

The Friends of Syresham School

Charity no. 1030877

Chair's Report - AGM 12th October 2019/2020

I always look forward to the AGM and hearing the Chair's report as it's a lovely chance for us all to reflect on what we have achieved throughout the year and give ourselves a collective "pat on the back" ... however I find now it's me actually delivering it, it's not quite as much fun... but still nice nonetheless to look back and reflect on what has certainly been an "interesting one"!!

The aim of the FOSS, when it was set up many (many) years ago, was to "to support the school in running their events and open days and to host the major fundraising events throughout the year, providing school with much needed additional funds". This obviously still reflects a lot of what we're about but, I feel that over the past few years we've grown into much more than that, not only putting on fabulous events that raise an amazing amount of money... but I feel as a group we are always looking for new opportunities to work with school to make a difference to the lives of the children...both in the large scale projects we are able to undertake like our DIY days but also the small things like rallying round at the last minute to provide an impromptu disco in March when it looked like the children might not return to school before September or planting bulbs for the nursery children to enjoy in spring as they walk past the tranquility garden each day.

It has been yet another amazingly successful year for The Friends of Syresham School and this is in no small part down to all the wonderful ladies on the committee ... who approach each and every event with enthusiasm and a common goal to make it as marvellous as they possibly can! So a big old "thank you" to you all for everything that you do, I know it isn't always easy to give your time and juggle all the other stuff going on in your lives... but I think we can be thoroughly proud of what we have achieved. It's been a particularly tough year with the bombshell that was Covid 19, that turned all our lives upside down in March. It was with an incredibly heavy heart that it dawned on us that all our fundraising events would inevitably be cancelled and that there would be no May Day Fete or Christmas Fayre in 2020. This was sad for us all on many levels not least because of the whopping gap we knew it would inevitably leave in our piggy bank but also on a personal level as mothers knowing just how much the children all enjoy these events (... although I do suspect deep down as May Day came and went there were perhaps a few rye smiles out there, at the fact we weren't running round like women possessed... knee deep in raffle tickets or chopping box loads of fruit for Pimms?!).

But despite the abrupt end to fundraising we miraculously managed to raise a suitably impressive £5614 last year ... it would seem we were incredibly busy bunnies indeed from September to March!

Some of my highlights included our second ever Bonfire Night and Fireworks held with the Towcester Young Farmers in November... this has been a lovely new addition to our calendar of events... people often talk about "#MakingMemories" but I really do feel this event captures this sentiment. It was a wonderful evening sipping hot Chocolate and eating donuts in a magical setting amongst the fairy lights and straw-bales, ... and of course the fireworks were pretty spectacular too!! This is a big undertaking and responsibility, as there is an additional level of jeopardy and stress, however it is always managed brilliantly and with great care by the wonderful Claire and the whole Turham family.

The festive season was a particularly good one for us this year with record breaking sums raised with the Round Table Santa Run, Nativity Raffle (the introduction of mulled wine to this event may have had something to do with that... just saying?) but also our Christmas Fayre. As ever The Friends of Syresham School pulled together, working their socks off and we managed to surpass ourselves yet again ... putting on a really top notch memorable event and raising more than ever before ... this fabulous total was thanks in large part to Lisa Gregory's single minded determination and hard work with the Wish Upon a Star game, which together with the Barclays Match funding we received represented more than half the over all profit.

It was also a year of record spending ...we were able to contribute a phenomenal £12,870 to school spending. That is a truly vast some for such a small school and represents approximately £150 per child! This included significant contributions to the outdoor areas, french lessons, the PHSE mental health programme, a new phonics programme and a whole plethora of special requests from individual classes. Again I think we all need to take a moment to reflect on this amazing achievement ... "jolly well done us!!".

In addition to the FOSS team, I would like to thank Mrs Clough, Mrs Allee and the Govenors for their continued support. As a small school we very much rely on everyone pulling together for a common purpose for the benefit of the children and I am very conscious that without your ongoing assistance and willingness to engage with our ideas ... we just wouldn't be able to achieve all the things we do.

Thank you also to Anette Wilson and Claire Turnham our fabulous new Treasurer duo and to Lisa Gregory our secretary for keeping us all on track.

And finally to our wonderful Chair, Sarah Eames who will sadly be stepping down this year... I know this hasn't been quite how you had planned your year as Chair and that there have been times where you have had to reluctantly take more of a back seat than you would have wanted, but I thought I would let you know just how much we all appreciate everything you do and that the sense of fun, positivity and enthusiasm you bring will always be a welcome boost to our committee!

So onwards and upwards to 2021!! I suspect it's going to be yet another rollercoaster of a year but I also feel sure that we will meet the challenge with our usual mix of tenacity, humour and Gin ... we already have a great plan in place for the coming months and I'm actually really looking forward to seeing all our new ideas for fun and fundraising coming to fruition!

Caroline Ferguson
Vice Chair the Friends of Syresham School