



## **Annual Report 2018-2019**

**By Carolyn Hopper (Vice Chair)**

The Parents' Association has continued to champion its three basic aims this year, namely; fundraising, providing a refreshment service for school functions, and acting as a social platform for the parent body.

### ***Fundraising***

I have promised the Treasurer not to steal her thunder by peppering my report with figures, but there are one or two that I feel compelled to highlight. The headline figure is the phenomenal profit of **£43,728** (this includes the total from the PA accounts, plus other donations sent directly to the school account in our name: £1,791 donated via School Comms by parents wishing to support the Fairs, plus £350 in reclaimed Gift Aid). Every penny of this has gone, or will be going, into the school's crucial Making Ends Meet fund.

In total we donated **£39,725** to Pate's in 2018/19. The largest chunk of this (just over £23,000) was spent refitting an entire IT lab principally used by the Languages department, but we also covered the Languages departmental budgets for the year, spent £5,000 on some very fancy new microscopes for Biology, provided planners for every student, and managed some quirkier donations as well: e.g. plants for the gardening club, a pair of canoes for OED and two "hydration stations" much desired by the school council!

### ***Events***

As ever, we have been kept busy providing refreshments at the school's many events. Over the last school year there were 22 events or performances on the calendar where we were on hand with drinks, snacks and/or homemade cake - including a new foray into noodle soup and dumplings at the inaugural Pate's Chinese New Year celebration.

In addition we raised money through our own PA events: the Christmas Bazaar and Spring Fair are hugely successful fundraisers and very popular with the younger students, the Christmas Quiz was a sell-out as ever, and Back to School day in the summer was hugely enjoyed by two classes of rather mature students.

### ***Other fundraisers***

I should also mention a few other activities that contribute significantly to our fundraising each year:

- The second hand uniform service contributed over £2,300 to our profits this year (including takings at the two fairs) and is so much appreciated by parents

- The 100 Club, for those of us who like a flutter, contributed over £4,500
- Hampers, which are filled entirely by donations and raffled at the main school events, contributed just under £5,000 of the total

Income and profit went up this year, but it is a challenging environment which requires savvy shopping to minimise expenses and good communication with parents to maintain attendance and income.

### ***Thank yous***

Pate's is blessed with a very large and active PA team, who are tremendously supportive of one another, and extremely good company – I am really grateful to be part of the PA, it has made the secondary years a lot of fun. The only downside is that I have an awful lot of people to thank tonight!

This year I'm going to start with school. One of the main reasons that Pate's has such a successful PA is the fantastic support we receive. I'd like to thank **Russel Ellicott** and the **SLT**, who make saying thank you an art form, and are there with practical support too at every event; the **teaching staff** who offer practical help (so many tables! so many students to carry them!) and are also so appreciative individually; the wonderful site team, also known as **Anthony and Phil**, who provide endless help with the heavy lifting, and considerable amounts of banter; **Yvonne Shelmerdine** and the **front office team**, who always greet us with a smile and are endlessly patient with any number of strange queries; **Liz Connole** and the finance department who keep on top of our payments to and from school; and **Julie** and the kitchen team who continue to support our sausage escapades with good humour.

Last but certainly not least, our first line of support: **Stephen Locke**, Bursar and King of the (100 Club!) Balls, in whose vast brain resides the answer to every question we come up with, and **Sarah Cartwright** who has leapt into her new PA liaison role with amazing gusto. You both smooth the way for everything we do, and you set the tone so positively: thank you for always making us feel part of the team.

Next up – you lovely lot. You are the army that keeps the PA moving ever forward. I'd like to thank the whole of the committee and our active members and volunteers for all they have done throughout the year.

There are a lot of people who have stepped up to take on a piece of the PA puzzle and own it, often putting in huge amounts of work behind the scenes – I'm thinking of second-hand uniform, the hampers, the 100 Club, recruiting stallholders for fairs, match funding, organising the quiz, recycling, writing copy, acquiring raffle prizes ... it is a long list! You make the scale of what we do possible, and stop the Chair's head from exploding, so thank you.

In addition there are many people who turn up every year for the huge House events or fairs to do their particular thing – serving sausages, manning tills, revving up and marshalling the youngest students, producing soup or cakes, making endless toasties, I could go on – and there are people who turn up whenever they can throughout the year just willing to do whatever is needed. All of these "repeat offenders" are absolutely key to making things run smoothly. You are quiet heroes – thank you.

I also need to say a personal thank you to the really impressive number of people who have already put their hands up to take on a committee position or other role going forward, some of whom have been shadowing their role while contributing enormously for a year

now. It is comforting as many of the old committee stand down to know that the PA will not miss a beat.

### ***Retirements***

Tonight we say goodbye to some dedicated committee members who have completed 4 years in their officer roles. Standing down tonight are **Louisa Coley**, our Treasurer; **Linda Arthur**, our Secretary; and Linda's shadowy sidekick, husband **Paul**, who stepped in as Data Officer to save Linda's sanity, and our records from chaos.

**Linda** – you and Paul have been integral in keeping the committee organised and our volunteer army on the road. You are always so positive, and have been a joy to work with: we're going to miss you hugely.

**Louisa** – always on top of the most unforgiving job of all! We couldn't have done it without you, and I'm glad we won't entirely lose the benefit of your experience yet.

I just want to say a huge Thank You on behalf of us all.

### ***Fond farewells***

Finally, there are three people who aren't here tonight to whom I would also like to record the committee's thanks. They all contributed hugely to the success of the PA, and continued to do so right up until the day they left the school. It is typical that they all managed to "slip out quietly", avoiding any fuss.

**Laurette Thomas** was a fabulous, inspirational Chair for nearly 4 years. She worked tirelessly to make the PA successful, and as an expert arm-twister recruited many of the people here to her cause. Laurette oversaw a huge increase in PA profits, but never lost sight of the importance of making it fun.

The lovely **Dawn Eccles** transformed the second-hand uniform process, threw herself into helping at every opportunity, and was always the life and soul of the party at PA gatherings! Meetings will never be quite the same without her.

Lastly, **Shirley Park** was the PA liaison officer for most of the 4 years of the current officers' term. She steadied us as we were finding our feet, and continued to be our biggest cheerleader and support until she moved on to a new job in the summer. I think we all know we couldn't have achieved so much without her.

Our thanks and best wishes go to all of them.

### ***Looking Forward***

It is always good to see new faces at the AGM. Parents' Associations across the country have one thing in common: they are always changing. I know that the new committee will welcome your involvement, so to those who are new here: please grab any of us tonight and let us know how you'd like to help.

That just leaves me to say one last Thank You to every single person who has helped along the way. I am hugely excited to watch the new committee take the baton and run!