

St Alban's PFA Chair's Report for 2021-22

by Jane Burke

The role of the PFA is set out in our constitution (available on our website for all) and has not been changed in the past year: we exist to assist with building the social community of the school and to raise funds to create better learning experiences for our children. All parents are automatically members.

The Committee must be three at least and at the AGM it was confirmed that Emma-Jane Farrell would be continuing as temporary Chair until her maternity leave, Emma Boland would be Secretary and Carolina Stannard would return as Treasurer. Jane Burke and Angela Bennett continue as committee members with Jane's roles covering tax, banking and return filing. (From November to March, Jane became acting Chair after which the committee proceeded without a chair.) Furthermore, we are supported by a wonderful events committee of volunteers and a similarly brilliant small team of year reps. We are an official charity and the trustees are Joseph McCrossan and the Committee. Bank Signatories include Jane, Carolina, Teeba Lundy and Elizabeth Callery. Caiohme Keenan kindly employs her professional expertise to advise us all on Health and Safety. Our return to the charity commission for the previous year was filed on time and has not been queried.

Every year we agree on a draft plan for events and fundraising. Mr McCrossan represents the teachers and liaises with the governors in agreeing the plan. All fundraising campaigns over £2000 are explicitly agreed to be in line with the school's prioritised investment plans. We circulate the draft in rough to those who will help most often and then communicate it to all members (as a plan). We are always open to flexibly changing the plan for better suggestions or to respond to changes in events and this has been proven true this year more than most.

Highlights of the past year include:

- Pumpkin parties were able to proceed again and were hugely enjoyed by the majority of the children with some very inventive entries to the pumpkin carving competition.
- A fun and craft-filled Advent Fair that set off the advent period in cheer - with old favourites and successful new additions to the stalls. Parents were unable to attend after-school - due to covid - so no Carols or hot food at the end. We trialled the sale of Christmas trees, though this produced disappointing sales.
- 'Ice Cream' sales all proceeded (though they were ice lolly sales, again due to covid and uncertainty over the application of Natasha's law to ice cream in cones assembled on site)
- A very well attended Spring Social organised by year 5 families - complete with bar, curry and dancing - that was a fantastic return to parents being

allowed to attend events in school - contributed to a brilliant sense of a return to participating in the school community for many.

- We trialled a 'break the rules days' for our annual sponsored event. This was an idea stolen from other primary schools, and allowed children to pay to break a pre-agreed list of rules harmlessly. The school council contributed ideas, with silly hair and squash in water bottles being favourites amongst the children.
- The achievement of a push for fundraising towards a new set of laptops - the £5000 target was achieved with help from a large one-off donation but also very many contributions from all families. This took our payments to the school over the year to over £10,000, including theatre performances, science week, Y4 brass instruments, topic box materials, Y6 coach hire, and minibus service/MOT. This year there were fewer in-year emergency school repairs than usual!
- A full Summer Fete - with perfect weather for an afternoon with friends in the school grounds. This included a full BBQ and bar, Irish dancing, raffles, book stalls, tombolas, water fights, crockery smash, sporting challenges and very popular hook the duck and splat the rat! The stylish bunting deserves a mention too!
- A move to taking digital payments on two hand-held card devices.

Uniform sales, bags to school, Christmas cards, strawberries/music evenings and Christmas lunches completed a return to our more normal post-covid offering to the pupils and parents. Indeed, the only event that was cancelled completely this year were the cake sales in the Autumn term.

I would like to personally thank the committee for their tireless support, the events committee for an amazing Advent Fair at very short notice, and the Year Reps for keeping me on the straight and narrow and actually making everything happen. The members have supported us every time with overwhelming good will and we exist only because of them. Thank you especially Emma for saving us all by taking on the secretary role brilliantly and crucially bringing the committee up to the legal quorum.

Next year we very much hope to have a full programme of events, and look forward to fully welcoming the families who have joined the school during the covid period. We strive to support the community and not to burden it. It will always be true, that the more people who can and choose to get directly involved, the more fun we all have. Our provision will be all the better for the introduction of new ideas, talents and enthusiasms. Time volunteered will always be gladly received and warmly welcomed.

It has been a privilege to be (acting) Chair again, and although personal circumstances mean I had to take a sabbatical from the end of March due to ill health, I will (of course) continue to support the committee and community actively.