



Annual Report 2017-2018

By Laurette Thomas (Chair)

It has been yet another remarkable year for the Pate's Grammar School Parents' Association. We are working harder and more efficiently than ever. We are indeed an effective team, living proof that you can take a bunch of busy people, make them even busier, arm them with laughter, grace and good will, and you can move mountains.

We have 403 parents on our volunteer database plus solid and supportive relationships with school staff and students.

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

Fundraising

The headline figure tonight is the phenomenal profit of £37,827 (plus £150 donated directly to school) made in the 12 months to July. Every penny of this has gone, or will be going, into the school's crucial Making Ends Meet fund or on providing furniture and IT for the impressive new 6th Form Block

We donated an astonishing £52,328 to school in 2017/18 following liaison with Stephen Locke (Bursar) and Shirley Park (from the Development Office).

In October we donated £12,500 which bought 54 much-needed chairs and nine tables for the refectory, a host of online subscriptions and the much enjoyed UKMT challenges entry fees for our brilliant mathematicians, planners for every student in the school and a wee top up of £57 towards a special art gun we bought last summer.

We then heard that the Humanities departments were in dire need of some simple but effective support. We spent a total of £1,314.96 on books for History, digital text books for Politics, revision webinars for Geography and yoga mats for the PTE department.

Our phenomenally successful Spring Fair in March raised all the funds (plus some!) needed to support our cherished performing arts departments, Music and Drama. First off when we heard there were no music chairs available for left-handed students we immediately purchased six of them for £174.95. We were then able to purchase a beautiful piano for £3,400, 15 electronic keyboards and Sibelius licenses for £3,520, and then a lighting desk and snazzy lights for Performing Arts at a cost of £2,918.

A wonderful example of school and the PA working brilliantly together was when Mr Locke heard that there was a spotless second-hand mini-bus on sale at a local primary school. We

knew School needed another but hadn't dared think we could afford it but at a great price of £3,500 we pounced and within weeks it was ours, sporting our logo, and on the road ferrying students here, there and everywhere.

Our biggest contribution this year has been an astonishing £25,000 towards the new Sixth Form Block. Whilst a government grant covered the actual build, there was no financial support for IT, furniture, books, supplies etc. When the building is officially opened at the end of the year the Parents' Association input will be apparent to all on the ground floor where we have bought furniture and IT.

One of the main sources of income this year has been our bar sales which have not only cleared nearly £10,000 this year but are integral to bringing Pate's parents together at school functions. Only last week at House Music we had 41 volunteers who served 1,000 students with drinks and sausages, and 1,200 parents and grandparents over three performances. It never ceases to amaze me how much laughter there is in the midst of trying to serve 100s of cups of tea in a very limited period of time. And, if anyone is interested we have identified that of all the hundreds of choccy bars sold – Cadbury's Dairy Milk was winning every time, until Fruit Pastilles took over at House Music.

Key to Refreshments success has been the remarkable management and stock buying skills of committee members **Anne Daly and Mary Farquhar**. Mary in particular approaches the whole matter of stock buying as one might a military operation. Poundland even call her when their shipment of Pringles arrives in the knowledge she will be down like a shot buying up stock. If any supermarket has vouchers or special offers, emails flurry backwards and forwards until PA members have gone into action. As a result the accounts show that for every pound spent by the PA, we make an average of £2 profit! Anne and Mary have been strongly supported this year by **Eleanor Fea, Kathy Ascham and Laura Watts** who collectively make up the Refreshments Team.

With the fantastic help and support of the catering manager **Laura Davies** and her refectory team we have also continued to serve hundreds of hot dogs to students in between matinee and evening performances at House Music. With England's surprise success in the summer's World Cup sausage sales were suspended for House Drama.

This year we have had 21 events on the calendar where we were on hand with drinks, snacks and/or homemade cake. We supported the 3rd Diwali celebration and the wonderful Cory Band concert. We will be back to mark Diwali again on the 4th of November. We were especially delighted to support the Languages department at a meal and concert celebrating Pate's German Exchange links.

At many of these events we have considerably boosted our fundraising with an array of raffles beautifully wrapped by parents **Kate Thomson and Laura Watts**. Using donations from parents, and with **Sam Golding** leading the ticket selling team, the hampers have raised a remarkable £3,220 this past year.

Just in case we weren't busy enough when we heard that the German Christmas Market was not going ahead we felt we simply had to step into the breach. The result was the inaugural Christmas Bazaar which proved to be a joyous occasion that not only raised in the region of £3,000 but had Year 7s, in their five houses, competing against each other to raise the most money. Before the bazaar started they enjoyed pizza and the delightful Christmas film Nativity in the Refectory. External stall holders filled the hall, student buskers serenaded us with carols, and a community choir featuring a handful of Pate's parents performed round the Christmas Tree. Father Christmas who looked remarkably similar to Mr Renton ran a free

raffle, while the kitchen team was exhausted serving hundreds of portions of homemade soup, toasties and mince pies. The art gallery was turned into a festive Games Café where you could even grab a sprig of Mistletoe. A special thank you must go to **Anne Casey** who project-managed the whole affair ably supported by **Dawn Eccles and Jane Kent. Jody Hung**, baker extraordinaire, introduced her Jam Pan for the first time where she collects £1 in exchange for a ticket and the winner gets half the cash. Simple but effective. In this particular instance the winner was a Year 7 student who decided to hand his winnings back to Making Ends Meet because he wanted to support his new school.

Just three days later, tired but happy, we held another record-breaking family quiz night, marvellously organised by committee vice chair **Carolyn Hopper** with **Mary Farquhar and Dawn Eccles** manning the bar. There were prizes, puzzles and picnics; the refectory was crammed full of competitors and once again a great time was had by all. We raised £1,935 from ticket sales, bar and raffle.

The Annual Spring Fair and Prize Draw in March was yet again even more successful than the year before raising an astonishing £13,786. **Shona Barnard and Anna Macey-Michael** secured a great selection of prizes for the draw while **Becca Orum and Anne Casey**, galvanised and co-ordinated the year 7 & 8 stalls. The result was more students involved than ever before which added a joyous buzz to the whole event. **Rachel Abbott** arranged for many external stall holders to attend and the Music and Drama departments came out in force. The Pate's Jazz Band was a joy to behold while parents paying to perform songs from their favourite musicals was – hmmm, what can I say – out of this world? We even put eBay into action when **Corinne Saha** spotted some fine pieces of costume jewellery on the bric a brac stall. She put them up for Auction and we made another £105. Corinne will be looking out for a dusty Ming Vase next year. With wonderfully high raffle ticket sales we raised £13,786 (plus £150 donations directly to school from building contractors Carters and a generous parent).

Our sales of Second-hand Uniform have gone through the roof this year. The inimitable and indefatigable **Dawn Eccles** is now offering a waiting list for parents in search of particular garments. Dawn even delivered items to one worried new parent during the summer holidays. With the cupboard now open on the first and third Friday of every month, Dawn supported by Anne Daly, is offering an excellent service for our parents. In one night alone, at the Year 6 evening for those starting Pate's last month, £554 was taken. Taking into account sales made at the Spring Fair and Christmas Bazaar the astonishing total is £2,149 – a record beyond all records.

A streaky thank you must go to the Pate's School Pig who has now raised £551 gobbling up "old" £1 coins, £5 and £10 notes. The bright idea of a Pate's grandparent, the pig will continue to munch up illegal tender and is particularly looking forward to the time when the £20 notes get switched over.

Meanwhile stationery obsessed Mum, **Laura Watts** has continued to sell pencil cases and stationery in the colours of the five Houses. The sale of these raised £425 for school funds and continues to delight our younger House-proud students.

Our 100 Club, run methodically and at all times with zen-like calm, by **Andrew Thomson**, continues to be an important source of income clearing £5,078 this past year. We have had between 163 and 140 members in the past year, on average slightly down on previous years. The search for new members is always on-going.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I want to thank the whole of the committee and our active members and volunteers for all they have done throughout the year. At every event parents from Year 7 through to Year 13 work tirelessly to make everything happen.

Many individuals have already been mentioned and I thank you all. But there are so many more people who make this impressive machine tick over. Thanks go to **Linda Arthur** our indomitable secretary – you, with your husband **Paul** (our data officer) – really do keep your fingers on the pulse of all our data, organising volunteers, and us, through emails and Doodles, and keeping the agendas and minutes moving forwards making sure we keep track of things. You keep us all smiling too – critical.

And treasurer **Louisa Coley**: Louisa always has an air of serenity about her regardless of how much she has to do in order to keep the accounts firmly in order, reminding us regularly in hard facts and figures, how well we are all doing. Keeping tabs on floats at the Spring Fair alone is awe-inspiring. **Ben Coley** is co-opted to the committee as media officer and is in charge of keeping the website, our Newsletter and entries in Pate's Progress current and interesting. Thank you.

Vice Chair **Carolyn Hopper** has surpassed herself this year. Not only has she had my back as always, when I have been unable to attend certain key events due to family commitments, Carolyn has stepped gallantly into the breach. Her timetables, power points and data analysis are second to none. Thank you.

Specific thanks must also go to individual parents, such as **Tabitha Gilchrist**, who have attended many committee meetings (held once every half term) and become crucial for the smooth running of events. **Rachel Abbott** has not only taken on the mantle of external stall holder expert but is also the PA's first ever official photographer. I also saw her at the Christmas Bazaar where, a la Cinderella, she never once left the kitchen. Alex Collishaw has been shadowing Andrew and getting to grips with the 100 Club while **Stephen Senior and Anna Macey-Michael** have stood front of house, the smiling faces of the PA. **Graham Palmer** has become king of the toastie machine as well as helping us get on top of Match Funding which will be launched soon. Our new School Governor link, parent **Carolyn Horrocks** is always full of good ideas. Thank you.

In addition to the Committee and our members there are also a number of school staff I must thank who are an important part of ensuring that the PA runs as smoothly as possible:

Without a doubt **Shirley Park** (PA link with the school) is key to it all. We cannot do anything without her unstinting support. She attends every meeting, every one of our events and answers every email with kindness, thoughtfulness and patience. Only this Sunday morning I received an email from her apologising for a delay in getting back to me: I had only emailed her an hour earlier. Her latest little touch is supplying Dolly Mixtures at all meetings – pure Class! Shirley's support knows no bounds and her energy is contagious. Thank You.

Stephen Locke (School Bursar) is also there at every meeting, offering us advice and guidance where needed. His appreciation of what we do is always apparent and is a real motivator. The highlight of every committee meeting is when Stephen makes the 100 Club draw. Who knew numbers could be so exciting. Thank You Stephen.

Special thanks go to caretakers **Anthony and Phil**, who continue to lift, carry and tidy up for us, locking up after we finish, guiding us in the right direction, and decorating for Christmas like no others.

Also to **Yvonne Shelmerdine, Fiona Hutton-Potts, Teena Shooter** and the team in the front office and reception for constant smiles and patience, regardless of what we ask parents to bring in and leave with them. Thanks to **Liz Connole** and the finance department who keep on top of our payments to and from school.

I would like to thank **Russel Ellicott** for his constant support and promotion of the Parents' Association. He leaves no doubt whatsoever that we are a highly valued and critical part of Pate's. Thanks too to **Rachel Thorpe, Andrew Jones and other members of the Senior Leadership Team** who are unflinching in their support of what we do.

Fond farewells

Tonight we say goodbye to two stalwart committee members who have dedicated year after year to the Parents' Association both on and off the committee. **Mary Farquhar and Andrew Thomson** are retiring.

Of all their many talents one stands out for me in particular: their inability to say No when I beg them to do something! They really are yes people and have done everything for the PA with a remarkable eye for detail and a passion for getting the most from their areas of responsibility.

Among so many other things Mary has transformed the stock-buying system which now runs with utmost precision and economy. She has Poundland and Farm Foods in the palm of her hand and no-one, but no-one, can get better value for money with supermarket vouchers. Mary is also queen of the good idea! When left alone for more than a few minutes she comes up with fantastic schemes to make the system even better. Choccy boxes to handy little stock cupboards come to mind, and when it comes to moving stock off site for school events – nothing thwarts her.

Andrew meanwhile has run the 100 Club for several years without glitches and confusion – which is an amazing feat. Andrew has always said Yes to helping wherever and whenever he can from counting cash post events, heading to the bank, and even rocking up to House Music this year despite the fact his son left Pate's in the summer.

To both Mary and Andrew I can say no more than a huge Thank You on behalf of us all.

Looking Forward

As we welcome new committee members tonight we know that Louisa, Linda and myself will be standing down next October leaving the positions of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary open. Having time to shadow different roles this coming year would be invaluable for our successors, so the search is underway. It was wonderful to see so many new Year 7 parents helping at House Music – they are the committee of the future. Please speak to any of us at any time if you see a role for yourself.

That just leaves me to say a heart-felt Thank You to every single person who has helped along the way. From cash counters and envelope stuffers to cake bakers and tea pourers: we've made a cracking job of it yet again so let's make it happen.