



Friends of Lethbridge Annual General Meeting 2020

Chair's Report

13th October 2020

2020 has certainly been an interesting 3rd year as FoL chair.

As the Treasurers report will detail, we have raised a total profit of **£5,660** during the *2019/2020 academic year*. This sadly is less than half of the profits from previous years but feel that we shouldn't look back with any sense of regret for what we had managed to achieve before Covid 19 changed the world 6 months ago.

With most of our major events held in the summer months, and like so many other charities, we have missed out on these fund-raising opportunities. With 'The Lethbridge 10K', Summer Fete and The Hydra Ride all having to eventually be cancelled, we certainly missed out this year on bringing the school and wider community together to raise funds for the school. However, with the safety and community health at stake, I am proud that we made the decision to have put those considerations ahead of raising money.

We were able to arrange some of the regular annual events though, such as the handmade Christmas cards. Thank you to Martene Davidson for organising, the teachers who enable the arts and crafts to take place in lesson time so far in advance of Christmas, and to the parents who purchased items from the supplier (APFS) raising commission for Friends of Lethbridge.

On 30th November 2019, we held our only large-scale event, bringing together the school community for the Christmas Bazaar and raising **£2,370**. With a few small changes this year, most notably the time change to a late afternoon/early evening event, maximising on the more Christmassy darker evenings and the amazing new Santas grotto (thank you Vicky Gilbert & Kate Widdows for all your enthusiasm in sprucing this up) we did ourselves proud.

The KS2 disco went brilliantly as always, thank you to Kate Widdows for organising this and to James Heydon for the photo booth which the kids always adore.

We also trialled a doughnut sale to coincide with world book day, raising money for more books for the library. There were definitely some learning points from this event but would be good to do something similar in the future – everyone loves a doughnut! Along with the FOL Café organised by Ruth Halsall & Kerry Snell, we made a good profit from the refreshment-based events.

We only managed to squeeze in two of our clothing drives (via Bags-2-School) into this academic year. However; with thanks to Lorraine Simpson for organising these events we still would have been on course for our usual profit.

Before the nationwide lockdown, we managed to ensure the Mother day wrap went ahead. Although not a fundraising event, the kids always enjoy being able to provide a surprise from the significant women in their life and I was so proud that we managed to get something organised for the last day of school before lock down – Thank you to Lisa Monis for always being the driving force with this event. There were many children who were unable to benefit from this event as the student cohort was already starting to reduce, but well done to the team for making sure as many kids got to benefit as possible.

Our ongoing fundraisers throughout the year were:

The Friends of Lethbridge lottery - '100Club'. Thank you to Paul Castle for ensuring those that won for the months since April still received their winnings.

Terracycle crisp packet collections, has also shown itself to be an easier money earner with little effort, as well as showing the kids that not all rubbish needs to go to land fill. It raised **£150**. Thank you to Clare Bugg for being our Terracycle organiser.

The last event organised was a brilliant treasure trail around Old Town, devised by James & Viv Heydon. It was a hit with the younger cohort and provided not only something parents could do to support the school when all our events were not able to be held, but also a good indication of the uptake of virtual events that do not require mass gatherings. Well done the Heydons for spear heading this event.

We are still a relatively small number of volunteers representing a large parent cohort for Lethbridge and we continue do an amazing job staying enthusiastic and dedicated to our events. With the departure of some long-term volunteers as their kids move to secondary school, I am very happy to welcome some new volunteers to our charity. You are joining at a very unique time in our history and we can't wait to have you involved in what we do.

A huge thank you to all team, especially Jo Innes, our secretary always making sure I'm not taking too much on, 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, Tracey Owen, Cathy Millen & Elaine Eggleton.

Our teacher contact – Karen Kidd

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

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

The senior leadership team, Mrs L Mayes, Mrs C Short, Mrs C Harmer and Mrs C.Millen 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 our parent volunteers who return to help out at our events year after year and of course, the adults and children who donate their money, making all of it worthwhile.

Although our fundraising has been low, we haven't been shy about spending the money raised. This academic year, FoL donated £12,566 to the school enabling the purchase of:

- 50 sets of headphones
- Dictionaries & Thesaurus' for all of KS2
- Year 6 leavers Books
- The Explorer Dome
- STEM week workshops
- 40 iPads & charging trolley – to which to we contributed £9,000.

Over the coming year, our focus will be the development of the forest schools area, which is an under-utilised resource to the school, as well as EYFS outside area, and refurbishment of the KS1 trim trail area. The need for good quality outside space has never been so great.

To support this, I think external grants and funding are going to be greatly needed to help ensure we can maximise our contributions to the school. If you would like to support with these applications, or know of any we could apply for, please let me know.

And finally, organising events for FoL is always enjoyable, but it is incredibly time-consuming, often stressful and it doesn't pay a wage! On the other hand, the rewards are amazing. Watching the children enjoying the Christmas Bazaar, discos, summer fete and especially the Mothers day Wrap is fantastic. Seeing what a difference the items we have funded makes to the school, brings a kind of satisfaction that can only come from knowing you have made a difference to many children. For these reasons, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to both our amazing committee, and those parents who have assisted with the planning and/or running of our varied calendar of events, 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