

The Friends of Syresham School

Charity no. 1030877



Chair's Report - AGM 2nd October 2017/2018

Another 12 months of unbelievable fundraising and wonderful achievements. What a fantastic team we are – thank you one and all for everything you do to make this the most successful year of fundraising in the history of Friends – it is inspiring and impressive.

We hosted 15 events, 38 Friday cake sales, collected with the Round Table and Santa, produced T-towels and received donations from our DIY SOS weekend, Easy Fundraising, Barclays and Aviva – all of this combined to raise a whopping £9,957.

As we all know there is no point in having these well earned funds just sitting in the bank - so how much and what have we invested in this year? Well it's a big amount, £12,166 to be precise! This included a significant contribution towards the transformation of the Nursery, Reception and KS1 outdoor area, plus the large playground bike / trike shed & separate storage shed and re-instating the Timber Trail. We also paid for the provision of French lessons for all children for the year and purchased three 16 seater foldable tables used every day for breakfast club and for events.

Friends is very much a team effort, our events I hope are as enjoyable to put on as they are to participate in, be it Bingo or Film night for the children, or the Quiz and Summer Ball for the adults to name but a few. Year Reps lead many of the events so we're able to share the responsibilities and time spent producing them – a big thank you to the Year Reps – great job. We all come together for our big fundraisers the Christmas Fayre and May Day and take on elements to deliver these larger events – year on year these are growing and becoming ever more impressive and very polished – well done!

Shirley our Treasurer I'm sure will provide details on each of the events and fundraising stats, but I thought I would highlight a couple of great firsts this year.

Our inaugural DIY SOS weekend(s)! Caroline led the whole project, with Mrs Clough's support - from Aviva to DIY SOS – with a massive creative campaign and bundles of enthusiasm - Caroline persuaded 100's of volunteers to help over two chilly (to say the least!) weekends and get our outdoor learning area for the younger members of school and nursery up and running. A special thank you must go to Stuart Webster for his generous contribution of time and building expertise. The vision, motivation and momentum Caroline created drove the whole campaign, not only did Friends very much support the 'on the ground' team effort, but we also - as mentioned above - contributed to 50% of the material costs. Without Caroline and Mrs Clough's leadership and everyone's support (including the most incredible cakes – thank you Paula amongst others!) both within and outside of the school we really wouldn't have seen their vision come to life. Thank you so much, it is lovely to see the children all playing outside and really really enjoying themselves.

Secondly, the truly wonderful 'Syresham Summer Ball' – a new fixture for Friends! Led by the marvellous Paula, we really did have the most magnificent Black Tie evening of 3-course fine dining and fabulous cocktails all in the beautifully decorated stunning new village hall. It was well supported, perfectly executed and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The next one is in the diary already – 6th July 2019. Thank you Paula, a brilliant idea turned into a perfect reality.

So here is to more fun fundraisers for this coming year, from quizzes to disco's, Father Christmas to curry nights, Easter egg hunts to bike rides, film nights to refreshments, fashion shows to raffles we really do have a good time whilst making a huge difference to our children's life at school.

As we kick off the 2018 / 19 academic year our initial focus is Easy Fundraising, in the last 12 months we've added 16 supporters, now at 42 and counting! Our aim is to raise over £2,000 by July 2019, we are currently at £940 – go Syresham, go Easy Fundraising! So please sign up and raise easy funds for your children's school. <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/fosyresham>. I'm sure Mrs Clough will share her vision for future purchases but ideas so far include maths equipment and resource for KS2 and IT including digital cameras.

We have a new logo for Friends, embracing growth, longevity, team work and our 'hands on' approach, it's very attractive and a much needed positive change. Thank you Caroline for your design and artwork. We all love it!

We have already held two events this year; the New Parents Coffee Afternoon for the Reception mums and dads, thank you to Karen and Liz for organising this and the Year One mums for making cakes and supporting the event. Secondly, our Pub Social for New Parents, it was a great turn out of parents across many school years and a very enjoyable evening of catching up over a glass of wine or two, but sadly no new families attended – another time perhaps! Thank you to all those Friends who came along and supported the evening it was good fun. It must be noted that MCS also had an open evening and the school had a Governors meeting – we will endeavour to avoid these next year.

As always we couldn't do it without Mrs Clough and Mrs Allee, your support as always has been stoic as we come up with more and more and more requests. Thank you for keeping all school families informed of our activities and for supporting them. We really do appreciate our close relationship with the school and know we couldn't achieve what we do without your support.

In addition to staff, I'd like to thank the Governors for their great contribution to our fundraising events, especially the most wonderful May Day BBQ – in soaring temperatures you managed to cook hundreds of sausages and burgers for our hungry guests, I'm pleased the new BBQ did the job and there was no 'hot coal walking' this year!

Cakes – a HUGE thank you to Nicola Fowler for her YEARS of service ensuring we have enough bakers, keeping everyone abreast of their 'Bake Off' date, putting the rota together and being there every Friday with float and bags to support cake sale come wind, rain or shine – a big 'Hollywood' handshake to you for your years of support with Friday cake sale. Don't worry though, cake sale Friday hasn't come to a grinding halt – we have fantastic news in the form of a new Mary Berry calibre candidate taking it on – thank you Paula for being our Prue, we really appreciate it.

Stepping down – another massive thank you must go to our wonderful Secretary, Vicky Powell who is formally stepping down, after years of taking minutes and putting together agendas to name but a few of her admin hats. Your hard work and enthusiasm at keeping us all organised has been very much appreciated over the years. This role will be officially appointed tonight.

I'd like to say a really heartfelt thank you to Shirley, she works so incredibly hard, mostly behind the scenes doing lots of work to ensure our finances are accurate and up to date. From floats to the Charity Commission, checking statements to logging receipts, paying expenses to collecting money she really is an incredible asset to our team. Thank you Shirley.

Lastly, Shirley and I have both been on the committee for eight years, we are both happy to stay in our current roles this coming year (2018 / 2019), but equally happy to pass the baton on if anyone would like to take on the Treasurer or Chair role. We will both be stepping down in 2019 when our youngest children go into year 6.

Thank you
Lisa Dimpleby, Chair of the Friends of Syresham School