

Chairman's report 2020 / 2021

When I first sat down to write this Chairman's report, I initially wondered how I was going to articulate the very odd situation we all found ourselves in this year and pondered what I was going to say. In the grand scheme of things, 'Friends' fundraising has not been at the forefront of everyone's minds as 'Life as we knew it' had so drastically changed and it felt crass to be trying to raise money under such challenging circumstances. I very quickly reminded myself however, that at the root of why we are here is to help our school and our children. We all know our school has depravity and is juggling what funds it has to accommodate its educational and curriculum needs so the 'nice, fun things' are often out of reach.

Our kids deserve a safe, happy, fun, creative environment to explore whatever they desire and that's why we are working so hard to achieve the maximum we can for them. Fundraising has been different this year where we've had to steer away from the physical contact events, this we thought initially was going to be catastrophic, but on reflection, we have had our most successful fundraising year yet raising over £10,000.

Committee Members Changes

We are super sad to see more long-standing members who have spent years tirelessly raising funds moving on from friends this year, as their children have now left. Celia Roberts has been a valued asset to Friends and her meticulous planning and organisation will be greatly missed.

Ellie Blaney entered a new job role just after the start of her co secretary role and stepped down to allow another member to take this on. Poppy Coley gallantly took on the Secretary helm in the hope we could find a co to share the responsibilities. To date we are still hoping to fill the co secretary position. Wendy Martineau is stepping down as Vice chair due to her exciting new work commitments. We are so sad to be losing Wendy as her strengths among the team are flawless. Ruth Cotton has been a vital cog to our wheel making sure we are keeping track of funds raised and spent. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my direct team of Wendy, Poppy and Ruth for supporting me in more ways than one. Not only in the work with 'Friends' but taking control of the committee when I was experiencing personal tragedies. I cannot begin to tell them how grateful I was for your nurturing kindness and allowing me the time I needed.

Vice chair, co secretary and social media roles are currently unfilled and we await and look forward to welcoming new members. Our wider committee is growing in numbers with passionate and exciting parents joining. Thankyou all so very much for coming along for the ride 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 our lovely long-standing Santa, Brian Davies for his years of Santa magic. He will be very hard to replace.

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 – to be filled

Anyone wishing to step up or fill a role can request to do so.

Overview of the year

The events

Events we have held this year include:

Virtual Quiz, Xmas tabletop stalls, Xmas cards / mugs, Xmas raffle, Ssssshhh Santa surprise, Bags 2 school, Easter smartie challenge, Crazy hair day, Year 6 leavers party and just recently our first Car Boot sale. We were unable to offer the children any in person events like discos, story time / movie nights etc nor could we support the Nativity, Yr 6 show and either summer or xmas fayres. We are hoping, in time we may be able to resume some normality, but in the meantime, keeping everyone safe, we will come up with new, fun and different ideas.

Grant Fundraising

We were incredibly grateful to Wendy Martineau and Clare Titley for their outstanding efforts securing us a grant for our outdoor project. Wendy and Clare are going to continue to research funding for the next year ahead. Thank you, ladies, we were overwhelmed to receive such a generous grant to help our cause.

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 yet still we don't have everyone on board. We will continue to advertise these avenues.

Ongoing projects to fund

Our outdoor project was split into 4 stages. The first stage of clearing was a huge success seeing multiple families give up their precious time to help. The rest of the project has been slow due to several factors, limitation of being on the school ground and changes to school staffing with ideas shifting. We are committed to completing the rest of the project as swiftly as time allows adding more floor and wall artwork, painting the existing furniture and replacing tired and old play equipment. We have successfully created the first section of wall art, the school motto mural and look forward to moving ahead with this.

The historical timeline which has now been fully designed and signed off and is just waiting to be installed. We cannot wait to see how it looks.

Where has the money gone?

Ruth has brilliantly laid this out in her report, so I'll leave this to her to explain.

The working of Friends

Poppy and I have been working hard to create our own PTA website. All parents have now been informed about this and need to register to access. In time we will hopefully run all ticketed events through this platform to again avoid further handling of cash. This is a work in progress so will develop over time.

With the confusion of communication in the past with various platforms, Whats App year groups have been set up and established so information can be shared to parents and carers in case school communication has been missed. This has proved to be a great way of reminding parents and carers. Facebook and Twitter are appearing to be a successful way to distribute information to a wider audience and encourage the village to attend external events, hence the suggestion of its own committee role.

Having school governor, Zac Coley, at meetings continues to be a big help in maintaining improved communications between Friends and school.

And our teacher representative Sonya Crutchley has done a fantastic job in not only communicating with the school, but with the teachers specifically.

Our request last year to have a clearer email address and access to the school website was granted and have found this wholly beneficial in keeping parents and carers up to date and informed being able to signpost them to up to date information.

Finally, as chair, what has screamed at me this year is the amount of love and care parents have for this wonderful school and their desire to make it an inviting place to be. Good will oozes out of so many, and the number of incredible skills and trades we have among our parents and carers is unfathomable. We have people working in government, the arts council, designing music videos for A list celebrities and TV shows, international sportsmen to name just a small few, as well as fantastic photographers, writers, skilled trades, surgeons, business owners and people willing and wanting to share with the children their expertise. This is truly something to behold and as a school, we should be grasping that with both hands and leaning on those to help educate and inspire the minds of our young influential children. Let them have access to the tools that make their dreams bigger than they ever imagined and allow them to be 'The best me that they can be'.

Lara, Geeta, you and all your incredible, dedicated staff have our full support, and we are with you every step of these uncertain ways. By working together and using our strengths, I honestly believe we can move mountains and put Crockerne on the map.

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

Heres to an even bigger and better year and success in its plenty. I for one, can't wait to see what we can achieve.

Charlotte Kaszubski
Chair