



The Firs
Lower School

PTFA NEWSLETTER

July 2022

Wow, what a year it's been! Our new committee took over last autumn and have had an action-packed year of fundraising, raising around £18,000 through all our activities. Every single penny goes directly to the children and a big thank you goes out to you all for your efforts in helping out or attending events, buying raffle tickets or donating cakes – every little helps! So many new people have got involved and it's been great to see so many new faces, especially after two years of disruption. We rebranded to become the PTFA – Parent Teachers and Friends Association, because often we find grandparents and other friends support what we do so it's only right everyone is recognised and made to feel welcome. Whilst we work away behind the scenes to raise such vital funds to enhance the time the children spend at The Firs, we aren't always the best at feeding back to you with what has been raised and spent and so what better way to round off a fantastic year with a bit of just that.



SCHOOL DISCOS

One of the children's favourites and we held two discos this year, in October and February. We are already busy planning the next disco for **Thursday 20 October 2022**.

BAKE SALES

In October we held our first ever Krispy Kreme doughnut sale which was a huge success and one we will do again next year. We also held a Christmas decorated cups and mulled wine sale and a jubilee cake sale this year. The year four children have been super in helping to man these stalls... perhaps the PTFA of the future!?



THE FIRS BALL

Every other year we host a ball and it's our largest fundraising commitment. After a lot of postponement due to Covid we were finally able to hold the ball on a sunny April evening. Around 180 Firs parents, teachers and friends ate a delicious meal, won some fab prizes in the auction and partied the night away. It's fair to say everyone had a great time... we even spotted some teachers on the dancefloor! The ball raised over £12,000 which is phenomenal, and the money will be used so that the children can enjoy more nature and more reading, by doubling our Forest School provision and recruiting a brand-new lunchtime librarian. We have been able to fund each of these for at least two years so that as many children get the benefit.



FUN RUN

After the success of holding this in the school day during the pandemic we decided to keep to this format this year. The children made us all really proud running so many laps of the school field, even on such hot and sunny days. Well done to all the children for their tremendous effort and for the sponsorship money received.

SUMMER FETE

In July the KS2 playground was adorned with stalls for our summer fete. As ever, the kids loved this event and all went home suitably high on sugar and filthy from running riot on the school field. The parents and friends also went home happy having spent some time at the bar and BBQ! Special thanks to the teachers for the fun games, loved by all.



AMPTHILL GALA DAY

This year the theme was the Queen's Jubilee and our take on this was 'through the decades'.

A special thanks to Frankie Orell who led the vision for this and created such a brilliant display of colour, crafts and costumes, earning us 2nd place.

With over 100 children taking part from every single year group, it really was a great show. Special shout-outs go to the family and friends accompanying the children who dressed up too!



Y4 LEAVERS

Just next week it will be time for our current Year 4 children to leave us and move on to Alameda and other local middle schools. Every year the PTFA fund a leavers yearbook for each of the children to treasure as a keepsake for their time at The Firs. Goodbye to all those in Oak and Willow class ... we hope you have enjoyed all the PTFA events and wish you all the best for your futures!

SAVE THE DATE

On **Thursday 13th October** we will be hosting a 'learn to braid' evening in the school hall. So whether you have no clue where to start with French plaits or would like to learn some more advanced skills this workshop will be sure to give you the skills. Dads also welcome! Look out for details after the summer break.

WHAT HAVE WE FUNDED?

The PTFA exists to enhance the time our children spend at school. We have a range of commitments which we fund each and every year. This year these included the Christmas pantomime (this year's has just been booked!), transport for swimming lessons, Christmas gifts, sports/playground equipment, Reading Cloud subscription and WOW days. The PTFA also funded both individual Christmas presents for each child, together with gifts for each class, which were delivered by Santa much to the delight of the children!



These annual commitments total over £6,000 so whilst it may seem like we are constantly asking for your donations and help, it is all to allow us to keep doing these things. Of course, we hope that the events themselves also provide the children with a lot of joy and some fabulous memories of the time they spend at The Firs!

We also have requests from teachers throughout the year of things they would like to be able to provide at school that aren't funded by the local authority. We discuss these items at our quarterly meetings before making a decision as a committee. This year we agreed to spend funds on new equipment for the maths trolley, a new backdrop curtain for school plays, new audio equipment for performances, a science workshop, headphones for those with special educational needs and an annual commitment to top up plants in the year 4 garden area.

With this having been a ball year we set our sights even higher (as detailed on the previous page) so watch this space for more information next term on those appointments.

A FINAL WORD ...

A massive thank you to everyone who has got involved this year, whether you've bought raffle tickets, donated prizes, attended events, volunteered at events or come along to our meetings it all helps and the school really appreciate the efforts of all parents.

As many of you know, Helen Pearson our Chair has been on the committee for 3 years now, two years as an Events Officer and for the last year as Chair but it's time for her to step back and let someone else take this on from next autumn. Being on the PTFA is such a rewarding thing to do and a great opportunity to make some new friends so we urge you all to consider getting involved and look out for communications regarding next year's elections in the autumn term. Full training will be given!

In the meantime, thanks for reading and have a fantastic summer holiday.

THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2022-2023

TERM ONE

- PTA AGM & social evening
- Learn to Braid evening (Thursday 13 October)
- School disco (Thursday 20 October)
- Christmas craft activity day (Saturday 26 November)
- The Firs Christmas Panto - Goldilocks & The Three Bears (Friday 9th December)
- Christmas entertainer for Saplings
- Nativity Plays
- Mulled wine and mince pie sale

TERM TWO

- School disco
- Doughnut sale
- World Book Day & Bedtime Stories
- Spring Gift Fayre
- Easter Egg Raffle

TERM THREE

- Ice lolly sales
- Fun Run
- The Firs Summer Fete
- Ampthill Gala Day
- Y4 Performance and leavers party

More details to follow ... watch this space!