



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2012

PRESENT:	Vicky Cole (Chair)	Parent
	Greg Cookson (Vice chair)	Parent
	Sally Cunningham	Parent
	Andrew Greathead	Parent
	Dave Neillans	Parent
	Donald Smith	Parent
	Ian Smith	Parent
	Kim White	Parent
	Kath Anderson	Staff
	Linda McInnes	Staff

IN ATTENDANCE:	Janis Craig	Head Teacher
	Sheena Richardson	Local Councillor
	Tom Trotter	Local Councillor
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Derek Simpson, Mark Wyllie and Mrs Ingham.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the last meeting, held on Wednesday 11 January 2012, were approved.

3. Matters arising

Duke of Edinburgh Awards - Mrs Craig has met with East Lothian Council's Outdoor Education Department and also with Kim White. Mrs Craig will put together a paper on the matter prior to a further meeting after the February half term break.

Curriculum for Excellence – Mrs Craig has a meeting on 20 February with Phil Denning, HMIE to discuss Curriculum for Excellence.

The £10,000 Curriculum for Excellence development fund for faculties within the school has now been distributed.

4. Chairperson's Report and Action Points from last meeting

Staff rep - Mrs McInnes has offered to step down as a staff rep to give other staff members the chance to participate; however if no other member of staff wishes to join the PSP, Mrs McInnes is willing to remain as a staff representative. Ian Smith confirmed that the period of office is 3 years, but that anyone can step down within that time. Vicky Cole will send an email around all school staff (the staff rep does not have to be from

the teaching staff) to advertise the vacancy. Thanks were expressed to Mrs McInnes for her valued contribution to the Parent School Partnership.

Action VC

Website log in - Mary Benson has obtained log in details for PSP website and will upload minutes for the PSP.

School reports – Mrs Craig has received no further comments on the new school reports and the S3 parents evening went smoothly. In some cases, there may have been a slightly difference between departments in how they filled in the new report forms, so Mrs Craig will revisit the staff guidelines for filling in reports.

Feedblitz – The Knox Academy website updates are run on a similar system to Feedblitz, called MailChimp; however unlike Feedblitz, MailChimp is free to small users, such as the PSP. It is unclear whether the existing 200 or so Feedblitz subscribers could be imported into a new MailChimp system without having to resubscribe individually. Iain Smith agreed to liaise with Mr Dempster to find out more.

Action IS

5. Pupils' Matters – none.

6. Head Teacher's Report

Staffing – A report on staffing was made to members. Mr Stephen Illingworth has been appointed as Depute Head Teacher. Mrs Craig will invite Mr Illingworth to give a presentation at the next meeting on how school departments are reviewed internally, including how they identify when and where they are not succeeding as they should.

Action JC

Secondary Schools Management Review – is still ongoing. Mrs Craig will give a presentation on this at the next meeting.

Action JC

Tesco – The ongoing issue of pupils shopping in Tesco during their lunch break was discussed. The queuing system for pupils at the door of the store has now been abolished. Pupils are now each required to take a basket when entering the store to discourage shoplifting. This system seems to be working better. However, following feedback from S6 pupils, there is a strong consensus of opinion that there is a perceived lack of trust by Tesco staff, with reports of some pupils feeling that they are being followed round the store by Tesco staff. Tesco have a new store manager, whom Mrs Craig will invite to the school after the February break to discuss the matter. Mrs Craig believes that if Knox pupils are treated well, they will respond.

Road safety – there has been an ongoing problem with some pupils jumping in front of moving vehicles at the traffic lights near the Railway Inn, and within the Tesco car park. The school has been working with the police to try to reinforce the road safety message to pupils and the police will attend school assemblies after the February break to reinforce this further. It was suggested that the Tesco manager may be invited to attend also. As previously discussed, the school is looking at opening up more social areas within the school building to encourage more children to stay on campus during lunch and break times, but this is difficult due to the layout of the school. Ultimately, the school is not a prison and many schools have similar problems at break times.

The Gideons – The Gideons International come into the school each year to offer a free copy of the bible to each S1 pupil. This is currently done within an S1 assembly. There are two issues: firstly that peer pressure encourages some pupils to take a copy of the bible without really wanting it. Some bibles are then quickly discarded and end up littering the streets of Haddington. Secondly, no other religious organization currently gives out material to pupils in assemblies. It was suggested that the Gideons could in future be invited into religious education classes to talk to the pupils about their beliefs and work, rather than during assembly. Representatives of other religious faiths are already invited to talk to pupils in this way. The Gideon's Bibles could then be handed out during RMPS classes, advertised as being available from S1 tutors, or given out free in the school library, thereby reducing the peer pressure to take one.

Events – Mrs Craig gave details of the following events:

- Winter disco – had been a great success.
- Certain staff have been on a working visit to the Czech Republic.
- Drama productions “Passing Places” and “Lord of the Flies”.
- S5/6 prelims.
- S3 parents evening.
- KASG Burns Supper was cancelled due to accommodation issues (but rescheduled – see below and item 10).
- KASG “A Taste of Scotland”.
- February half term holiday.
- The Biology Dept’s science/environmental trip to Florida for senior pupils, has had to be cancelled due to a lack of numbers. The department may try to run the trip the following year, with a longer lead-in time to allow pupils/parents to save up for the trip.

7. Staff Members Report – none.

8. Parents Matters

Careers event – Vicky Cole introduced the idea of the PSP organizing a careers event at the school. It is felt that the parent forum is a huge untapped resource of parents and carers with a wide variety of skills and experience of different careers.

Willing parents could be invited into the school to be on hand for an informal chat with interested pupils, to share knowledge about their chosen career and give information about how they got into that career, including what training they undertook. Information about voluntary work was also felt to be valuable. Parents would not be asked to give a formal presentation to pupils, as this may put a lot of people off becoming involved.

The idea of contacting Knox former pupils for the same purpose was discussed. This could mean approaching more mature former pupils who are now established in their careers, or perhaps those who have just qualified in their chosen profession or trade, who could give guidance about how they went through the application process, how much they enjoyed their chosen course and how successful their course of training was in getting them a job. The question of how to contact former pupils was raised – perhaps through parents, the local press or community groups.

The idea of involving the Haddington Business Association was also raised, to give pupils an idea of the kind of work that may be available locally, as has been done in the past at the school.

It was felt that the above ideas would work best as separate events.

The school already has a careers board, which gives details of what qualifications you need for different careers. S6 pupils also come to speak to S4 pupils about their experiences, which sometimes involve the phrase “I wish I’d worked harder”, which can be a valuable lesson to younger pupils.

Mrs McInnes said she would be happy to help with a careers event. The matter will be discussed further amongst interested parent reps prior to the next meeting, when it is hoped to have a clearer idea of the way forward. Any parent rep interested in becoming involved should contact Vicky Cole by email. **Action All**

During the above discussion, Mrs Craig left the meeting to attend the “Lord of the Flies” school play.

Topics for website-based discussions – very few parents comment on the school blog. Information about how to post messages could be put on the school blog, including how to post things anonymously. There was a discussion at the meeting about what topics could be raised on the blog by the PSP to encourage parents to get involved and share information and experiences. Suggested topics were:

- How to encourage children to do their homework
- How to help with revision
- Pocket money
- Amount of time children spend on computer games
- The amount of sleep children get / need

Miss Anderson also suggested that staff could perhaps create a “how to” guide for parents and pupils. For example: “How to revise”, “How to apply for a job”, “How to write a CV” etc.

9. Correspondence – has been distributed to all via email.

10. AOCB

KASG – Sally Cunningham advertised KASG’s upcoming “A Taste of Scotland” event on 8 March 2012 from 7.00 to 10.00pm. Vicky Cole offered to advertise the event on the PSP website. Tickets will be available from Sally or from Mrs Ball, the school nurse.

Cluster primaries – a question was raised as to whether there was any perceived difference in attainment between children from the different cluster primary schools. Mrs McInnes said she had noticed no difference.

Date of Next Meetings:

7 March, 2 May and 30 May 2012.

Action points	Who	When
Email all school staff to invite a new staff rep to join PSP.	Vicky Cole	Before next meeting.
Liaise with Colin Dempster to find out if Feedblitz subscribers can be imported into MailChimp.	Iain Smith	For the next meeting.
Give a presentation to PSP on the Secondary Schools Management Review.	Mrs Craig	At the next meeting.
Invite Mr Illingworth to give a presentation to PSP on Departmental Reviews.	Mrs Craig	At the next meeting.
Discuss careers event ideas to find a way forward.	All interested parent reps.	Before the next meeting.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson) Date: 7 March 2012

Signed _____

(Clerk) Date: 7 March 2012