

## Chair's Annual Report 2016/17

Another excellent year for Friends of Somers Park (FOSP), our most successful so far. We've have been really busy and thanks to the enthusiasm, dedication and generosity of the committee members, meeting attendees and parents, staff and friends we have achieved a huge amount.

The start of this year was uncertain, family situations had changed and our small but dedicated committee and regular volunteers were looking to have less time to dedicate to FOSP. The decision was taken to only focus on hosting tried and tested events in order to raise enough money to spend on the usual requirements of Christmas presents and the summer fayre and not stretching ourselves too far with only a few volunteers. This was the plan but it never materialised. Volunteers stood up, made some great suggestions and more and more new faces got involved in organising and running events making so much more possible than we ever expected. This has been amazing. We've raised more than ever before, enabling us to spend on large projects, smaller items and have a surplus in the bank for exciting projects planned for the next couple of years. All in all a fantastic and expectation busting achievement.

Our fundraising year started as it always does with a cake sale! We very quickly found ourselves covered in glitter and planning Christmas cards (but it's only October!!!). The highlight of the winter term was as always the very successful Curry and Quiz night and special thanks must go to Penny and James for an excellent (and not too difficult) quiz as well as to Claire and Mark from Malvern Catering for once again supplying the fabulous curry. This year was a sell out and next year, tickets will have to be limited in order to fit everyone in the hall. Special thanks (and pre warning next time) must also go out to The Express, who unexpectedly found themselves full on a Friday evening (and running out of prosecco) as approximately 60 people decamped from the school hall and refused to move until last orders were called!

The summer term and the inevitable summer fayre planning was on us all too quickly. Another very successful push on pre sale raffe tickets and an expertly cooked BBQ together with more sugar than any parent really wants their children to have and the most successful fayre to date was underway. A special mention here must go to Vikki, who showed an interest in being involved in

the organisation of the fayre and quickly found herself organising pretty much all of it. It was a fantastic success Vikki, and thank you so very much.

Our main spend this year has been on the blinds for the school halls. This was a suggestion that came from the school council, direct from the children. It was a large and expensive undertaking and together with the school and the council, the jointly funded project was approved. The council organised a Christmas Jumper day to raise their share of the funding and work began early this year to get the blinds fitted. They have made a huge difference to both halls, keeping our children cool in the summer, the hall dark for the performance in the summer and every day during assemblies the children can read the white board in order to full involve themselves with the assembly topic or read the words of the songs during the very popular weekly singing assemblies. They now have no excuse for not joining in (not that they ever needed one).

We've also raised money to provide new dictionaries to every class room, school were upgrading the traditional style ones and FOSP wanted to add to this with some less traditional ones. Our most successful cake sale ever enabled us to provide Roald Dahl dictionaries to every class and picture dictionaries to the early years. Thank you to everyone who baked and bought not just for this cake sale but every one we've held over the year.

Last year, the school council worked with us to provide wet play equipment for every classroom, this year, school have focused on improving the outdoor play time experience for pupils. We contributed over £300 to enable the purchase of outdoor equipment for each play ground to give pupils things to do particularly during lunch time. This has also been a huge success and funds are set aside to renew and replace the equipment as required.

Towards the end of the summer 2015, we received requests from parents and the school to look to provide storage for bikes and scooters that were regularly brought onto school property, and money was set aside to look into this for the 2015/16 year. The idea was to not just safely store the growing number of scooters left every day but to also encourage more children (and parents) to get active and walk, cycle and scoot to school. After much deliberation over type and location, as the warmer weather arrived, we had installed the scooter rack over by reception and the bike and scooter racks in the front playground. These have been so well received and are in constant use, that the decision was made to install an extra rack over by reception early in September. Please

continue to make use of these as you require but please note all bikes and scooters are left entirely at your own risk so a good bike lock is recommended.

All these projects are in addition to the regular spending on things like presents for the seasonal visitor to hand out to all children and lovely Atlases for the year 6 leavers.

This year has been so successful that we still have funds available in the bank. A decision was made that during this first term, a luxury item fund of up to £100 would be made available to each class teacher to purchase something 'different' or 'exciting' for their new classrooms. Items that they wouldn't ordinarily have access of funds for. We are hoping that this will happen before half term and all children will have the benefit.

This has still left us with a surplus in the bank and once again are looking for a large project to spend the money on. School approached us with an idea to renovate both the library areas to make them much more welcoming and inviting for all our children. This is potentially a huge project and the generally feeling is that all fundraising activities for the next academic year will be directed towards the library fund. We will of course continue to provide the small items for our seasonal visitor etc but hopefully we can end the year with a large amount of money to hand over to put the new renovations into reality. We are hoping to kick start this with a sponsored read this term, a method of fundraising that FOSP so far have not tried. If you have any new ideas that we could try please do not hesitate to let us know and we will do everything we can to support you in putting it into action

We would like to thank everyone who helps make this year a success. All parents and staff who helped organise events, attended them, manned a stall at the summer fete, baked and bought cakes or looked after someone else's children so that they could help out. Without all of you, our fantastic achievements wouldn't be possible. Special thanks must go to the Committee members and our regular meeting attendees who have worked as a great team and make being part of FOSP such a fantastic experience.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally stand down as Chair, to thank my fellow committee members for all their support over the last couple of years, helping to keep me relatively sane during the process. I could not and would not have done it without you.

Finally, we would like to remind you that as a parent of a child at Somers Park School you are already a member of FOSP. Come along and get involved and make a difference to your child's experience at school and have some fun while doing it.

Message from Jennie Cale: Vice Chair

After much consideration I have decided that I need to resign from the committee of FOSP due to other commitments.

I have been a committee member for five years and can honestly say that it has been a rewarding experience getting more involved with my children's school.

FOSP has gone through many changes over this time and has evolved into a charity that successfully raises over £5000 per year for the 'enhancements' to school life.

From a personal point of view being an active member of FOSP has brought the benefits of a better understanding of the school, lots of laughter at events and many wonderful friends whom I would otherwise have been unlikely to come across.

I will remain an active FOSP supporter and I'm sure I will be there for cake sales, discos and the fayre.

If you are sat wondering whether to become more involved I say DO IT you will gain as much as you give