



Friends of Lethbridge Annual General Meeting 2023

Chairs Report

17th October 2023

The last 12 months has seen another busy year as my 6th year as chair.

As the Treasurers report will detail, through our fundraising activities we have raised a total profit of almost £12K from events during the *2022/2023 academic year*.

It was great to be able to hold our first Christmas Bazaar since 2019. With the amount of mulled wine and baileys hot chocolate we sold, I think everyone else enjoyed themselves. It felt like a real return to a school-based event that could directly engage with the parent cohort. Thank you to Vicky Gilbert for the amazing Santas grotto (I have a feeling this is only going to get bigger and better with each year!) and to Laura Burgoyne for arranging the hampers for the raffle as always. This is no small task and you do an amazing job making it look easy!

Martene Davidson continued to do a fantastic job arranging the Christmas card event, in collaboration with APFS raising commission on orders. Thank you to the teachers and TAs who help facilitate this activity, we appreciate that its not always what you want to be doing in October!

The Mothers day event this year was a full school event, thanks to a generous donation of Dove toiletries, organised by Vicky Gilbert. It was a real team effort this year, working till the late hours to pre-wrap & organise 500 gift for everyone's significant female in the children's lives.

As a new event this year, to compliment the Mothers day event, Sarah Banting organised a 'Fathers Day plant'. All the children were provided with a compostable flower pot, some soil and a seed, providing a ecofriendly gift for all the children in the school to take home to their significant male figure in their life.

The preloved uniform continues to be a monster of a task to control, especially with the mountains of generous donations we receive, but Sarah & Zoe Van Vliet have taken on the task to arrange various uniform sales throughout the year. A storage solution continue to be a significant challenge, maybe a creative solution can be found this year.

Both the KS2 and Yr6 leavers disco were held as usual with many of the children who had missed out on the opportunity for a disco over the last few years, fully enjoying their chance to dance, buy sweets and make those seminal memories of social events at primary school.

Thankfully the rain stayed away this year for the Summer fete! With more organisational support on the day, I personally felt the most relaxed I have ever been while organising this huge event. The event was opened with the return of the Fun Run. A route that snaked around Old Town Gardens and ended in the Rec created a great energetic start to the day. Our wonderful volunteers continued to support our usual BBQ & Bar, as well as several other stalls throughout the event. This year we hired external face painters, which worked out to be a not only a weight over off shoulders but also made a profit! The magician, Magical Mark Mayhem, continued to be a huge hit with the kids and adults alike. We also had a fencing workshop and lots of wonderful stall holders helping to make the event yet another success.

We are still very lucky to have 2 sub-committees that arrange community-based fund-raising events, The Lethbridge 10K & The Hydra Ride. We are very grateful to the hard work and commitment it takes to hold these events, especially as not all the members of these committees have children still in Lethbridge Primary school.

We are still a relatively small number of volunteers representing a large parent cohort for Lethbridge and we continue to do an amazing job staying enthusiastic and dedicated to our events.

We saw the departure of a few long-standing members, Jo Innes and Lorraine Simpson. They have been instrumental throughout their years being involved, ensuring that funds continue to be raised for our kids.

A huge thank you to all the team, especially Amy Derham, our secretary and Laura Burgoyne, our hard-working treasurer & our hamper coordinator!

Other thanks include:

All the staff in the school office who have to deal with the mountains of requests and work we end up creating them to support our events – Thank you Pete Hellier, Jackie Messenger and Tracey Owen.

Our teacher contact – Karen Kidd

Kevin Lee, the school caretaker who helps facilitate requirements for our events.

All the teachers, TAs and other support staff who help provide/distribute and create fundraising items.

The senior leadership team, who allow us to operate the Friends group within the school and support us at every event (there are many schools who do not have such a supportive SLT!)

Last but not least the adults and children who donate their money, making all of it worthwhile.

Over the last academic year, we have helped to fund over £15K of wonderful resources, including outdoor furniture and learning equipment for the forest school area, a STEM workshop, Jonathan Jungle show for EYFS and of course, the impressive trim trail in the KS2 playground.

With the return to full strength fundraising, we still have a very healthy balance in the bank and have discussed a list of items the school would like us to fund this year, including more equipment for the playgrounds, a fresh stock of books in the library, new equipment in the EYFS area and funds per class for which the children of the school council can get involved in deciding how to improve their classroom resources.

Being part of a PTA can be incredibly time-consuming, often stressful and it doesn't pay a wage but organising events for FoL is always rewarding.

After 6 years, I am now stepping down as chair and handing the reins over to a fresh perspective, which is always needed so that our committee continues to thrive.

Over the last 6 years, FoL have raised more than £62K through fundraising to benefit the children of Lethbridge, thanks to this amazing driven committee. I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to the committee members past and present; and I would strongly encourage new parents to come along and see what we do.

Here's to the new academic year.

Ria Walega – Chair