

# Friends of Bowes



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## **Friends of Bowes (FOB) 2017-18 Chair Report**

FOB is about two things: community and money. By strengthening the community of the school, this lovely, inclusive school full of children and families from many different cultures, we raise funds for the school. By raising funds for the school, we then have the opportunity to strengthen the community by investing in our children. It is a circle of virtue, from which we can all only benefit.

But running a parent teacher association, or any sort of volunteer group, can have its frustrations – it is always hard to get volunteers to help out, it is difficult to negotiate the differing viewpoints and needs of a disparate group of people. And, as ever, many people just don't want the bother of extra curricular activities, they are busy enough. However, the joy and sense of achievement gained from seeing a plan come together, from seeing how much the children love the different activities we put on for them, from our events contributing to the cycle of the school year cannot be matched. And on top of which it is amazing to see the fun a group of parents can have by themselves at an adult event, like Musical Bingo or the Quiz Night in the main hall.

Every year we tell them, but we are not sure all parents realise that every parent and carer of a child at Bowes is automatically a member of FOB. But they are and we need to make sure all parents realise this and are aware of how their involvement, however big or small, helps to make a difference. Our help is vitally important in this current climate of school budget cuts in order to keep the children supported in their learning and enriched in their wider school lives.

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Even the small things we help to organise, like the cake sales, result in great trips and learning experiences. This year's cake sales have funded a trip to the cinema, to the Ragged School Museum, London Eye, Chessington World of Adventures, Willows Farm, as well as an exciting project at The Royal Courts of Justice and Apple Class, our Special Needs class, had a trip to a Chinese Restaurant. We hope parents realise what good things can come out of the Friday afternoon scramble to buy cakes and muffins, and why it is important to keep them going and supported.

But our fundraising has also gone towards bigger projects such as:

- Indoor and outdoor playground equipment
- iPads
- The school sound system
- We also helped to fund the AstroTurf in the main playground.

## **Financial Summary**

2017-18 has been yet another record breaking year for the FOB. Year on year for the past 5 years we have increased the amount raised. In 2017-18 we raised nearly £20,000, an increase of £2,000 from last year's record-breaking amount. Here follows a table of the increase in fundraising profit over the past 4 years:

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Year	Total fundraising by FOB (figures rounded to nearest thousand)
2014/15	£10,000
2015/16	£13,000
2016/17	£18,000
2017/18	£20,000

The Treasurer's report will have details of the breakdown of events/profits.

## 2017-18 Events

Our events are roughly split into two categories: those which simply provide fun and enrichment for the children, and those which raise money. Of course there are some, which do both.

Some of the fun extra-curricular activities we have provided for the children are the Christmas disco, a visit from Father Christmas bringing presents (bought by FOB), the children's' school quizzes (brilliantly devised and run by Debbie Harris), and Mr Marvel's magic show at the Welcome Evening.

In terms of fundraising, we held some of our FOB regular events last year. They included the Summer Fair, Christmas Hamper Raffle, Christmas Cards, School Calendar, Book Fairs, Adult Quiz Night, Musical Bingo, Easter Egg Raffle and Phil A Bag. All of these events made profits for the school and brought the Bowes community together. While our Summer Fair did not quite scale the heights of last year (we were down £1,500), we had a couple of extra events which contributed magnificently to our total.

Firstly, a dynamic group of parents from Year 1 organised a new format Winter Fair, including a grotto, which was incredibly successful, raising nearly £3,000.

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We are indebted to Kelly McConnell, Claire Dentith, Kirsty Lucarotti and Bex Kitching for their amazing efforts.

This was also the third year running in which we sold and delivered our Christmas trees, which generated an income of £842 - £300 more than last year.

Each year we run 2 book fairs which earn the school vouchers to buy more books. This year our efforts enabled the school to buy £962 worth of new books – to put this fabulous amount in perspective, last year we received £738 worth of books, and the previous year £215. This project is coordinated by Claire Reynolds, and we cannot thank her enough.

However, this year's fundraising crowning glory has been our astonishing Bike for Bowes team, led by Eleni Stathi, Nicole Pearson and Fabian Fausten. They came up with the idea of entering a team of parents into the London to Southend Bike Ride in July 2018. Some regular cyclist parents were champing at the bit to enter, other less regular cyclists (including myself) took a while to warm to the idea, but in the end a team of over 20 parents trained together with regular rides on weekends, and then completed the 52 mile course from the Olympic Park to Southend. In total the team raised nearly £4,500. This is an absolutely wonderful achievement and huge thanks to Nicole, Eleni, Fabian and the rest of the Bike for Bowes team for this amazing contribution.

**Looking forward**

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2018 sees Friends of Bowes in a really good place – our fundraising has come on in leaps and bounds over the past few years. And as we all know, in the atmosphere of current educational funding cuts, the onus must now be on us parents to become actively involved in their children’s all-round educational development.

There are, of course, things we need to address and things we could do better –ideas for the future which we need to look at include:

- voluntary donations – how can we engage the parents who are happy to make voluntary donations to the school, but who don’t have the time to attend or help with events;
- company matched giving schemes – we need to advertise and promote this potential fundraising scheme. Last year 2 parents utilised their company’s matched giving schemes and those 2 donations amounted to nearly £1000 for FOB – imagine how many other parents could have utilised such schemes and how much we might have earned on top of this;
- Easyfundraising and similar online shopping schemes. We are already signed up for Easyfundraising and receive a bit of money, but it is currently a very underused scheme in the school and it could be earning us thousands of pounds if more people were aware and bothered to use it;
- We also need to address the issue of inclusivity in our events and fundraising. Bowes is a school with families from all sorts of cultural backgrounds and they all contribute to the atmosphere of inclusivity.

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However, the majority of FOB events are attended by a small section of that community. This may have something to do with putting less emphasis on alcohol (although alcohol is, of course, our main revenue stream at events), and having different types of events at different times of the week. I know plans are underway to address this issue

## **Contribution to the school**

At last year's AGM, it was decided that the FOB would ringfence £21,000 for the school's benefit. From this amount £10,000 has been used to buy 60 new iPads, leaving an extra £11,000 available to add onto available funds.

From our fundraising efforts this year, we have £19,000 available to donate to the school, so with the extra £11,000 from the previous year, we are very pleased to propose that we will ringfence a total of £30,000 to support the school this year. FOB looks forward to liaising with the Senior Management Team to decide how this money can best be of benefit to the pupils of Bowes New Southgate.

## **Thanks**

Tina and I are stepping down as Co-Chairs this year. I have spent 5 years on the FOB committee, 2 as Vice Chair, 2 as Chair and 1 as Co-Chair – Tina has spent 3 years on the committee as Design and Publicity officer, Vice Chair and Co-Chair. While running a PTA has its admitted frustrations, we would like to say how supported we have felt by so many people over this time. The enthusiasm and dedication of committee members, parents and staff make

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each event a great success and we are proud to have led such a fantastic team who have achieved so much this year.

We are unable to name every helper, but a special thanks, as ever, to Gaby and Dennis and Phil for their hard work behind the scenes and the office staff for their continued support and patience. And not forgetting the committee members: Jenni who is an absolutely trusted Treasurer and for whom nothing is too big a task; to Ana who assists her in so many things, as well as helping the somewhat thankless Second-hand Uniform sales; Kate for her great secretary skills, humour and getting the minutes to us always just in time; Juliet who is a whizz with our social media presence; Patricia who organised our fun and friendly coffee mornings and sorted out our sponsorship; and Lucy who designed the glorious posters and brochure for the Summer Fair. Thanks to all the class reps, who help to disseminate information, organise events and help to keep the PTA working. A special mention must be made for Effie Demetriou, our Head Teacher, who as always encourages an easy, relaxed and productive relationship of cooperation between the school and the Friends of Bowes.

**Vicky Woodward and Tina Solari**

**FOB Co-Chairs 2017-18**