

PTA CHAIR REPORT 2018

2017-2018 was the second complete academic year since myself, Jo Taylor and Camilla Lovell were appointed as Chair, Treasurer and Secretary respectively of the PTA and it feels we have kept things ticking over.

Events and Fundraising

In terms of events, this year has seen some of the usual events: 3 discos, an FSU pyjama party, the Panto trip, a Mayday Picnic. The Summer Fair and Christmas Fair were both pared down and ran in the form of after school raffles.

Discos: We continued to theme each disco, which was a popular idea, and we have found that novelty items have sold increasingly well, both increasing the fun and the funds raised. Discos have always been such successful sources of fundraising in part due to the hard work of Paul who has DJed at every disco I can remember – and whose low prices mean more scope for fundraising, so I would like to take the opportunity now to recognise his contribution.

The expansion has led to a high concentration of pupils in the lower years and this led to us shifting the year groups who attended each disco. If discos were to run again in 2018-19, this is something that would need to be considered again, although the capacity of the hall may mean a different mixture of year groups. Having seen the new hall and the facilities on offer there, there could be scope to make even more of the discos.

Panto Trip: The Panto trip to the Hexagon was a success as before, and despite the increase in costs affecting our margins, it was still a profitable and enjoyable evening. It was reassuring to note that, even in these times of change and uncertainty, the jokes have stayed the same in the past 4 years I've been attending. Thanks must go to Abbie Green for taking care of this mammoth feat of organisation.

Christmas Cards: Design your own Christmas cards was once again run by Helen Bantock and Sarah Pugh, my thanks go to them for not only raising funds, but brightening the mantelpieces of a few grandparents over Christmas with the children's own designs of cards.

FSU Pyjama Party: The FSU children enjoyed the pyjama party in lieu of a disco and it was a lovely gentle way to give the children an event outside of their usual school day. Thanks in particular to Natasha Waller whose baking skills we called upon once more to bake a cookie (or several, in my son's case) for each of the children.

Christmas Raffle: A highlight this year was the Christmas Hamper Raffle and choir event. I was really pleased at how well attended this was, the lovely festive atmosphere it brought to the end of the school day, and how profitable it was. This event was masterminded by Camilla Lovell whose innovative idea meant that despite the pressures brought about by a lack of volunteers and the school expansion, the funds raised were virtually equivalent to what has been raised in previous school fairs. I would suggest a similar event could be run this year if the new committee are able and willing.

Painting event: A painting event was suggested and advertised, however this was cancelled due to lack of interest. I am mentioning it in the chair's report because I wonder if there is

opportunity to try a similar event this year. I also mention it to highlight that it has sometimes felt challenging to involve parents in events.

Mayday Picnic / Royal Street Party: The Mayday Picnic this year was a huge success in terms of funds raised and numbers of attendees. In this sense, it was almost a victim of its own success due to the enormous queues for the ice cream van and bouncy castles in particular. I feel that moving the timing to the day after year 6 completed SATs added to the atmosphere of fun (and sheer relief!) amongst children and teachers alike. If this event were to run again (and I hope it will!) then I would suggest keeping the new date. In particular, the Street Party acted as a scaled down Summer Fair.

Summer Raffle: The success of the Mayday Picnic / Royal Street Party, coupled with the building work and lack of volunteer time, meant that we decided to forego the usual Summer Fair, instead running an after-school raffle and ice cream sale. Raffle prizes were this time higher value items that were purchased from the raffle takings. Whilst this was a more expensive option, it was less time consuming and required less involvement from parents and local businesses. I feel that the format went well but if it were to run again, I would suggest tweaks to enhance the sense of occasion – for example, by adding stalls etc. The new hall facility may prove useful in doing this if weather forces a move indoors. Thanks must go to Marianne Clement for running the ice cream sale.

Sponsored Walk: Special thanks go to Hannah Milway who organised a sponsored walk. This was a profitable event and enjoyable for the families who took part, giving the children a chance to help with fundraising. I am particularly grateful to Hannah because I know that she took on this event in its entirety from conception to completion.

Second Hand Uniform Sales: I was delighted this year that Sarah Anstey took on the second hand uniform sales in the Spring Term. Whilst this is a fundraising activity for the PTA, I will always see it foremost as a source of support for parents and families and I am pleased that the stock is now organised and easily accessible.

Earley Charity donation: Although it was agreed earlier in the year, the Earley Charity donation was finalised in Autumn 2017. I mention this in my report to give thanks to the trustees, and also to note for future committees that the charity is able to accept new grant applications every two years. A new application may therefore be submitted after 19th March 2020.

Spending: In terms of where all the money we raise is spent, we have continued to fundraise primarily for the playground project. I would like to propose that, as part of this meeting, we assign all of the funds available in the PTA fund to make a donation towards the total cost. It may be that future committees would like to continue to raise for this project.

The PTA funded the reindeer to visit us in December on the day of the Christmas raffle (please note that we usually don't publish this to preserve some of the magic!!!), leavers' books for year 6, caterpillars for foundation unit and microphone hire for the school productions. The first part of the pirate ship project, the installation of two ships in the Riverdale playgrounds, was also funded by the PTA, largely thanks to the Earley Charity grant. Some funding was allocated towards a PA system however it is likely that this can now be redirected to the main playground fund if preferred. Additionally, some funds have been allocated towards the refurbishment and toy purchases for the parent hut.

On a personal note

The school benefits so much from parents and carers who give their time and their skills to help the PTA to run events and raise funds for our children's school. There are many other volunteers who I haven't been able to thank here and I apologise to any who I have missed out. Thank you to all of those who have given time and support in any way you could.

This year has personally been a challenging one for me as I have changed career and am now working full time. This has meant that since January I have not been able to give the time to the PTA that I would like to, and that our school community so deserves. It is for this reason that I am with a heavy heart (and a sense of relief!) stepping down formally from the role as chair and from the committee. I hope that I can offer support and handover to new committee members who take on the helm and will be as available as I can. I am deeply thankful to Camilla Lovell and Jo Taylor who picked up the slack and so tirelessly made sure that things could run with "business as usual". Their commitment has been so valuable to the PTA and to the wider school.