

# FRIENDS OF REED SCHOOL

Reed First School, Jackson's Lane,  
Reed, Royston, Herts, SG8 8AB  
Charity commission no: 1091180

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019

### Chairs Report

As my fifth year as Chair of FoRS, 2018/19 has proved the most challenging. In my report last year, I talked about how school charities had found their remits shifting – they no longer merely providing their school's with additions that engaged and enhanced the children's learnings, but also now helped deliver more functional and practical support on a basic level. The age of austerity, belt tightening and budget cuts had definitely taken it's toll and FoRS was no exception to that. This year, events returned smaller profits than in previous years, and that combined with volunteers becoming increasingly time poor, the task of steering a PTA forward has indeed been a tricky one.

We spent a large amount of time analysing the calendar of events at the end of 2017, to try and provide a balance between the events that were our old staples - which we knew turned a healthy profit - and those new alternatives which may help engage and become staples of the future. We looked at supporting our working parent community by alternating meetings between school times and the evenings, and even trialled introducing Skype meetings. For the first time, we sadly had to cancel not one but two events due to lack of support, highlighting dramatically for us just how the world of the PTA has changed. Which is why, in such a difficult climate, it is truly amazing that we still managed to make an amazing £4,316.63 profit.

Every year, we have continued to invest more and more into school, providing activities for the children that enhance and inspire their learning. This year we surpassed ourselves, and spent a whopping £5,797.76. We paid for a new Mud kitchen, complete with full environmental area that we also installed outside the Infant Classroom. We heavily subsidised the Kingswood trip for Years 3 and 4, alongside the coach for the all school trip – meaning that the cost to parents for these excursions becomes far more manageable. We hosted a falconry display, so the children could get up close to some of the most beautiful creatures – even meeting a brand new fluffy baby barn owl. We threw an environmental weekend, where we purchased all the materials to refresh the school and teach our children the importance of taking pride and valuing the environment you learn in everyday. We replaced the signage to keep the school looking smart, and paid for the Open Day ads and banners that keep our school presented in the local community. And for the children, not only did we throw an entirely free disco, to celebrate all the years hard work, but we bought our leavers their own individual personalised hoodies and dictionaries to send them on their way with a memento of Reed that they will never forget. To deliver all of this in a year fraught with challenges is a truly great and incredible achievement.

But the world has changed. That is what the last year has highlighted, and it needs a new direction to effectively steer us into the future. So this year I stand down from my post, to make way for that new vision.

Five years is a long time to invest so much heart and soul into a project as huge as FoRS, and I wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate just exactly what we've managed to achieve in that time.

### **So during these five years, what was our goal?**

Our aim was clear. We wanted to give something back. To support the school – both

financially and practically to help provide enhanced facilities for the betterment of our children's educations. To raise the school's profile in the community, and give it presence on the map.

**And what EXACTLY did we do? Well I'm glad you asked...**

We have hosted:

- 3 Christmas Shopping Nights
- 5 Quiz Nights
- 2 PJ Days
- 1 Wine Quiz
- 1 Murder Mystery night
- 3 Chocolate Tombolas
- 1 Royal Wedding Bake Off
- 5 Father's Day Sweet Shops
- 5 Present Wraps
- 3 May Fayre Stalls
- 1 Royston Xmas Market Stall
- 5 Treasure Hunts
- 5 Co-hosted Strawberry Teas
- 2 Fabulous Bookworm Balls
- 2 Co-hosted Fireworks nights
- 5 Wreath laying ceremonies at Remembrance Sunday
- 3 Christmas Hamper Raffles
- 5 Easter Teas
- 5 Leavers Teas
- 1 Retirement Party
- 1 Kids Bingo
- 1 Kids Beetle Drive
- 3 Kids Discos
- 6 Open Days
- 2 Play Creches
- 1 Pampered Chef Night
- 2 Photoshoots
- 1 Race Night
- 5 Sports Day Refreshments
- 36 100 Club draws
- 4 Welcome Breakfasts
- 10 Bags 2 School collections
- 4 sets of Xmas Cards
- Created 1 Cookbook
- And 1 Tea towel design
- Introduced a "Buy a Brick" scheme
- And sold more second hand uniform than Oxfam have jumpers

We've also utilised many affiliate accounts, receiving regular payments from the Giving Machine, Boiler Juice, Butlins, Stampstastic, My Name Tags and Boiler Juice to mention a few.

And all of these events have meant that in the last 5 years, we have raised an absolutely phenomenal **£35,757.97**. For a school of just 40 children, it is truly remarkable.

**So WHAT has it been spent on?**

The list of what FoRS have supported over the past five years is fairly impressive. Every coach can cost in the region of £500, and just this subsidy on a school trip can make a huge difference to costings for parents. FoRS have funded every coach on every trip for the past five years. We have subsidised 3 trips to Kingswood to ensure every child in the Junior classroom has the option to benefit from this fabulous residential experience.

There have been times when we've helped with the costs of some more fundamental items. We have paid for the redecoration of the infant classroom, to freshen and brighten their

learning environment. We've bought a sink, CD player and Interactive Learning Aid for the Early Years classroom. We have rebranded the signage and replaced and updated the school signs. And then the more fun stuff. We have paid for a chocolate workshop experience that explored the Junior classes topic and invited the whole school to Once Upon a Bus that unlocked the children's imaginations with their own individual little keys. We have paid for numerous pantos, including this year's panto that will come to a Reed stage near you this January. We've bought three iPads for the Early Years classroom to support phonics learning, and a camera to record these experiences in their learning journals. On a more practical level, we've bought a visualiser and mathematical counting aids for the Junior classroom. I've already mentioned the mud kitchen and area for the Infant classroom and we've replaced the sand pits in both Infants and Early Years. We paid for the leavers dictionaries and hoodies at the end of the year, paid for the crackers at the Christmas dinner, and sometimes even the Christmas tree itself! That's a wish list even Santa would struggle to beat.

### **How about the community pledge?**

One of the true beauties of schooling our children in such an amazing location is that Reed has the most outstanding community. Indeed this school is supported whole heartedly by the dedication of those who volunteer – anything from Governor to reading in school to those supporting extracurricular clubs. I am so very proud of the part that I have played in increasing those community links – with the church, the cricket club and the parish council. We are now recognised as a village group in our own right, and I can only hope this amazing network can continue to push school life into the heart of this amazing village.

### **And what about the library?**

As you know, nearly four years ago, we embarked upon a fundraising campaign in conjunction with the governors to build an all-purpose library. This drive was no mean feat, and was set to provide the future children of Reed with not only an educational space, but a place to nurture the love of books and the joy of reading in a library setting. It was about being part of something bigger. We set about fervently setting up a community library, sourcing donations of over 2,000 books for both the children and the residents of Reed. This campaign did come with a set of terms, however – that no child should feel that existing luxuries were lost in the raising of these funds. And in fact, as you can see from this year's record breaking spend, quite the opposite has occurred.

During this time, we have raised over £20,000 for this build, and that figure is a true credit to the dedication and support of the village of Reed. I am so proud to be able to hand over such an amazing amount, for the governors to continue to support this amazing project with further grants and funding opportunities. The jewel in its crown is that our project has been recognised as that of such value, that the Co-Op are happy to support us in our efforts – choosing us as one of three local charities of the year. A legacy to be truly proud of.

### **And it's goodbye from me.**

As I mentioned earlier, the time has come for a new direction and a different face at the helm. So I would like to close by thanking each and everyone of you who has supported me over the past five years. Who have stood on a cold market stall, made infinite cups of tea, helped wheel a filing cabinet down the road and driven a wobbly BBQ on a trailer. Who helped co-pilot the driving of Santa's sleigh up the A10 on a very windy November's night to make the children smile for Father Christmas. For those of you who delivered flyers, wrote quiz questions, baked endless cakes, bought food for events and generally allowed me to persuade you into turning up time and time again, I will forever be in your debt. For your time, effort and energies. No time was ever too small or too undervalued. And finally to the children – who all of this was for. Thanks for making me smile, every single day.

It's been an honour.

Charlotte Eeles