

Welcome!

Welcome to the 2020/21 St Thomas' PTA annual report, which looks back at what we have achieved in the past year and looks forward to the academic year ahead.

The main objective of the PTA is to enhance the education and experience of all children at St Thomas'. This is done through developing relationships between the staff, pupils and parents. We organise fundraising initiatives, which help to build community spirit and also provide funding that allows the school to offer our children facilities, equipment and experiences that cannot be met through the school's budget.

Committee

During the year, the key officers of the PTA were Rhian Greaves (Chair), Becky Judson (Treasurer) and Sarah Morley (Secretary).

The Committee was supported throughout the year by Joanne Hayes, who is the Corporate Funding Officer and also by Bec Till and Catherine Meardon who supported the PTA's communications with the school community.

All staff members and all parents and carers of school pupils are automatically general members of the PTA.

The year in review!

When I sat down to draft last year's Chair's report, we were six months into the pandemic, hopeful of a vaccine and desperate to get back to some sort of normality. Another 12 months on – and thankfully double jabbed – it's easy to feel deflated and that we are perhaps not much further on. However, I have good news!

The continuation of restrictions has wiped out well over a year of our tried and tested fundraising activities. There are now children in year 2 who have never experienced a Fair, Summer or Christmas. There has (sadly) been no repeat of Bubbles & Bingo and absolutely no chance of a Fashion Show.

The pandemic has been hard on us all. Many of us have lost loved ones, juggled months of home school with busy jobs and dealt daily with the uncertainty and anxiety that Covid has brought. It would have been very easy for the PTA to suspend its activities temporarily whilst we rode out the storm and it is a source of immense pride that we decided to do – and indeed did – the polar opposite.

With many of the usual fundraising options off the table and in close discussions with Mr Campen and the Senior Leadership of the school we drew up and scheduled a list of activities that could be delivered remotely and in a Covid safe way. In addition, we continued to throw all our support behind the flourishing corporate funding programme run by Joanne Hayes.

Within the schedule of events, particular highlights included:-

- Break the rules day – perhaps the most popular PTA event ever with the children and a great fundraiser, bringing in over £1,000 when we also added on the match funding from Ecclesiastical Insurance, employer of parent Anita Lincoln who came up with the idea.
- Smarties Challenge – whilst Covid restrictions impacted the children's ability to do many of

the chores that would usually result in a 20p for their tube, we managed to raise an incredible £3,250! Thank you to Bec Till and her crack team of Smarties labellers!

- Christmas cards – sending cards had something of a renaissance when we were parted from friends and family and that showed in the amazing £1,270 raised. Huge thanks to Polly Hammerton for her years of festive service and for showing Hayley Mayer the ropes!
- Festive trail – despite the very un-festive cold rain, Katie Thorp and the year 5 pupils put on a great event in Heaton Moor Park, raising a wonderful £435 and helping the children towards their Young Leaders' Awards.
- Sponsored run – originally part of our “Summer of Sport” plans for 2020, Toni Brokenbrow took charge and saw the children build on their regular Smile Miles to great effect, raising £835; thank you Toni!
- Most recently, we saw the return of the Luxury Raffle. Although we had amassed our greatest ever prize pot, we could not have dreamt of the enthusiastic and generous way in which the school community responded, raising a whopping £6,351.71. Team Raffle – you are amazing every year. Particular thanks to the Warburton family for the wonderful draw by Facebook Live, which I still encourage you all to go back and watch...!

And that doesn't even begin to tell you about the corporate funding successes of which there are frankly so many that I have again asked Joanne to prepare a separate report detailing them. When I first raised the potential for corporate funding nearly three years ago, I could never have imagined that it would come to represent such an important chunk of our annual funding. Whilst I like to think that the good idea was mine, the reality is that its success is in its implementation. The hard work, diligence and commitment of Joanne Hayes is something to behold and as a school community, we are very lucky to have her. Thank you Joanne!

My key motivation when I became Chair was to increase engagement across our school community. I'm not sure that has been possible given the impact of the pandemic but I really hope that whoever takes on the role of Chair next year will do what they can in this respect. We are the largest primary school in Stockport and we have a diverse and talented community and I feel that we are only just scratching the surface in terms of harnessing that. I hope that my successor and the committee going forward will be able to continue in this respect.

I always wanted the PTA to be more ambitious, to tap into the skills of the parents and carers and to try new things. The Luxury Raffle and the corporate funding work are two prime examples. More recently we have seen the launch of the PTA's Eco Group. The brain child of Sarah Dixon, the group is already strong and willing and packed with ideas, skills and enthusiasm for their first project; greening up the KS1 playground. Thank you to Sarah for driving this forwards.

It is quite remarkable to be able to write this report with such a positive tone at a time when many PTAs, including some locally, have understandably been unable to raise any money at all. So let's look at how the money has been spent!

- The PTA delivered 180 recorders to the Infant School, the first step in realising Ms Loynes' new musical vision for the school. This means that all children can now learn to play a musical instrument allowing them to participate fully in all Ms Loynes' amazing plans as they progress through the school.
- Our Year 6 leavers all went away with their much prized hoodies. We also supported the inaugural Leavers' Fest, organised by the Year 6 staff. The PTA paid for the inflatables (enjoyed by children and staff alike) as well as for the Domino's feast delivered at lunchtime. Whilst we would like to take credit for the appearance of the Blossoms, sadly we can't!
- Christmas treats for the children, wonderfully organised as always by Emma Fowler.

- We have recently been in the wonderful position of being able to tell the School that we have £10,000 available to be spent immediately! We await their plans for the money.
- We have also been able to top up the discretionary fund with a view to supporting some of our families with the cost of the junior school residential trips amongst other things. This money is spent entirely at the discretion of the School Leadership team and – for me at least – is the most rewarding activity of the PTA.

I am stepping down from the role of Chair this year and look forward to supporting the new Committee as they take forward all of the wonderful stuff the PTA does. I feel sad that the pandemic curtailed the momentum we had begun to build and the increased engagement we had started to see. However, I strongly believe that the PTA has moved on and continued to evolve and I am immensely proud of everything we have achieved this year in particular.

Enormous thanks goes to everyone who has volunteered in any capacity this year and to everyone who has participated in our initiatives. I will have forgotten to mention someone; I'm sorry! But I am grateful to you all.

My extra special last thank you messages go to:-

- Laura Nadel: for persuading me to do this in the first place and for sharing the load during the first year.
- Becky Judson: for always telling me like it is!
- Sarah Morley: for smiling through it all, good and bad!
- Paul Campen: for making liaison with the School a piece of cake. I have always enjoyed our discussions and have felt very fortunate to have you in our corner!

New Chair...whoever you are...it's over to you!

Rhian Greaves
PTA Chair (2019 – 2021)