

## **Annual Report – Knox Parent School Council**

The Parent Council (PSP) meets once a month throughout the academic year and we still command a large number of parents, so much so that we have moved to the library. We are supported by office bearers, staff, pupils, local councillors and interested members of the parent forum. We have thoroughly enjoyed having the Head Pupil and Deputy Head Pupils in attendance and at times it has been very important for them to present a pupil perspective. The Chair has attended meetings of the East Lothian Association of Parent Councils and the Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership to ensure representation of Knox in education and community initiatives.

There have been some extremely informative presentations throughout the year from Canon UK to members of staff, including a presentation by our School counsellors, which was attended by the Chief Executive of East Lothian Council. We are very proud of what the school has to offer not only academically but in the availability of guidance and support for each individual pupil. It is the role of the PSP to support the school where possible by giving feedback and assistance and the following is a synopsis of the types of interaction between the parent forum and the school to date.

In the course of this year it became clear to the Parent Council members that the KASG support group which raises funds for the school is a sub group of the Parent Council. The Chair of the PSP attended a KASG meeting and it was suggested that minutes of the KASG are forwarded to the PSP Chair, and if necessary added to the [knoxparents.org](http://knoxparents.org) website. Also, at the same meeting KASG voted to change their name to the Knox PTA to make it clear to parents that there was a fundraising arm of the school. All purchases by the PTA would have a label, where appropriate, advertising the contribution made by the parents and local community to school resources. Many new parents are similarly confused by the label PSP and are not sure if it refers to the Parent Council. It was discussed at the Parent Council that there could be an emphasis on the “Parent Council” aspect rather than the constitutional name of Parent School Partnership. Our constitution is entitled “Knox Academy Parent Council Constitution” Although, PSP is well known for parents moving through the school the branding, Knox Parents – Knox Parent Council and Knox PTA are easier handles, since they are common in all the Junior Schools in the area.

The school have responded to many requests from the parent forum and we have been very grateful for the extensions and improvements that the school has made on our behalf. For example, the school have improved their communication of sports fixtures and parents and pupils have been successfully using Team App for different sporting sections. It is a great communication tool. The school have taken on board the parents requests to have assessments in place of prelims and while we appreciate that this is a work in progress we are grateful to have had the opportunity to have benchmark assessments. Feedback from parents suggested that Senior School briefing might be as important for parents as for the

pupils. We have recently attended a subject choice evening for S3,4,5 which was informative for next steps for all pupils.

### Communications

We have endeavoured as a Parent School Council to continue to have information available on different channels. In May 2014 we set up a facebook page which as of Feb 2016 has 136 likes up 29 from last year. This forum is used to advertise PSP meetings but also draw people's attention to the website. KASG has changed its facebook page to Knox PTA and has 105 likes. We share information on both channels and encourage people to engage via social media, our website and the school website.

### Appointments

Members of the Parent Council have been invited to be part of the Interview process for teachers at the school. Parents are asked to observe the interviewee for 30 mins, with another member of staff, and are asked to give feedback. We have assisted in several posts this year including the Deputy Head and Full time Guidance teacher and several class teachers. This is a very worthwhile contribution and we are grateful to the members of the Parent Council who have given up their time and we would like to continue to be part of the recruitment process going forward.

### Sup groups

The Chair set up a sub group to look at how parents could support both the school and the Haddington and Lammermuir District Partnership aims for young people in the community. The group discussed the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and tried to identify a capacity in which parents could help run the award. The school advised that there was no protected time available for teachers to run the DofE. The Deputy Head, Mr Simpson, advised that it would be his priority to see how the DofE could run in the school. We hope to hear the results of this before the end of the academic year. In the meantime there are 2 bronze groups and 1 gold group run by parents who have trained themselves. The Chair has been attending the Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership meetings and has become a joint "champion" with Penny Short for the Young People of the community in order to lead initiatives in the Action Plan that concern Knox facilities and pupils and their interaction in the community.

### Budget

Monies accrued in the PSP account to £714.34. £300 has been allocated from the budget to the purchase of the We R Knox badges for the school and £250 for Staff Training for Sheena Paterson.

Chair, Louise Elder (9/2/16)