**St. John’s School Parents’ Association**

*Fundraising for our children’s futures*

**Minutes of Meeting**

10 November 2014

**Attendance**: Mrs Grimsey, Rebecca Evans, Susi Catchpole, Jude Woods-Ballard, Sam Miller, Jodi Sangster, Heather Breed, Julia Spittles, Sara O’Connor, Sarah Ebdon, Sam Ward, Charlotte Downing, Jane Bobbin, Lucy Rippon, Kay Bolton, Emma Voss, Elena Smith and Ed Mueller

**Apologies**: Helen Nichols, Helen Isaacs, Sharon Barraclough and Helen Davies

**Agree Last Meetings Minutes & Matters Arising**

Rebecca ran through the previous minutes and raised some outstanding matters:

*World War One Centenary*: The Quantum Theatre WW1 production was not able to be booked therefore the £350 allocated for this will go back into the PA funds.

*Second Composter*: Mrs Grimsey does not think this is needed anymore.

*Crocodile Walk*: All agreed it was unfortunate nobody has stepped forward to run the Crocodile Walk, especially as this year has seen an increase in traffic around school. A suggestion to ease parking congestion was put forward. Discussion was held regarding a proposed drop-off zone within the school grounds which could be made available for children to wait in before the school gates are opened with a parent, or group of parents, ensuring children do not leave the school grounds. This would allow parents who are there early to drop off their children and move their cars, providing more space for parents who arrive a little later. Mrs Grimsey agreed in principle but further thought will need to be given to exactly how this would work and insurance issues. Heather asked if there was any update on a potential Breakfast Club at school. Mrs Grimsey reported that there has been no more progress and this will need to be discussed at a later date.

*Summer Ball 2015*: Discussion was held on how to maximise revenue from the marquee that will be set up for the Summer Ball next year. Mrs Grimsey will speak to Mrs Insley to ascertain whether a music concert can be held after the Ball as this was a success in previous years and will also allow the opportunity to sell any drinks leftover from the Ball. **Action: GG**

*2nd Hand Uniform*: Mrs Grimsey has checked the shed and there is not much uniform left. It was suggested that a 2nd hand uniform stall could be run at the Christmas Fayre.

*Hot School Meals*: Mrs Grimsey and Mrs Kimber are compiling a questionnaire regarding hot school meals and this will be issued to parents w/c 17 November 2014. **Action: GG/SK**

Ed Mueller stated that he would like to take on responsibility for seeking donations, grants and sponsorship from the wider community. All agreed that this would be an excellent idea but success would rely on a clear vision of the fundraising requirements. Ed is very enthusiastic about building links throughout the village and creating a network of contacts. He is also keen to set up a weekend/holiday club to cover activities for the children such as nature walks and the PA would be very grateful for his commitment and energy to raise funds in this way. Ed will keep in touch with Rebecca and Mrs Grimsey to ensure a consistent message is put across.

Emma Voss stated she would like to see PA funds directed towards some kind of flood lights for school, especially now that some after school clubs are finishing in the dark. It was agreed that Mrs Grimsey, Emma, Rebecca and Caroline Gulliver should discuss further. **Action: GG/EV/RE**

**Head’s Report**

Mrs Grimsey thanked the parents that have stepped forward to form the new Committee and also thanked Jodi, Julia and Heather for their time on the Committee. She was pleased to see there has been mutual support to enable a smooth handover.

*KS1 Outdoor Area*: Mrs Grimsey will check to make sure planning permission has been applied for as then other projects can be concentrated on. **Action: GG**

*Staff Budgets*: Mrs Grimsey asked whether the budget of £200 allocated to each teacher from PA funds, along with an ICT budget, would continue for this year. Rebecca confirmed this would continue. However, it appears there are some administrative issues to resolve over last year’s allocation as the accounts show £1,108 of the original budget is still left to spend. It is understood that the teachers have used the funds so Heather will speak to Tara in the school office to reconcile the invoices so that last year’s accounts can be closed. Any unused funds will go back into the pot for the coming year. Mrs Kimber and Mrs Rackstraw will be taking over the links to the PA and will monitor staff spending of their budgets going forward. The accounts show £545 is remaining of the previous ICT budget. Mrs Grimsey thought this was unspent due to waiting for the new curriculum to be confirmed and also an upgrade that is due to happen soon. Rebecca did not want to add to the ICT budget at present, given that there is a substantial amount still allocated. However, should there still be a need for more ICT once this budget has been used, we can revisit the allocation. Sara O’Connor is very keen to follow up with Mrs Rodbourne to gain a greater understanding of the ICT requirements. **Action: SO’C**

Rebecca stated the need for parents to have a clear understanding of what we are raising funds for and the impact this will have on school life. With this in mind, Mrs Grimsey will come to the next meeting with a “wish list” of ideas with full costings which the Committee will vote on whether we can support some or all of them. **Action: GG**

**Treasurer’s Report**

Jude gave the Treasurer’s Report (which is attached) and started by thanking Heather for helping to achieve a smooth transition of the finances. Since the start of term, the Barn Dance raised £471, the Book-o-Club has raised £372 and there has been an anonymous donation of £250, which was very gratefully received.

Jude asked for a vote on two points:

1. Change of bank signatories to allow any two of the new Committee to sign cheques
2. For Jude to have approval to carry out internet banking

Both points were unanimously agreed.

Discussion was held on the need to make more use of Gift Aid as this will enable even more funds to be raised. Gift Aid can only be claimed on donations and not where a parent receives something in return for their payment, eg raffle tickets. There are administration issues to resolve, including the need for parents to complete a Gift Aid Declaration form allowing the PA to claim Gift Aid on their donations. For new parents, this can be added to the Reception Welcome Pack but for existing parents, a form will have to be issued through Parentmail to be completed and returned to the office for a database of declarations to be compiled. This declaration only needs to be obtained once from parents and the only requirement is that they are a UK Taxpayer. There will also be issues to resolve over data protection and it was agreed that any information received would need to be stored by the school then accessed by the PA as and when required. Rebecca informed the Committee that we can register with the Data Protection Act for £35.00 to cover us in this regard. Rebecca and Mrs Grimsey will draft a suitable form to send to parents. **Action: RE/GG**

Following discussion on outstanding spend and invoices, it was agreed that all invoices received by 1 December 2014 will be paid and any unspent budget will go back into PA funds. If it is required at a later date, it can be requested again. This will allow Heather to close the accounts for this year.

**Committee Composition/Communication**

Rebecca said how pleased she was to see so many parents attending the meeting. Being new to the role of Chair, Rebecca has been studying the PA Constitution which states there should be 8 members of the Committee and 6 to form a quorum. Going forward, she would like to achieve greater consistency for the PA meetings and asked if any of the attendees would be prepared to commit to attending most future meetings. The PA meetings will always be open to any parent who wishes to attend, whether to offer help or just to hear what is happening in terms of fundraising, and they do not need to feel any pressure to get involved in any event. However, it would be useful to have a regular core of additional parents who are prepared to attend the meetings and help provide a consistent process of planning.

This led to discussion on having someone on the Committee responsible for communication to the rest of the parents through a system of Class Reps. It was felt that 2 reps per year would be a good starting point to enable the PA workload to be spread across a greater number of people and also to ensure that all parents are communicated to through someone they know rather than a Committee they may not be aware of. It was then felt that year groups would be able to work together on smaller fundraising projects, with perhaps an element of competition to see which group could raise the most funds! There would not be a need for Class Reps to attend PA meetings, unless they particularly wanted to, as they could feed back any reports to the Communication Representative on the Committee. The following people have agreed to go back to their year groups to ask who they would like to see as their Class Rep:

Reception : Sam Ward

Year 1 : Sara O’Connor

Year 2 : Jude Woods-Ballard

Year 3 : Susi Catchpole

Year 4 : Lucy Rippon

Year 5 : Charlotte Downing

Year 6 : Julia Spittles

Jude mentioned that she is looking into “matched funding” whereby larger companies effectively match any amounts raised by a particular cause, which could generate much extra income for the school. She also stated that Windmill Under 5s pre-school are keen to investigate joint fundraising opportunities with us. **Action: JWB**

**Forthcoming Events**

*Pamper Evening*: Elena Smith and Helen Isaacs are planning to hold another Pamper Evening around February/March next year. They are hoping to tie this in with a possible Boden sale.

*Christmas Cards*: Emma Voss is organising the Christmas Cards sales and all is in hand.

*Children’s Disco*: The discos will be held on Friday 21 November and all arrangements are in place. It will be a Mufti Day but donations will not be requested as parents have paid for the discos.

*Children in Need*: This is on Friday 14 November so there is little time to arrange too much. It was decided to allow the children to wear odd socks or tights (as last year) for the donation of £1 towards Children in Need.

*Christmas Fayre*: This is being held on Friday 5 December. Hot meals will need to be served to the children in their classrooms on this day to enable setting up to take place. Jodi has all the arrangements in hand and there are many parents who have volunteered to help this year. Collection boxes are in each classroom for donations and Jodi will arrange for plastic half pint glasses to be given to all children to fill and then return for selling at the Fayre. Jodi still needs to get in touch with Father Christmas and there were offers to help with arrangements if necessary! It should be noted that, after 4 years of arranging the Christmas Fayre, Jodi will not be running this event next year so we need to find someone who is prepared to take over the Fayre in 2015. Rebecca suggested that this should be stated on Jodi’s final communication about the Fayre to remind parents of the need for a new organiser and new stalls next year.

More helpers will be required for the Secret Room and it was discussed whether a limit should be placed on the amount of gifts the children could buy. It is hoped that all KS1 children and Year 6 will be able to visit the Secret Room before 3.00pm, which worked well last year and eased congestion once school finished. Mrs Freeman had expressed concern that the children were carrying money with them last year but Heather explained the parents had given money in an envelope to teachers or the office in advance of the Fayre. Heather will talk to Mrs Freeman about these concerns and it was discussed that perhaps any change, with parents’ prior agreement, could be put in a donation box. **Action: HB**

Mrs Grimsey has been in discussion with an art student based at Grymsdyke Farm who would like to create a musical garden at school as part of her MA. She will have a stall at the Fayre to display her work and ideas.

Discussion was held about where donations could be kept in the run up to the event as there is very limited storage space at school for PA activities. The shed is not a suitable option although it was suggested that metal storage units could be used inside the shed or, alternatively, the shed could be replaced completely by a metal container.

*Adults’ Disco*: This is being held on Friday 12 December and Elena reported that all arrangements are now in place. Food with be provided by Ashridge Delicious and Jodi has kindly agreed to run the bar. The event will not be a huge fundraising event, it will much more of a social event, so it was agreed that there should not be too much extra fundraising undertaken on the night. Possible ideas included a “golden bucket” or a small raffle using anything leftover from the Christmas Fayre. Elena asked for decoration ideas that would enable costs to be kept to a minimum and, again, it was felt items could be used from the Christmas Fayre and possibly from the Barn Dance. This type of event is a good example of how Class Reps could be beneficial in spreading the word and encouraging parents to attend. Class reps will be tasked to sell tickets to their respective year groups. Elena will supply tickets once she is informed of who the class reps will be.

Mrs Grimsey had a leaflet from M&S promoting their products and offering a raffle prize for an event in return. It was agreed that Elena should use this at the Disco.

*Christmas Lunch*: Christmas lunch for the children will be on Wednesday 17 December and class parties will also take place on this day. It was agreed to allow children (and staff!) to wear Christmas jumpers on this day with donations given to the PA funds.

It was agreed to discuss future events after Christmas once the “wish list” has been compiled.

**Any Other Business**

*Easyfundraising*: A Parentmail needs to go out reminding parents of the benefits of using the Easyfundraising website. By simply starting on the Easyfundraising page before doing any online shopping, donations will be made by those companies registered on the site to PA funds. This is a fantastic way to raise money for the school through online sites that most of us use regularly, eg Amazon, eBay, Next, The Book People, John Lewis. With Christmas shopping at the forefront of most people’s minds, now is an excellent time to remind everyone that we can all raise funds just by shopping online. It was agreed this communication should also include encouraging parents to purchase giftwrap from Norbrook to help raise funds for the school. **Action: SM**

*Year 2 Violin Lessons*: Jodi asked if violin lessons for Year 2 would be going ahead as in previous years. Mrs Grimsey explained that, due to the recent changes with the Music Centre, it was now too costly to carry on as before. However, she is in discussions with Kate Laughton and Fiona Insley to see if an alternative plan can be arranged. Kate has talked about a possible start after February half term but costs have not yet been discussed. It was felt that the PA should make a contribution to this worthwhile activity, but that, equally, there were many extra-curricular activities that should be made available to all the children. This is another point to be raised on the “wish list” for discussion at the next meeting.

*JRSO*: Julia reported that the Year 6 Junior Road Safety Officers are holding a competition about safety - KS1 will focus on scooter safety and KS2 will focus on road safety. Julia has sourced slap bands as prizes and the Committee agreed to pay the cost of £9.85. This led on to a general road safety discussion, bearing in mind earlier points raised regarding darker nights and heavier traffic around school. It was questioned whether a fluorescent sash could be incorporated as part of the winter school uniform to be worn to and from school. All agreed this would be a very good idea and Mrs Grimsey saw no reason why this could not be enforced as part of the winter school uniform from October half term through till Easter. Julia found an option of £5.10 per sash when ordering over 250 and it was also suggested that we speak to the school uniform providers to see if they can offer an option. It was agreed that the PA would contribute towards providing one per child but, if children lost their sash and needed a new one, it would then be the responsibility of parents to buy a new one. Jodi agreed to come up with some price options and report back to the Committee. This is an urgent issue to follow up as they are really needed right now. **Action: JS**

*Happy Circus*: Susi has been looking into the possibility of a Happy Circus performance at school next year. They are extremely booked up and can only offer us one date – Tuesday 9 June – but it comes highly recommended as an entertaining event and could be a huge fundraiser for us. A £60 admin fee is payable on booking with the payment of £2350 payable within 7 days of the event taking place. There is an undertaking to sell up to 600 tickets but we are able to set our own ticket price, with average prices being around £8. There would be the option to run stalls and have food/drink for sale. This would also be a great opportunity to involve the wider community through the links that will be made by Ed. Susi will also find out further information. **Action: SC/EM**

Rebecca made the point that the money raised needs to be spent rather than sitting in the bank, but it needs to be spent wisely. With this in mind, the focus for the next meeting will be to discuss a wish list of ideas and allocate funds accordingly.

**Next Meeting:**Monday 12 January 2015 at 8.00pm