



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 22 MAY 2013

PRESENT:	Vicky Cole (Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Greg Cookson (Vice Chair)	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
	Kath Anderson	Teacher	PSP member
	Callum Blair	Teacher	PSP member
	Colin Dempster	Teacher	PSP member
IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher	
	Mr Swinney	Teacher - Communication & Literacy Faculty	
Head			
	Jon Hunton	Parent	
	Tom Trotter	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 Jane Scott.

2. Mr Swinney – Literacy

Vicky Cole introduced Mr Swinney, Head of the school's Communication & Literacy Faculty who attended the meeting to talk about the school's Communication Plus scheme. Communication Plus was set up by the school to enhance literacy and to involve parents more in reading with youngsters. At the start of this academic year, the school advertised for parent volunteers to take part in the Communication Plus scheme and a small group of people became involved. Volunteers were paired with specific S1 pupils who had been identified as needing extra support with their reading. Volunteers and their S1 pupils have been meeting for half an hour each week to practice reading using the Accelerated Reader programme. Volunteers have been given a journal to write comments about

progress each week, which are then passed to the English department. The first year of the scheme has been very successful and the school have noticed a great improvement in the reading skills of the S1 pupils involved.

A past study into literacy highlighted the importance of reading to younger children, particularly between the ages of 4 and 9. Reading with them at this age helps children with their spelling and vocabulary, and helps them to recognise patterns in the words, which can make the difference between developing into a “functional” reader and a “fluid” reader. Knox hopes to work with their cluster primary schools to support reading and they are looking at ways of doing this.

Mr Swinney asked parents to pass on to him any thoughts, feedback or ideas they might have about how to help the Communication Plus project grow. (dswinney@knox.elcschool.org.uk)

One suggestion was to contact the East Lothian Courier to suggest that they write an article about the scheme, to raise its profile and attract more volunteers to get involved. It was agreed that the scheme would be advertised at the upcoming P7 open night and in the regular daily bulletin and Head Teacher’s update on the website.

Mr Swinney had a paper copy of a list of recommended books from the school library for teenagers to read and gave a copy to parent reps. He agreed to arrange for this list to be put on the school website.

Action DS/CD

Vicky Cole thanked Mr Swinney for coming to the meeting and said how helpful and interesting Mr Swinney’s talk had been. The PSP felt that the success of the first year of the Communication Plus scheme was very encouraging.

Mr Swinney left the meeting.

3. Minutes of 24 April 2013

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change. Derek Simpson had not received a copy of the last minutes by email. Mary Benson will look into this.

Action MB

4. Matters arising from the minutes – see item 5

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

Communication Plus – Mrs Ingham invited Mr Swinney to this meeting to discuss Communication Plus.

Declaration of Interest - Vicky Cole has drafted a statement for the top of the agenda, which was discussed. It was agreed that the future wording would be: “*Members of the PSP must draw any conflict of interest to the attention of the Chair when it is relevant to matters under discussion or when they are in any doubt that it might be relevant.*” It was agreed that this statement will be placed at the top of all future agendas.

6. Pupil’s Matters

Mrs Ingham noted that more toilets had been opened up again in the school and that there had been very little vandalism in them since.

7. Head Teacher’s report

News –

- Fiona O'Donnell MP and Iain Gray MSP visited the school to mark the Oxfam "If" appeal.
- Knox 2013 KWN (Kids Witness News) team won "Best Picture and Sound" and were awarded the "UK Grand Prix" at the recent Panasonic UK Awards in Redditch for the second year running with their very powerful film "Lacey's Story" about teenage cancer. They are now through to the International Finals. Congratulations go to the KWN team and huge thanks to Mr Dempster, Mr Bristow and Ms Duff.
- The School of Rugby has been extended for another year and has been working in the community, including with Haddington Infant School, to promote health and fitness.
- S3 prefects have now been appointed and will take over from the Senior prefects until the end of term.
- Awards Ceremony – congratulations to Craig Greathead, who is S5 Dux. The PSP will also give an award at the ceremony this year – see item 11.
- Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) – the school are expecting 6 NQTs next session, in English, Modern Foreign Languages, Physics, Geography and two in PE.
- School Improvement Day – 21 May. Mrs Ingham showed parent reps the Improvement Plan Map, based on the work done with staff at the in-service day yesterday. The School Improvement Plan for the next three years will be based on this and will be issued to parents in August.
- Calendar – the school are in the process of working out the calendar for next session and will be setting an explicit date for when assessments have to be completed. This should avoid this year's problem of NABs (National Assessment Bank internal assessments) and Prelims being very close together.
- New Timetable – should be ready for 3 June.
- School period times have changed, with 1 minute shaved off each period during the day to increase the 6 minute morning registration period to 12 minutes. A longer registration period should allow more time for teachers to read out the daily bulletin, giving a more relaxed start to the day and allowing staff to build up more of a relationship with their form class. The time change will be trialled for one year.

Staffing –

Mr MacDonald (PE) will be leaving in the summer and his post will be replaced like-for-like; the advert for the PT PE (Principal Teacher, Physical Education) closes on 26 May. Mr Woolley (RE – Religious Education) will also be leaving the school and his job will be advertised from 24 May. The school are also advertising for a 0.5 full time permanent post in Computing, due to an increased uptake in this department this year.

Mrs Ingham would like parental involvement in all of these interviews, if possible. The role of the parents involved would be as observers and they would be accompanied by a Depute Head Teacher, so it may not be necessary to have people who are trained in recruitment and selection. Any interested parents should contact Mrs Ingham.

Diary –

- 27 May – S1/2/3 Activities Week. Mrs Ingham expressed her thanks to Mr Taylor and his team (especially Mrs Weir). There have been fewer letters excusing pupils from Activities Week this year, but due to changes in the curriculum and exam leave, Activities Week will not happen again in its present form.

- 3 June – new timetable begins. Mrs Ingham expressed her thanks to Mr Illingworth and Ms Skirrow for their hard work with this.
- 11 June – Sports Day (weather permitting)
- 12 June – Swimming Gala
- 14 June – Leaver’s Ceremony – all S4/5/6 leavers will be invited to attend.
- 17 June – P7 Information Evening – Vicky Cole will attend for the PSP.
- 18 & 19 June – P7 visit days
- 21 June – Leaver’s Dance
- 27 June – Awards Ceremony. PSP members will be invited.

Mrs Ingham expressed her thanks to all parents for their support this session.

8. Staff member’s report

Uniform dress code picture – Mr Dempster is in the process of finalising this.

Modern Foreign Languages – Mr Simpson said the school have applied to the British Council for a Chinese National to come as a learning assistant to Knox for one year, with the intention of offering short courses in Mandarin. The school would need to find a staff member or parent who would be willing to put the learning assistant up for a year, as it is a condition of their placement that they are given a place in a UK household during their time here. The PSP felt it was encouraging that the school were responding to discussions on Modern Languages at the last meeting.

Mark Wyllie will let Mrs Ingham have details of funding possibilities for Modern Language teaching which were mentioned at a recent talk he attended on Curriculum for Excellence. **Action MW**

9. Parent’s matters

Twitter feed – Kim White thanked staff for their work on the @KnoxMaths Twitter feed, which has been used by the Maths department to help students with maths queries whilst away from school on study leave. Parents felt it had been extremely useful to pupils.

The PSP thanked the entire school staff for their positive spirit and “can do” attitude over the past year. Mrs Ingham said that it was all about partnership and remembering it was not “them and us”, but “us and us”.

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

Vicky Cole noted the recent correspondence from the Education Authority about the Parent Council budget for this year which is £265.00. This money is held by the school for use by the PSP. Mary Benson will check with Val McIntyre if this money must also now be used to fund parent rep’s places on East Lothian Council training courses. **Action MB**

11. Any Other Business

PSP membership - Vicky Cole noted that Sally Cunningham has now resigned from the PSP, due to other commitments. Vicky expressed thanks on behalf of the PSP for Sally’s hard work and commitment during her time on the PSP and said she would be greatly missed.

Pupil Council – Vicky said she would be happy to attend the Pupil Council on behalf of the PSP, since Sally will no longer be able to go. Mrs Ingham will liaise with Vicky regarding dates. **Action VC & SI**

PSP Award (AAA Award – Attitude, not Aptitude determines your Altitude) – The Parent Council will use last year’s budget to purchase a piece of silverware to be used as an annual award to be given to a pupil who is an unsung hero and has shown extraordinary effort and used their strength of character to achieve something amazing. The winning pupil will be chosen each year by the PSP. Nominations for this award can be forwarded to the PSP now, with the decision needed by mid-June so that the award can be engraved with the pupil’s name before the Award Ceremony on 27 June.

Feedblitz – Ian Smith has spoken with David Gilmour (ELC IT dept) and discussed the use of Feedblitz/MailChimp on the PSP website. The PSP currently use MailChimp to email alerts to subscribing parents when updates are put on the PSP website. However, David Gilmour suggested the use of Feedburner, as it doesn’t require a plug in on the website (which is something the IT department are trying to avoid). Ian will arrange this, but email alerts are not automatic in the meantime. Ian said he could manually send out emails at the moment and that it was not too onerous to do so. **Action IS**

East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members (ELAPCM) – Ian Smith has attended on behalf of the PSP and has forwarded his notes by email to the other parent reps. Vicky thanked Ian for attending these meetings on behalf of Knox PSP.

Dates of next meetings – Vicky Cole asked Mary Benson to compile a draft list of dates for next year’s PSP meetings, based on the dates of this year’s, and to forward it to all for comment. Once finalised, Mary Benson will book the room on those dates with FES Facilities Management. **Action MB**

12. Date of Next Meeting:

To be confirmed.

Action points	Who	When
Put recommended book list on school website	DS/CD	As soon as possible
Check email details for Derek Simpson	MB	As soon as possible
Pass on funding details for Modern Languages to Mrs Ingham	MW	As soon as possible
Check if ELC parent council courses must be funded from PSP budget	MB	For next meeting
Liaise re PSP attendance at Pupil Council meeting	SI/VC	For next term
Set up Feedburner for PSP website update emails	IS	As soon as possible.
Send out list of meeting dates to PSP and book with FES Facilities Management once the dates are agreed	MB	As soon as possible.