



## **Pate's Parents' Association**

### **Chair's Annual Report – November 2022**

**Fiona Crouch**

#### **Introduction**

Well, what an initiation I've had to Pate's Grammar School and the Pate's Parents' Association (PPA). To think that only 12 months ago, I had only been to the school once – to drop my son off for his induction day!

The PPA is a registered charity whose purpose is to support the school. We do this by organising our own fundraising events, providing a refreshment service at school activities, and building a community for parents to meet and socialise together. Any funds that are raised are used to advance the education of the pupils of the school by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities for education.

Academic year 2021-22 saw a return to in person events – this was much-needed by the whole school community, especially the students who have missed many opportunities throughout the years of the pandemic. This posed a number of challenges. First, the PPA had lost some of its members who were experienced in hosting these events. Second, we said 'yes' to nearly everything and, in the longer term, this level of commitment is not sustainable, even though it was the right approach for 2021-22.

#### **Fundraising**

In total, we raised £57,351.09 up to July 2022. Once expenditure has been deducted, tonight's headline figure is a huge £46,266! In the same period, we donated £28,000 to the school, with further donations

from the remaining surplus already earmarked for the forthcoming year. Most of the money the PPA donated was allocated to the creation of the new science lab and the remainder was used to purchase items selected by the Student Council.

A more detailed breakdown of financial matters will be given by **Margaret** in her Treasurer's Report.

Reflecting on the number and variety of events supported and activities organised by the PPA over the last year highlights how incredible the Pate's community is, your willingness to give your personal time to the school is humbling. The following events were supported or led by the PPA: Diwali, Online Christmas Raffle, Lunar New Year, Spring Quiz, Carol Service at Christ Church, Harry Potter Quiz, Spring Fair, House Music, House Drama, Sports Celebration Evening, a beer-tasting event, a panoply of music concerts, and several parent information events. In addition, the Nearly New Uniform Shop has been open on many afternoons, evenings and weekends to provide a service to our families. I apologise if I've missed an event off this list! I want to thank every volunteer who has given their time to these events. It has been a pleasure to meet and work with you.

The 100 Club remains an important and regular source of income for the PPA. I would like to say a huge thank you to **Emma Smith** for picking up the ropes and ensuring the smooth running of the 100 Club over the last year. We continue to promote the 100 Club to parents: not only is it a good revenue stream for the PPA, it is also a way for parents to feel connected to the school by making ongoing contributions to our fundraising. The Matchfunding scheme is another key that we raise money. Helen Divett – thank you for your perspicacity and attention to detail. Your tenacity has added a great deal to how we run this scheme.

The Nearly New Uniform shop has always been a valuable asset in the PPA's armoury. Now, as we all look to adopt more sustainable, environmentally friendly purchasing habits and the cost-of-living crisis prompts more of us to be careful with our money, it is, quite simply, invaluable. As more families look to the Nearly New Uniform Store to purchase items, its sales have nearly doubled in the past year to £5220. **Emma Brazier and Chloe** – through your efficient management of stock and the shop, the difference you make to our families, especially in these challenging times, is phenomenal. Most people don't realise the hours you put into the role - the sorting and mending of items requires considerable effort. I am in complete awe of everything you do for the PPA – thank you!

From one team who has made a Herculean contribution to the PPA to another! When I became chair last year, I had no idea what was involved in the purchasing of stock for events. **Eleanor, Amie and Sarah Edge** - thank you for everything you've done to ensure that we're able to support events – you really have been unsung heroes and you will be very much missed.

For me, the Spring Fair was a highlight event. Thank you to **Rachel Abbott**, who coordinated the external stallholders, and **Anne Daly**, the event planner extraordinaire, for their work on the Spring Fair.

Not only do we sell refreshments at events, we also raffle beautiful hampers. These add considerably to our fundraising total. I would like to thank everyone who has donated the prizes for these boxes of joy. However, it's an even bigger thank you to everyone who has carefully put together a hamper (the list is long), especially **Vicky Hewett** for her creativity in creating such stylish hampers.

One of the special things about the PPA is that we have a pool of willing volunteers and it's great that they have all been recognised in tonight's thank you event. Yet, they wouldn't be able to volunteer if we didn't have someone organising them! Thank you to **Ping Thomas** for yet another year of sorting out databases and doodles. You will be missed. Also thank you to **Tricia** for your ongoing support with the Terracycle scheme – not only does this generate money for the PPA, we're also doing our bit to help the environment by recycling huge quantities of packaging.

It's now time to thank the Big 3. Treasurer **Margaret**, thank you for managing the PPA accounts so efficiently and for supporting every event. A lot of effort goes into banking, sorting, and counting. However, your financial acumen is surpassed by your ability to strike a good deal. Domino's didn't stand a chance when you were negotiating over pizza prices!

Secretary **Louise** – I'm unsure if I should thank you or curse you. The professional inveiglers, the Army human intelligence unit, tried to recruit me but failed. As clear as day, I remember you asking if I'd help out at PPA events when Gethin had just received his 11+ results. I thought I'd be serving cups of tea... Seriously, thank you for your commitment to the PPA. You go above and beyond in everything you've done for the PPA.

Vice Chair **Libby** – what a year we've had! You've given so much to the PPA over the past 12 months – from planning events to taking home recycling, from organising volunteers to washing tea towels. I

wouldn't have survived the year without you; your calmness has been the perfect foil to my craziness. I'm really thrilled that you're going to stay on the committee as Secretary.

I now move on to the thank yous that we owe to the Pate's staff. To Headmaster **Russel Ellicott**, thank you for your patience as I got to grips with the role, your ongoing support and guidance to the PPA, and for letting me be your unglamorous assistant at raffle prize drawings and the Online Christmas Raffle video. **Stephen Locke** (School Bursar) - I can't thank you enough for everything you've done for the PPA over the last year. Thank you for your sage advice, the time and support you've given us, being present at every meeting, and for having an uncanny knack for picking the Pate's balls during the 100 Club draw! **Beth Morgan** – thank you for your positivity and organisational abilities. You've ironed out so many little niggles at events and ensured everything runs smoothly. Thank you for liaising with the Student Council and ensuring the thoughts of the student body reach the PPA. I can't miss **Geoff Worth** and **Adrian Nickson** off the list – thank you for making the Harry Potter Quiz and the Spring Fair such successful and enjoyable events. The explosions added real wow factor. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank **Liz Connole** (Finance) for all her support, and tolerance, with Parent Gateway – activities such as the Online Christmas Raffle and pizza sales at various events wouldn't happen without you.

You've heard of the Two Ronnies? At Pate's there are the Two Debbies! **Debbie Greene** – thank you for not only tolerating the disruption we bring to the Refectory and the catering team but supporting us. You and your team have gone above and beyond on many occasions **Debbie Jordan** – getting married and changing your surname doesn't mean you can hide! The Harry Potter quiz was spectacularly magical. Thank you for the quiz and every meeting and event you've supported over the last year. Thank you also to the Front Office team, above all for your patience in collecting and distributing raffle prizes and donations.

A very special thank you to the Site Team. **Anthony** and **Phil** – events wouldn't happen without you. Thank you for lifting and carrying, opening and locking up and being ready to respond to any problems we encounter. It's an even bigger thank you for sourcing and fitting out the Nearly New Uniform Shop's new premises – a.k.a. the she shed. It's such a great facility, we're even wondering if we could rent it out on Air B'n'B!

When I look at my phone list and see my frequently called list, School Rep, Sarah Cartwright, is normally near the top! I've lost count of the times that we've spoken on an evening or when we're both on the

school run. You've given 110% to the PPA. Thank you for keeping me on the straight and narrow, for tolerating my flights of fancy, and for being such a wonderful link between us and the school.

### **Looking Forward**

It is amazing to see both familiar and fresh faces here tonight. I would like to extend a huge welcome to those who are joining us for the first time.

As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, we have been hit by the considerable challenges posed by war in Continental Europe and the cost-of-living crisis. As a charity, we need to remain mindful of people's circumstances. Absolutely, we will continue to fundraise for our children's terrific school. However, a slight shift in focus does afford us the opportunity to take stock and evaluate the PPA's future direction in the medium to long term. Over the coming year, I would like to concentrate on building a community of volunteers. There are year groups (especially current Years 9, 10 and 11) who did not have the opportunity to volunteer as parents of Year 7 and 8 students – I would like to reach out and connect with them. We continue to explore ways in which parents whose geographical distance from school, work commitments or personal circumstances mean that they are unable to join us at meetings, can find ways to support the PPA.

In the year to come, the new committee will continue to work tirelessly to support the school through its activities and fundraising activities. Thank you again, to those who made 2021-22 such a tremendous success. To those who are joining us on the committee, all I will say is...bring it on!