

FORS AGM: Chairs Report

As the current Chair of Friends of Reed School (FORS) I would like to give you an informal overview of the changes we've seen over this past year and share our achievements. As you may or may not know the chairs report is not a constitutional requirement is moreover an overview of the achievements of the prior school year. I hope that this information is helpful and insightful into the work FoRS has undertaken, our ethos and approach.

This existing committee was formed of Gabby (Secretary), Jen (Elected Representative), Cat (Treasurer) and me as Chair. It was my first year as Chair, Gabby and Jen were new to the committee and Cat retained her Treasurer role. Combining all these changes and the fact that the last academic year was a little unusual given the COVID-19 pandemic and impacts that had on educational settings, we are really proud of what we have achieved.

At the end of 2019 the exiting committee finished with the Christmas Gift event. A chance for the children to choose a gift for a friend, family member or loved one. I would like to thank the exiting committee for seeing through these commitments after their official role had concluded.

The new committee had aspired to create fun and engaging events for the school children and at the same time raising funds for the school. In April 2020 we planned to launch our first event of a Mad Hatters Tea Party. We had organised for Mad Science to join us for a science demonstration and had arranged local party suppliers loan us party equipment, in the theme of Mad Hatters of course.

At the same time, we also planned a yoga morning and created marketing collateral and promoted the event and had many sign ups.

As most of you will be aware, given the circumstances with the progression of the pandemic we were unable to continue these events. We did have some generous individuals who had signed up for yoga morning and allowed FoRS to retain the contribution that they had made. Thank you if this applies to you.

In addition to these planned events and as a means to engage a wider population, we hosted our very first informal PTA get together. This was a chance for our parents and their children to come together in a relaxed environment and talk about how we could work closer together. We was delighted with attendance at this first get together but unfortunately the circumstances meant that we could not get together again.

As a team we worked to find new ways to raise funds and were in a position to donate some artwork valued in the region of £500 to the school. This will soon be on display in the school for all to see, as and when the pandemic permits.

We also put in place online ordering of pre-loved uniform and undertook a parent survey to see how best to communicate to our parent body.

I am sure, like many of you, external factors such as work commitments, Furlough and for some, the need to home school children (as well as the potential impacts to health of our friends and family) meant that all further fundraising had to be postponed.

Notwithstanding the impact to our fundraising schedule we put in place measures to change the way that we hosted our meetings, such as the introduction of virtual meetings, whilst linked to COVID, it also helped us to try to accommodate working parents commitments.

Some children continued at school for the duration of the pandemic, and others re-joined in May 2020. We were pleased to provide the ice lolly's for Sports Day, fund the Leavers Tea and Leavers Hoodies. We also funded the Bear Keep Sakes for the new children joining school. This was a new initiative to help welcome new families.

Finally moving into the new academic year, we put in place some completely new ideas, such as the New Parent Welcome Pack.

We hosted our very first Frozen Friday

We created a Keep Sake Gift for all Nursery & Reception children, which was a measuring string with a poem. We hosted an online New Parent Event which was a Body Shop Party, we also reached minimum level of sales to qualify for host gifts. This will enable the new committee the opportunity to raffle items later in the year.

Many parents in the school have been my support and sounding board on these ideas and events and have contributed to their implementation. Thank you so much to those who have given up their time and energy to support FoRS and the school. I truly appreciate it.

I wish the incoming committee the best of luck and will support as best I can with learnings from what has been a rather strange year.

Angela Holland, 05 October 2020