

Chairman's report 2021 / 2022

Welcome everyone and thank you for attending this year's Friends of Crockerne AGM. The AGM is the PTA's only formal meeting of the year which covers committee election, Chairmans report and Treasurers annual financial report.

2021 / 2022 has indeed been a brighter year in many ways seeing lots of 'life as we knew it' resuming from its surreal re-set and frozen moment in time we all experienced. The year brought us many changes and the feelings and needs of people wanting to be face to face grew at an overwhelming speed, eager to be united again. Despite the challenges, we had such a successful fundraising year in 20/21, one I was convinced would be hard to replicate or repeat. That said we have again hit an all-time record amount raising just over £11,000. What an incredible achievement for our humble little school.

At the end of last term, we saw our Headship changing as Lara Furmidge and Geeta Verrell followed other life/work/family commitments. I'm sure you all join me in thanking them for their years of service and contribution to allow 'Friends' to have a 'Free reign' with their full support. I am very excited to be welcoming **Sue Elliott** with her wealth of knowledge and enthusiastic passion for a healthy 'Friends of' and very much look forward to working with her if I am elected again this year. I know you're all after this position 😊

Its no easy mission to lead a team of people, trusting you to make the right decisions for the good of their children, their school and their community. I am not alone, I have a formidable team with **Poppy Coley, Ruth Cotton** and **Annabelle Foot** and can only share my sincerest praise for their unwavering support, especially Poppy who steers my delivery, making sure I waffle less, I think I should've sent her this report 😊. I also must mention my poor husband **Phil Kaszubski** who is a member of the Friends team by clear default and who knows exactly how to execute my ideas by simply saying 'I can do that for you'. The work we were able to carry out, in the Nursery especially simply wouldn't have happened without him and I can't thank him enough for his time and man skills, let alone the savings we were able to make. I know this didn't go unnoticed as the wonderful Friends Committee held a surprise family picnic for us both to thank us for our efforts. We were speechless and very overwhelmed so Thank you again for such an unnecessary yet very thoughtful act of kindness.

Current Committee

Chair – Charlotte Kaszubski

Vice Chair – to be filled

Co-Secretary – Poppy Coley

Co-Secretary – to be filled

Treasurer – Ruth Cotton

Social media role – Annabelle Foot

Anyone wishing to step up into a role currently filled or would like to fill an unfilled role can be nominated at today's AGM.

Our wider committee is growing in numbers with passionate and exciting parents joining. Thank you all so very much for coming along for the ride, sharing the laughter and helping make friends a fun platform to raise money and socialise. I'm so appreciative of your dedicated support. I would also like to extend my thanks to **Deb Brennan** for her continued input and support into organising the Xmas cards and Yr. 6 Hoody's, **Zac Coley** our newly appointed Chair of Governors for being a

constant and reliable source of support and not forgetting our dedicated **Sonya Crutchley** who continues to be the lifeline and incredible link to the school and staff.

Overview of the year

The events

We continue to put on events that are not only good fundraisers but fun for adults and children to enjoy, we have however tried to steer away, at the moment, of the events which take up a huge amount of manpower, organisation and effort, these are namely the Summer and Christmas Fayre & the Easter Egg Hunt. This is largely down to time and commitment of volunteer required. We did however change things a little this year finally hosting our first Circus during the Summer which became our sole focus. Although at times we felt like a nag, we did manage to get help, support and volunteers in abundance which made for a really successful day for all concerned. We received huge praise and great feedback from residents and our school community and almost tripled what we make at our usual Summer Fayre. Can I take this opportunity to thank those involved for stepping forward to do a 'shift'. Your hour or two, or three in some cases meant we could spread the load, so no one felt overwhelmed and that was truly invaluable. We've seen many of our 'new fundraising events' continue to be great little earners for the charity. The Smartie Challenge has been a huge success along with our continued relationship with Ben and Steph at Bags 2 School. We will be looking forward to holding some fun events for the children at school by bringing back Movie Night and the Discos, making sure we are getting the balance right between fun and fundraising.

Grant Fundraising

We were incredibly lucky to receive a grant from Quartet for our outdoor project which I am pleased to say we have now spent. We are very grateful to **Wendy Martineau** for her outstanding efforts in not only helping to secure the grant but for seeing the project through with submitting the final report and statement of expenses for our outdoor project. We will be continuing to seek out grants for our projects moving forward.

Ongoing projects to fund

Our outdoor project as initially set out, has now been completed with the generous help from Elmtree Landscape and Gardening designs. The new beds are in place and in use creating an allotment area for the children to learn how to 'Sow and Grow'. There are still benches and seating to paint and other areas that are in need of improvement but this again will be work in progress as we do an overview of the school and allocate where to spend. The historical timeline is installed and protected with Perspex from those sticky fingers, the new 10 Metre low level climbing wall is in full swing and enjoyed by so many and our wonderful new wall art has created a fantastic creative play zone for our budding performers. As always our ICT suite needs constantly upgrading and we will be looking into how we can support this.

Fundraising

As well as the previously mentioned events, the online purchasing apps such as Easy fundraising and Amazon Smile are proving to be a gentle trickle of funds. This, along with match funding is such a simple way to earn money for the charity. Huge thanks to **Jenny Lake** at Lloyds for match funding £500 against our Circus event. We will continue to advertise these avenues.

Where has the money gone?

Ruth has brilliantly laid this out in her report, so I'll leave this to her to explain. (Please see the Treasurers report)

The working of Friends

The new website that we set up last year is proving to be a great success. With Poppy at the helm and learning new things every time we hold an event is really making for some easier transactions and organisation for us and the parents / carers. The Whats App year groups have continued to be a great source of communication along with Facebook and Twitter which are appearing to be a successful way to distribute information to a wider audience and encourage the village to attend external events.

Finally, as chair of this current committee I'd like to close by simply saying the following. Whilst our covid times seem to be getting further in the distance, I am fully aware hardship and tough times are by no means over. We face a new era of stress, worry and instability within our current climate and raising money in such uncertain times not only seems crass but unsympathetic and distasteful. I'd like to reassure everyone that, no matter what the outcome of a year's fundraising ends up as, or however many zeros we achieve on that bottom line, I will sit here for as many years as I am chair and be proud of whatever outcome we achieve. Our children and their learning environment is of our top priority and they will not miss out or suffer as a result of what is going on in this crazy world, we just need to think a little smarter. With the passing of our great monarch we all witnessed the crowds of people who pulled together in times of need. With so many families in a financial crisis, they need not feel alone. Please come and talk to us and share your worries, your children need not ever feel isolated, and we will do all we can to make their school day and their environment the best place to be.

Pill is, and has always been, something quite special and that is because everyone pulls together to help each other. I for one am unbelievably proud my daughter is a Crockerne Kid and although we don't have an endless supply of funds, we do have people willing to move mountains and that is worth far more in my book

It's been an absolute pleasure to lead the friends team this year and no words can thank you enough for your support.

Charlotte Kaszubski
Chair