



DRAFT MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL 2013

PRESENT:	Greg Cookson (Vice Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Andrew Greathead	Parent	PSP member
	Dave Neillans	Parent	PSP member
	Derek Simpson	Parent	PSP member
	Donald Smith	Parent	PSP member
	Kim White	Parent	PSP member
	Colin Dempster	Teacher	PSP member
	Callum Blair	Teacher	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Jon Hunton	Parent
	Julie-Claire Paterson	Parent
	Jane Scott	Parent
	John McMillan	Local Councillor
	Tom Trotter	Local Councillor
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Kath Anderson, Vicky Cole (Chair) and Mark Wyllie.

2. Minutes of 6 February 2013

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

A question was raised about the S3 free choice of subjects. Mrs Ingham gave an overview and said that the school had changed the process after having listened to parents of the present S3 who had said that youngsters had found the series of gradually narrowing down subject choices had been disruptive.

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

Literacy Plus – Mr Swinney was unable to come to this meeting, but intends to come along to a future one.

Careers Talks – Parent reps have forwarded the details of several potential contributors to Mrs Ingham.

Roll cap – Vicky Cole was unable to attend this evening. (See also Head Teacher's Report below for discussion on rollcap).

Declaration of interest – Mary Benson will contact Vicky Cole to confirm the wording for the Declaration of Interest to be put at the top of each PSP agenda.

Action MB/VC

Pupil Council – Mrs Ingham will liaise with Sally Cunningham to arrange a suitable date for her to attend a Pupil Council meeting on behalf of the PSP. It may be next term before this is possible.

5. Pupil's Matters

Toilets – Further to the temporary closure of some toilets after graffiti was found earlier in the school year, the Head Boy and Head Girl approached Mrs Ingham to ask if some of the toilets could be reopened. As a result, the toilets next to the Food Court are now open again.

6. Head Teacher's report

Budget – Based on the school budget figures for the new financial year 2013/14, the school predicts that it will effectively break even at the end of the year, with a carry forward in the region of just £9,000. This will mean that there will be no budget for supply staff and the school will have to cover any absence with their own staff. The management team can afford to staff the timetable and they will make the budget work, but it will be hard. The budget for this financial year will be finally confirmed after the school census on 24 September 2013.

Roll – If the proposed housing development at Letham goes ahead, the school roll will rise; however it is unclear when this development will begin. Without the Letham development, the school roll is predicted to fall over the next few years. This means that there is not expected to be a problem with the Education Authority's roll cap of 140 youngsters entering S1 for the foreseeable future. However, since the school budget is calculated using the school roll, it means that the school budget will fall too.

Councillor Trotter mentioned a move by parents of Humber and East Saltoun primary schools, who have asked the Local Authority to allow their schools to be reallocated into the catchment area for Knox (currently they feed into Ross High). Humber and East Saltoun are within the same East Lothian Council ward as Knox. To date, the parents have been refused; however they may appeal.

Exam leave – S4 exam leave starts on 25 April, S5/6's exam leave begins on 8 May. Pupils are expected to wear school dress code when coming in to sit exams. Exam leave next year will change, with the move to the new National exams, which are replacing Standard Grades and Highers. National 4 courses do not have final exams, so exam leave will not be necessary.

Jane Scott came into the meeting.

New York Trip - was very successful.

Coursing – Coursing for pupils is continuing.

Young Enterprise – Knox pupils were very successful at the Young Enterprise Awards evening in March and were placed second and third in several categories. Knox youngsters were competing against schools throughout the Lothians and did extremely well. Mrs Ingham noted her huge thanks to the staff involved in supporting pupils in this.

Bake off – The Red Nose Bake-Off held in the Home Economics department in March was great fun for staff and pupils.

S3 Profile and E portfolios – Mrs Ingham noted her thanks to S3 parents for their input to the S3 Profiles and E portfolios.

School Developments

Evaluation Visit 2 – The results of the school's self evaluation for the recent Evaluation Visit by Alison Wishart, the Local Authority's Quality Improvement Officer, were not unexpected and give the school something to work on. The Staff Improvement Day on 22 May will focus on self-evaluation.

S3 prefects – Twenty S3 pupils will be made prefects. Application forms will be available next week.

Tots 'n' Teens – Tots n Teens is ongoing. Youngsters wanting to take part next year will be able to apply soon.

Staffing – Mrs Ingham gave an update on staffing and thanked the parents involved in the interviews for the recent appointment of a new permanent Geography teacher. As part of the interview, candidates were asked to teach a class of 20 youngsters whilst being observed by a member of staff and a parent. This was very helpful in determining the right candidate for the post. From now on, all interviews for permanent full time teaching posts will involve this type of assessment of candidates.

The school have asked for 4 NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers) for next year, in English, Modern Languages, Geography and Physics; however this will not be confirmed until May.

Diary

Thursday 24 April – S4 exam leave begins

Monday 6 May – holiday (unless you are sitting an exam)

Wednesday 8 May – S5/6 exam leave begins

Thursday 16 May – S1 reports due out

Monday 20 May – holiday (unless you are sitting an exam)

Tuesday 21 May – Staff Improvement Day, pupil’s holiday (unless you have an exam)

Wednesday 22 May – PSP meeting

7. Staff member’s report

Easter revision – parents passed on their thanks to the staff involved in the Easter Revision programme, which was very useful. Mrs Ingham said money had been put aside in the budget to cover staff overtime next year to allow Easter revision to continue.

Website - The website has had a freshen-up since Easter. Previously the home page had been a bit cluttered, with visitors not viewing everything as a result. All recent news is now streaming to the front page, so that new items are not buried within individual pages. House points have also now been put back on the website, as requested by pupils. The website and Twitter feed have also been promoted at parent events and a few more parents have signed up for updates.

KWN (Kids Witness News) - Mr Dempster and Miss Duff will be accompanying eight S3 pupils to Redditch next Thursday for the KWN Awards ceremony. This year’s film is “Teenage Cancer - Lacey's Story” and highlights the importance of fighting cancer together.

Counselling - The school made a successful bid for some money from Lothian & Borders Police and the funds have been used to employ a Counsellor to come in and work with some of Knox’s more troubled pupils. Counselling has also been offered to families. The scheme started two weeks ago and is already full. There have been some self-referrals from pupils and from parents too. It is hoped that this scheme will have a positive impact and that the police will see an improvement in the community, with a reduction in anti-social behaviour. The money received will fund the Counsellor for a year and the school will be able to apply for more in future. However since Lothian & Borders Police have now been replaced by Police Scotland, there is no guarantee that funding will be available in future years. The PSP felt this scheme was very positive.

Councillor McMillan came into the meeting.

Daily bulletin

The daily bulletin was raised by parents and Mrs Ingham said she would remind staff to bring it to the attention of all pupils at the start of each day. She also noted that copies are also on display at various points around the school.

Parent's matters

Modern languages – the subject of the teaching of Modern Languages to pupils at school was raised.

Mrs Ingham said she was utterly committed to modern language teaching at Knox. At present, French is offered throughout the school, with German available in S2. Mrs Ingham said that current staff were also qualified to teach Italian, however there had not been a demand for Italian to date and timetabling may be an issue. A Modern Languages NQT has also been requested, which may expand the number of languages available. Not all schools in East Lothian have made a Modern Language compulsory to the end of S3, but Knox has.

Parents noted that many people would not be aware that they could come forward with an idea for discussion, such as the teaching of other languages, but were very encouraged that Mrs Ingham would be responsive to parent's requests, where possible. Parents asked if a note could be put on the school website to let parents know that this type of discussion can be had with the school.

Mrs Ingham said that the timetable must be efficient in terms of time and value for money. There needs to be enough youngsters interested in a particular course to make it viable, which makes coursing into a balancing act for staff.

Councillor MacMillan raised the possibility of having a "floating" teacher who could be shared between several schools. However, Mrs Ingham noted that would be difficult for one teacher to fit teaching and travelling time into the timetables of two or more schools.

The choice and relevance of different modern languages was discussed. Although Mrs Ingham was open to looking at offering different modern languages in the future, she noted that current staff were qualified to teach French and Italian to exam level. It was not felt useful at this stage to allow students to vote on which languages they would like to see available, as the school can only offer courses in subjects in which current Knox teachers are qualified to teach and there are no funds available to employ extra staff.

Prelims – The timing of prelims was raised. This year's prelims were held shortly before the Standard Grade exams. Mrs Ingham said this won't happen again.

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

10. Any Other Business

Parental survey – The school will be carrying out a "deep audit", where they review everything within the school. This will feed into the work staff undertake on Improvement Day in May. As part of this, they are undertaking a parental survey and Mr Simpson gave parents at the meeting a copy of the web links to these online surveys. The links will also be advertised on the school website.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZKH3B5T>

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZL7XZ32>

A copy of the survey will also be sent home with the youngsters for parents to fill in. The questions are based on HMle questions posed to parents during a school inspection.

MidYIS results

Knox Academy, use the MidYIS (Middle Years Information System) test in S2 to measure each youngster's ability and aptitude for learning, to help inform course choice. As part of the recent S2 reports, the MidYIS results were given to parents. The test was taken by youngsters in December. A parent at the meeting felt that this was confusing when presented with the teacher reports and that the MidYIS results presented a gloomy outlook of likely future achievements. Mr Simpson noted that this year's MidYIS results were different from previous years, as they were now geared towards the new National 4 exams, which have not yet been

taken by any pupils, so it is a statistical leap in the dark. MidYIS results are measured against what similarly performing pupils in the past have gone on to achieve at Standard Grade. However, as no one has yet sat a National 4 exam, there is no data to measure against. Mr Simpson said that since the results of this year's MidYIS test were available, the school decided to give this information to pupils to help them make their course choices. Mrs Ingham noted that this had been made clear to parents at the S2 parent's night. Some felt that the MidYIS results were meaningless and distracting to the general report and this was noted by Mrs Ingham.

Uniform

Mrs Ingham was asked how the school uniform dress code policy was going. She reported that the dress code seemed to be settling down and that there was not so much confrontation now with youngsters. However, the big issue was youngsters wearing inappropriate shoes. It was noted by all that the enforcement of the dress code had to be consistent between staff.

11. Date of Next Meeting:

22 May 2013.

Action points	Who	When
Invite Mr Swinney to talk to PSP about Literacy Plus	SI	As soon as possible
Confirm Declaration of Interest wording for PSP agendas	MB/VC	As soon as possible