The Education Authority QIOs chose two topics and the school must provide evidence of how they are proceeding with it. On a six-point scale (1 being the worst and 6 being excellent), Knox were rated as 4 (good) on both topics.

Staffing – Mrs Ingham gave an update on staffing. Concern was expressed about Biology staffing, with one member of staff having recently left and another on long-term leave. Mrs Ingham said that the school was in a difficult position, but that they were trying their best. There is a lack of available Biology supply teachers, which is a real concern and has been raised at the Education Authority's Head Teacher's meetings. S4/5/6 classes were being prioritised for qualified Biology staff; however this may mean that classes do not get the same teacher for every lesson. Interviews for a temporary Biology teacher are taking place tomorrow (Thursday). The successful applicant will be in post as soon as possible. A recruitment campaign for a full time permanent Biology teacher will commence shortly.

Forthcoming events –

7 February 2013 – Valentine's Dance – has been postponed

8 February 2013 – Dress Up Day in aid of UNICEF's "Day for Change"

11 to 15 February 2013 – Half term break – New York trip.

27 February 2013 – S3 Parent's Evening

1 March 2013 – S3 Profiles complete

7. Staff members' report – none.

8. Parent's matters – Ian Smith gave a summary of the last East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members (ELAPCM) meeting. The next meeting is on 7 March.

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

10. Any Other Business

Budget – East Lothian Council's budget for 2013/14 will be set next Tuesday (12 February 2013). Councillor McMillan noted that setting the budget has been a very difficult process and that tough choices and tough priorities have had to be made. He noted that he would be happy to come along to a future PSP meeting, if required, to discuss the budget in detail.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – Kim White noted that the school's Duke of Edinburgh groups were progressing well.

Fund raising disco – Sally Cunningham noted that KASG would like to run a fund-raising disco at the end of term at Easter, but did not want to clash with other events. Mrs Ingham said that the Valentine's Disco had been postponed, but that the S6 Charities Committee would like to run it closer to the end of term. She said that she had advised them to run it with KASG's help, and to give them a cut of the profits.

CCF – Greg Cookson raised CCF (Combined Cadet Force - the Ministry of Defence sponsored youth organisation which used to run in the school and controversially closed in 2010) and asked if it was possible to review the running of CCF in the school again. Mrs Ingham said that funding and support from the Army would be essential if it were to run again. She noted that when the CCF closed, the school had been approached by the Army with a request to shut the CCF down. It had not been shut down by the previous Head Teacher, Mrs Craig, as commonly thought. Mrs Ingham said she would be open to consider CCF in future, but that it would have to fulfil a function not already filled by an activity in the school and that it would have to be sustainable in the long term. The PSP had not previously been aware of the details of the CCF closure. The PSP and Councillor McMillan said that they trusted Mrs Ingham to look into the possibility of CCF at Knox and to make the right decision for the school.

11. Date of Next Meetings:

24 April and 22 May 2013.

Action points	Who	When
Advertise the Careers Talks to potential contributors.	All	As soon as possible
Invite Mr Swinney to talk to PSP about Literacy Plus	SI	As soon as possible
Contact Mr Nightingale (Head of Education) for a response to letter re roll cap and transparency.	VC	As soon as possible
Discuss and agree a "declaration of interest" wording to go at the top of future PSP agendas. Confirm to MB.	VC and All	As soon as possible
Email Sally Cunningham a list of Pupil Council meeting dates so she can arrange to attend to represent PSP.	SI	As soon as possible