



DRAFT MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 31 OCTOBER 2012

PRESENT:	Vicky Cole (Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Dave Neillans	Parent	PSP member
	Donald Smith	Parent	PSP member
	Kim White	Parent	PSP member
	Kath Anderson	Staff	PSP member
	Colin Dempster	Staff	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Robert Flood	Acting Depute Head Teacher
	Andrew Bowen	Parent
	John McMillan	Local Councillor
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

Kim White welcomed everyone to the meeting on behalf of The Chair, who arrived shortly after. Apologies were received from Greg Cookson, Sally Cunningham, Alison Hunton, Julie Clare Patterson, Derek Simpson, Ian Smith, Sally Wilson, Mark Wyllie, Councillor Broun Lindsay and Councillor Trotter.

Vicky Cole arrived at the meeting.

2. Minutes of 3 October 2012

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Careers library - Mrs Ingham has checked the school library and there are 15 magazine files with prospectuses for many UK universities. There is also lots of information on careers, both for those attending university and those not.

Contact details - Vicky Cole will email Sally Wilson's (the new co-opted parent rep) contact details to Mary Benson so she can be added to the mailing list. **Action VC**

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

Pupil focus groups – see item 6.

Careers event – no progress to date due to other commitments. Vicky Cole will research careers events through ELAPCM and North Berwick High School who have experience of running career events, for some ideas and advice. **Action VC**

Noticeboards – updates are in progress.

Staff interviews – The difficulties for working parents attending staff interviews during working hours has been raised with the Education Authority. Vicky Cole has written to ELC's Val McIntyre to ask for this issue to be raised with the relevant decision makers and is awaiting a response. Vicky Cole thanked Donald Smith and Sally Wilson, who represented the PSP at the recent Depute Head Teacher interviews.

School handbook – see item 9.

Sponsored walk fund raiser – Mrs Ingham has spoken to the Head Teacher at Ross High School, Mrs Bartholomew, regarding their recent sponsored walk. Ross High raised around £7,000 with this event; however Mrs Bartholomew had said that it was difficult to organize, and involved liaising with local Police, detailed risk assessments and written consents from parents. She felt that it would be something that their school would consider doing every other year, rather than annually. Mrs Ingham will speak with Mrs Bartholomew again to see if there was any “charity fatigue” apparent afterwards, as it would be important to find a balance between a large-scale fundraising event such as a sponsored walk, and other fund raising initiatives within the school.

Action SI

5. Pupil's Matters

Seating – Mrs Ingham has put the idea of beanbag seating for social areas to the pupil council and is awaiting a response.

6. Head Teacher's report

Literacy Plus – Mrs Ingham has received very positive feedback from both pupils and staff. The scheme has been going for around 3 weeks now and 8 or 9 parents/other interested adults are involved. Mrs Ingham will invite Mr Swinney and some of the pupils involved along to speak to the PSP at some point in the future.

Action SI

Exam results – meetings between Mrs Ingham and the Heads of Faculties regarding this year's exam result trends are ongoing. Mr Greenaway is visiting Boroughmuir High School in Edinburgh tomorrow to find out about how they achieve exam success. This will be a reciprocal arrangement, where Boroughmuir can also share Knox good practice. Boroughmuir is one of Knox's comparative schools in STACS (Standard Table and Charts), which is a benchmarking and self-evaluation publication for schools. STACS includes information about comparative schools, as well as the statistics which show how a school is doing in terms of comparing departments with each other, with specific other schools, and nationally.

Parents asked about Knox's comparative schools. Mrs Ingham will speak more about this to the PSP at a later date when the post-appeal exam results are in. She is happy to discuss which schools have been Knox's comparative schools; however she noted that the current system is being phased out, so that in future all schools would be compared with a virtual school rather than a real school.

Dress code – the questionnaire for pupils is being finalised and the results of the questionnaire should be available by the next PSP meeting. Pupils also have the opportunity to feed into the discussion with their ideas for dress code (e.g. possibly a school badge instead of a tie for those who prefer it). The dress code consultation will also include an electronic survey on the school website for parents to complete.

Staffing update – Mrs Ingham gave an update on staffing, including details of recent appointments for Depute Head Teacher, Teacher of Physics and Teacher of Modern Studies.

Events -

The recent S4 Parent's Evening had been very well attended, with around 80% of parents coming along.

Sports Leader's lesson – afternoon nursery children from Haddington Infants and St Mary's had attended an afternoon of trampolining, gymnastics and sports organized by Knox staff and pupils on 23 October. The Clerk had attended with her daughter and noted how successful it was and passed on her thanks to Knox pupils and staff.

Pupils had helped at the Computing at Schools Conference on 27 October and their exemplary behaviour had been noted by several people at the conference.

East Lothian Young Chef of the Year – pupils from all five East Lothian secondary schools had taken part in this event on 26 October at Preston Lodge High School. Knox's team of two S4 girls were the winners.

S4 Prelims are now underway.

The Advanced Higher Biology class are visiting the National Museum to look at DNA extraction.

Mrs Ingham will be meeting with underperforming S5/S6 pupils over the next couple of weeks. These meetings are designed as a wake-up call to pupils who have been flagged up by staff. No parents are involved at this stage, however if youngsters continue to underperform, their parents will be informed.

Calendar –

S4 Drama pupils will be visiting Dundee Rep on 1 November.

S3 will be visiting the John Gray Centre in Social Subjects on 2 and 9 November.

Higher/Intermediate 2 RMPS (Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies) class will visit the Samye Ling Buddhist Monastery on 8 November.

S5 theatre trip to the Lyceum on 15 November.

S4 Work Experience – week beginning 19 November. The PSP echoed Mrs Ingham's thanks to the Guidance and Support staff who have helped all S4 pupils to find a placement for that week. Mr Flood spoke about how the work experience programme will change in future following the new Curriculum for Excellence.

S6 mock interviews - Mr Flood talked about the S6 mock interview programme which he has been working on with HBA (Haddington Business Association). It is hoped that every S6 pupil will get the opportunity to go through the process of preparing for an interview by producing an application form, attending the mock interview itself and going through an individual evaluation afterwards. Mr Flood is in the process of building up a group of people in the community that he can ask to be the mock interviewers. The PSP felt that it was very important for pupils to gain this experience and thanked Mr Flood for his work on it.

Stonewall Seminar – Knox's 2011 KWN (Kids Witness News) team will attend a Stonewall (the lesbian, gay and bisexual charity) Seminar along with Mr Flood and Miss Adam and will present their film "It Gets Better" which deals with homophobic bullying in schools and will be taking questions afterwards.

Armistice Day – Mrs Ingham, Mr Flood and the Head Boy, Head Girl and their deputies will represent Knox at the wreath laying ceremony in Haddington.

Haddington Festive Market, 25 November – S6 will be helping on the day and there will be a group of Knox pupils singing carols. Support on the day would be appreciated.

S6 Coaching – Mr Flood is promoting S6 coaching and mentoring at the school and is looking for people (parents or other adults in the community) who would be interested in taking part. This would involve meeting with individual pupils once a month or so to talk to them about their progress, both academic and other. Mr Flood will send more information on this to Vicky Cole so that it can be advertised through the PSP. Councillor McMillan noted he had some information on coaching and mentoring and will send a copy to Mr Flood for information.

Action RF, VC & JM

Pupil Focus Groups -

Mrs Ingham gave feedback to the PSP on the results of discussions with the Pupil Focus Groups, which had been looking at how exam success is achieved by pupils.

There did not seem to be one thing which produced a successful candidate. It was usually a confluence of things such as strong school departments working together as a team, parents who gave support but ultimately let youngsters take responsibility for their own success, a positive ethos from staff, parents and

pupils, and giving youngsters targeted options with their revision. Some, but not all, youngsters went to extra clubs or revision sessions. Ultimately, it is about working together: staff, pupils and parents. All youngsters need to be encouraged and the school needs to be consistent and fair and to meet the needs of all individuals, wherever they are in their learning process. Mrs Ingham will share the results of the Focus Groups with staff at future in-service events.

The school is running a Coaching Session in mid November for 10 parents, on a first come, first served basis. The session is designed to show parents how they can help their youngsters with prelims and support parents in their parenting.

Donald Smith, Andrew Bowen and Councillor McMillan left the meeting.

8. Staff member's report

Website – Mr Dempster is encouraging all Faculties to post Faculty news on the website.

9. Parent's matters

Revision classes - details of Revision Classes are on the school website.

School Handbook

Mr Flood spoke to the PSP about the school handbook. The Scottish Government has issued new guidance on the content of the school handbook and this will change the format dramatically. The school now has a legal obligation to ask the PSP what they would like to be covered in the handbook. PSP members felt that the existing handbook was very thorough. It was agreed that a regular open period where parents can speak to the Head Teacher would be helpful, perhaps on a monthly basis between 4 and 7.30pm, for example. Mrs Ingham was happy to do this and will confirm a suitable day and time, which will be advertised in the school handbook. Parent reps felt it was reasonable to refer those reading the handbook to the school website for further information, as there is a lot of information already on there. One suggestion received by another school was to provide a school map, but PSP reps were unsure how helpful that would be to parents.

Vicky Cole will send out a group email to all parent reps asking them for comments on anything they feel should be included in the handbook. Examples of where parents can get involved in the school (e.g. Literacy Plus, S6 Coaching) need to be included, so further suggestions for this would also be helpful. The first draft of the handbook is required by 23 November, so Vicky will ask for responses by a week today. **Action VC**

Mrs Ingham and the PSP thanked Mr Flood for taking on the task of updating the school handbook.

Recruitment & Selection - Vicky Cole will check with Susan McNaught (East Lothian Council) if Dave Neillans' Recruitment and Selection training (undertaken during the School Board era) is still valid, or whether he will need to go through the training again before taking part in relevant staff interviews. **Action VC**

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

Mrs Ingham noted her email regarding police safety checks on vehicles near schools in the area during November. This email has been forwarded on to all parent reps.

11. Any Other Business

Community Assemblies – Mr Flood is organising a series of Community Assemblies at the school. He is looking for people from the Haddington area that would be willing to come in and talk at the assemblies for 10 minutes about what their role is in the community and why they love Haddington. If anyone is interested in

becoming involved themselves, or can think of a good person in the community whom Mr Flood could ask, please let Mr Flood know.

Vicky Cole thanked the school staff on behalf of the PSP for “doing a great job”.

It was suggested that Mr Flood could become a permanent PSP staff rep. Vicky Cole said that under the PSP constitution, a formal vote for a permanent staff rep would have to take place; however she noted that the PSP meetings were open meetings and anyone was welcome to attend.

Date of Next Meetings:

28 November 2012; 9 January, 6 February, 24 April and 22 May 2013.

Action points	Who	When
Forward Sally Wilson’s contact details to Mary Benson.	VC	As soon as possible.
Investigate Careers Event ideas with ELAPCM and North Berwick High.	VC	As soon as possible.
Speak to Mrs Bartholomew (Ross High) re any “charity fatigue” following their sponsored walk.	SI	For next meeting.
Invite Mr Swinney and pupils to attend a future PSP meeting to talk about Literacy Plus.	SI	As soon as possible.
Send information on S6 coaching to Vicky Cole for promotion by the PSP.	RF & VC	As soon as possible.
Email all PSP reps re School Handbook.	VC	Responses to be returned to Mr Flood by 7 November.
Check with Susan McNaught re Dave Neillans Recruitment & Selection training	VC	For next meeting.