

Knox Academy Parent Council
Annual General Meeting
Chairperson's report for the year to March 2020.

The objectives of the Parent Council are:

- *To enable parents and school staff to work together to ensure the best possible educational experience and outcome for the pupils of Knox Academy.*
- *To promote the involvement and responsibility of parents in the education of their children.*
- *To identify and represent the views of parents on all matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils.*
- *To develop and engage in activities which promote the education and wellbeing of the pupils.*
- *To provide school staff the opportunity to consult with parents on school policies and decisions.*
- *To enable parents to participate in the appointment of school senior management.*

In this, my final AGM as Chair, I'd like to reflect on the past three years

1. Main points of the year

HMIE report

HMIE Inspectors revisited Knox in December 2019. Their feedback shows Knox has made further good progress and that under Ms Cook's leadership the Senior Leadership Team is working well together and providing effective leadership for guiding and managing the pace of change. HMIE will make no further visits related to the initial inspection of November 2016.

Parent Council Meetings.

The Parent Council meetings have consistently had 20-25 attendees, and it is always good to see new faces at these meetings. It's also been great to have Faculty reviews throughout the year, so thanks to all members of staff who've been involved in those presentations to us.

We introduced a Standard Agenda back in March 2017, which proved very useful in providing a structure to the meetings. However, we know Knox is now on a much more stable footing, so perhaps a new approach might be appropriate?

2. Parent Council support.

The Parent Council have continued to support Knox in a number of areas over the last twelve months, including:

- **Careers Event-** This year we had a wider range of sectors represented than in previous years. Sincere thanks to parents, friends and all the local and national businesses who supported the event. Lesley Pirie deserves special mention for leading this from the Parent Council. As

before, this is a joint effort between Knox (Mr Blair and Mr Flood) and DYW (Sophie Dawes). Work has already begun to find ways to develop the event in future years.

- Continued work between the Parent Council and Knox to attract grant support from HALAP. Thanks to Andy McBain and Phil Ross for their hard work in this area.
- In the last year the PTA spent c. £1200 supporting Knox with staff training and banners promoting the school values.

3. Knox PTA

The PTA is an integral part of the Parent Council and we've been fortunate in recent years to have a PTA who meet independently and report to the Parent Council.

We're immensely grateful for all their hard work behind the scenes. The team are; Nicola Cunningham - Chair, Sally Cunningham - Treasurer, , Lesley Prentice -led the formation of the 100 club, Mhairi Brotherston, Alison Munro, Mary McGavigan, Rhona Thomson, Alison Bannerman and Lana Borwick - Teacher Rep.

Special mention must go to Mae Ball who has supported the PTA tirelessly for years and has been a wonderful link between school and PTA. Apologies if I've missed anyone out. Everyone's help is greatly appreciated by the school and wider community.

The role of a PTA member can be wide and varied: selling raffle ticket and plastic ducks, to organising refreshments at various fundraising events. As with many activities related to Knox, you don't have to be member of the PTA to help out. Please get involved, any contribution, great or small will be appreciated.

This has been a challenging year, with controversy around ticketing for the Christmas Dance making it to the local newspapers; and despite strenuous efforts, we were unable to hold the Burns Supper.

4. Haddington Lammermuir Area Partnership 19/20

In the last year Phil Ross and Andy McBain have attended the HLAP meetings to support the school's applications and vote where appropriate on other requests for grants and assistance. Further Support and contributions at HLAP meetings have been provided by Sue Cook and Calum Blair. In addition, a strong presentation by a community led DofE Gold group on the many benefits of DofE Awards programme was very well received.

Over the year the governance and consideration of education requests has been more centralised, with the Education Department evaluating each application's appropriateness and merit. School applications have to be approved by the Education Department before the Area Partnership can vote on the application.

It has been pleasing to see the whole education budget allocated to appropriate requests over the year. In total over £100k has been allocated. Any unallocated money at the end of the year is returned to the Council for other purposes. There have been nine successful applications from Knox in the past year and we have secured approx 1/3rd of the overall education budget. In November an application for new Chrome books was successful with an award of £17,800 being granted. The new hardware will allow

more pupils access to the internet to research topics within the school and support pupil led learning. At the same meeting a further £2,800 was allocated to support maths learning. This request for 'Manipulative Maths Ideas' to the Partnership was led by Mr Blair. The list of Knox projects which received support from HALAP is shown below.

Date Approved	Project	HLAP budget
21/06/2019	Cycle training	£800
31/10/2019	Knox STEM	£4,500
28/11/2019	Chrome Books	£17,888
28/11/2019	Manipulatives Support	£2,892
Feb-20	Residential outdoor activities	£2,569
Feb-20	Training for parental support	£1,075
Feb-20	Meadow Park/Knox - Art therapy	£5,925
Feb-20	Breakfast club	£850
Feb-20	Mountain bike maintenance	£800
	Total	£37,299

HLAP offers invaluable support across the local community and it will be important for Knox Academy to look at early financial planning and identifying priorities early in 2020/21 to help maintain and secure funds.

5. Election to the Parent Council

Parents can stand as parent members of the PC. However, you don't need to be a parent member to take an active role in supporting the school.

A massive "thank you" to outgoing members, Nicola Cunningham, Louise Elder, Andy McBain and Caroline Taylor. They have all been strong and active supporters of Knox and of the Parent Council.

As many of you will know, we also have Staff members of the Parent Council, Miss McBride and Mr Blair are the current members. Mr Blair will step down this year. Thanks to him for his support of the Parent Council over a number of years.

May I remind you that any immediate concerns you have about your child should be raised, in the first instance with their guidance teacher. Please don't save them up for Parent Council meetings!

6. Looking ahead

It's been a real honour to have been the Chair of Knox Parent Council for the last three years. Knox has indeed been on quite a journey in that period, and I'm delighted we are on a much more solid foundation to continue our journey. The role of the Parent Council continues to evolve, and I wish the new Chair, all Parent Council members and all staff at Knox Academy a successful future, as you all evolve to meet future opportunities and challenges.

John Wrinn 20th March 2020