

CHAIR'S REPORT TO PTA AGM (2015)

Welcome everyone to this year's AGM! Thank you all for coming. It's wonderful to see so many parents and teachers here.

Let me start by thanking both parents and school staff for their support to the Committee over the past year. Happily, we've had a larger committee this year (there have been 9 of us), which has meant that the workload has been shared more, thereby easing the pressure when it comes to organising and running events. Nevertheless, the support of the school community is essential to us. Frankly, there have been some events, such as the BBQ social we had at the beginning of last year, the Christmas shopping evening, the BBQ we hosted at the end of this year's sports day and our recent summer fete and social night for parents, which the Committee simply would not have been able to pull off had it not been for parents, grandparents and school staff pulling together, rolling their sleeves up and helping us make it work. Your support and help is really very much appreciated.

It's been another busy year for the committee. Continuing on from last year's committee, we had three clear objectives, which we've worked very hard to achieve:

- To raise money to support the school in providing our children with important additional educational equipment, and with positive experiences.
- To improve the profile of the PTA with a view to encouraging more parents to become involved in the committee's work.
- To update the PTA's constitution to more appropriately reflect current practice and culture.

I'm very pleased to report that the Committee has achieved its first objective. As I speak, our bank balance is a very healthy £8,457 and, if we include the £1,774 that was raised from the recent sponsored walk, this year we have made a profit of £5,496. Of course, we raise money in order to spend it on appropriate items required by the school to support our children's education, and on the important extra's that enhance their school experiences. To this end, in the past year the PTA has paid for a new sound system with microphones for use at school concerts and sporting events, a digital camera, new equipment for Reception class, playground equipment and shed repairs. In addition, the PTA has already agreed, subject to final costings, to pay for a new competition sports kit for when our children play at inter-school sporting events, and will also pay for an electronic whiteboard. In addition, the PTA has continued to support children's participation on school trips by paying 50% of the transport costs, and has contributed a 1/3 towards the Laches Wood activity weekend for Year 4 pupils. In the course of the year, the PTA has also supported the school by making a termly donation of 10% of total profit made. In total, this amounts to £366.78.

Taking note of the findings of previous committees, our main fundraising activities have again been centred on the "tried & tested" which, happily, have often been the most simple and easy to organise. The ever popular 'Thank Cake it's Friday' weekly cake raffle, Bags2School, the mother and father's day stalls, the '50 club', plant sales, refreshments stalls at various events, and our Christmas hamper raffle all generated a healthy profit for the PTA, as the Treasurer's Report will show.

Other profitable, but more demanding to organise fundraising efforts, include the Christmas shopping evening, held way back in November, which generated £410 profit. In contrast to 2013, which was very well attended, this year's turnout was very disappointing for both the committee and stallholders, although financially it was more successful.

Our more recent summer fete was the most profitable yet, making, £484, nearly £100 more than last year. I believe that this was due to the committee having more members to organise and run the event and, crucially, having more parents and grandparents willing and able to support us in planning and running the event, so that we were able to introduce new ideas, and have more stalls.

Our final fundraising effort of the year was our annual social night for parents, this year held at Alton Village Hall. Following the success of last year's joint venture with St Peter's school in Alton, the event was again jointly hosted by both PTAs. This year it was an 80's themed disco, which was very well attended, and from the very positive feedback we've had from parents, hugely enjoyed! The event generated £896 profit for All Saints.

Happily, I feel that this year the Committee has also made some progress in achieving its second objective, which was to raise the PTA's profile, and generate more interest in joining the committee. We've worked very hard to create a more positive and inclusive image and, in so doing, hope that we have dispelled some of the myths that often associated with PTA committees; that they are elitist, and run by power hungry parents, keen to shine at the school gates! Our aim, as reflected in the draft constitution we have drawn up, has been to develop a transparent, inclusive and dynamic PTA committee that all parents, irrespective of their background, feel welcome to join and want to be involved in. In addition, the committee was again keen to be seen as 'giving back' to parents, as we recognise that we rely on parents for donations and help. And so, this year, we focused on organising social gatherings, which brought parents, children and staff together. We kicked off last September with an after school BBQ, which was aimed primarily at new parents to the school, and which was well attended. We received considerable support from parents and grandparents in hosting this event. It was a real team effort, and particularly pleasing to see everyone coming together to help at, and enjoy the event.

Next, as a thank you to parents, grandparents and friends who had supported the PTA over the year, we served complimentary non-alcoholic mulled wine and mince pies (hot chocolate and biscuits for the children) at the school gates towards the end of term. This was very well received, and created a lovely atmosphere at the gates. I feel that it would be well worth the PTA doing the same again this Christmas.

Then, with the school's support, we organised another informal BBQ following Sports Day, at which we gave the children complimentary ice-cream. We also served Pimms (so popular with parents that we ran out of it!) This was another pleasing and very successful event, not only because people appeared to be enjoying the food and atmosphere, but also because we had so many parents and grandparents come forward to help - working together as a team to make it happen.

And so, on to our third and final objective of the year - the updating of our constitution. The committee is very grateful to Ellen Layton, who has put in a huge amount of work in amending our current constitution, which dates back to 1989. It has been an onerous and protracted task, and although we have made significant progress, regrettably, we have not been able to complete it this year, as we had hoped. This is, in part, due to the committee deciding towards the end of the year to begin the process of changing the name of our association to "Friends of All Saints", in the light of recent difficulties in recruiting parents on to the Committee. Changing to become 'Friends of All Saints' will enable interested relatives, former parents and other local people to join the Committee, thus hopefully resulting in a more robust membership. However, the process of changing the association's name will necessitate a further revision of the draft constitution already drawn up, and the need to follow the consultation process, all of which takes time.

In summary, financially it has been a successful year for the committee, and I feel that as the year progressed the committee achieved a more dynamic and positive profile. There was certainly increased enthusiasm from parents in supporting the committee's efforts. I am therefore hopeful that the committee is now on the cusp of an exciting and dynamic new era, centred on inclusive and partnership principles.

However, let's not forget the motivation that lies behind this year's committee objectives. Ultimately, the PTA is here to serve and support our children's needs at school. In last year's report to the AGM, I wrote that the PTA hoped it had provided a service to the children at this school as, at the end of the day, it's all about, and for them. Well, that wish (and stance) holds firm this year as well. As well as paying for classroom and play equipment, contributing towards the cost of school trips, and weekend outdoor experiences, we have organised various activities that we know the children enjoy. The discos remain very popular, and we hope that the chocolate bingo, mother and father day stalls, summer fete, 'Thank Cake it's Friday' activities enhance our children's experiences at school, and contribute towards happy lifelong memories of their time at this school.

And finally, I would like to thank committee members and school staff for all their support to me, as Chair, over the past two years. There have been some challenges along the way, particularly last year when our committee was so small, but it's been a hugely rewarding experience, I've learnt new skills, and I've made new friends as a result of my involvement with the committee. I wish next year's Chair and committee every success in their fundraising endeavours.

Marianne James