



PTA Chair Report

for 2015/2016 school year



This past year has been unprecedented in the number of fantastic events and initiatives carried out, the flourishing of the School Fund, the involvement of a large number of parent volunteers via very successful class reps, and the progress on the big project, the outdoor classroom. The PTA continued in its open, transparent and inclusive mission to raise funds for the school (in total, the record £23,264.00), and to nurture the unique community spirit of the school through social events.

Fundraising events and initiatives

1. **Welcome Picnic:** this was a relaxed social event intended for Foundation and KS1 to welcome the new families in the reception classes.
2. **Fun Run:** a new event that was a soaring success! Categories of runners for all age groups, in fancy dress if so inclined; medals and cups for various groups. Walk, push, carry, jog or run – whichever you prefer. Amazing fun for all the family. Huge thanks to Dave Bettinson and his team of organizers. (funds raised: £1217.83)
3. **Harvest Festival:** the PTA helped in setting up the sales of the harvest assembly produce donations from the children. Thanks to Nic Burgess for stepping in with the organization while Mrs Burton was away. The generous funds raised were split between the PTA and the local children's charity Blue Smile. The leftover produce was donated to Jimmy's Night Shelter. (funds raised: £540.79)
4. **School Discos:** there were two discos for the children this year, both very well attended. These take form of two back-to-back sessions, one for EYFS and KS1 children, and the other for KS2 children. Natasha Forster with her team ran these extremely successfully, including the tuck shop and the coffee and cake sale – thank you! (funds raised: £1398.06)
5. **Christmas Cards:** we are grateful to Katie Farrell and her team who kindly organized again a Christmas cards scheme where the children design their own festive cards which are then sent off to be printed – a very unique and personal way to send your festive wishes. (funds raised: £338.86)
6. **Christmas Puddings:** award winning Christmas puddings of various flavours and with the MRPS school logo (perfect for your sweet tooth or as presents) were arranged to be sold by Judith Harrison and helpers – thank you. (funds raised as part of the winter fair: ~£300)
7. **Winter Fair:** Natasha Forster and Helen Crisp and a big team of helpers put on the amazing Winter Fair, one of our biggest events of the year. It was buzzing with electric festive community spirit. The class reps got their classes to take responsibility for one table of activities – this worked really well. Huge thanks to all who helped making this such a fantastic success. (funds raised: £1808.14)
8. **Band Night:** this was a parents-only event organized by Kate Winter and her team – we are grateful to them. It was held at the Social Club off Vitoria Road. We had two bands playing, and Kate made her legendary vodka jelly. We saw lots of dancing shoes put to great use, and much fun was had by all. (funds raised: £640.01)

9. **Summer Fair:** we are hugely indebted to Natasha Forster and her dedicated large team of helpers for organizing this biggest and fantastically successful event! We secured donations from the Co-Op on Chesterton Road (food supplies), and Carter Jonas Bradshaws (sponsorship boards). The steal-pan band added a festive tune, the last-minute replacement bouncy castle was very successful, the food by Seb Barker was amazing, and the drinks tent was as busy as expected. The Bake-Off for the school's 10th anniversary cake, organized by Liz Simmons, was creative and delicious. Thank you to all who helped and to all the parents and friends who came to enjoy the fair. (funds raised: £2070.36)
10. **Bags2School:** for the first time, and in fact, twice this year, Ali Hall and her team ran the recycling clothes scheme – great for when changing seasonal wardrobe. Participation was very good and the funds raised depended on the weight of the clothes collected. Thank you, Ali. (funds raised: £ 328.00)
11. **Pre-loved Clothes Sale:** Katie Symons, Liz Simmonds, Natasha Forster and helpers organized a second-hand clothes sale. This was great fun and very useful. In order to increase participation next year, we plan to open the event to the wider community outside the school's parent body. The leftover clothes were donated to the second Bags2School initiative (see above). (funds raised: £378.00)
12. **Film Night:** this was an event for the children kindly organized twice this year by Raquel Azevedo e Silva and Daniela Morris – thank you. Purchasing the license is expensive and makes this event less profitable, but the children loved it and it was well attended, so we will continue to organize it in the future. (funds raised: £83.08)
13. **Ice-cream Sales:** Helen Crisp, myself, Eleanor Hargreaves and helpers ran a number of (usually every other Friday when the weather was good) Ice-Cream Fridays with donations from the Co-Op on Chesterton Road – thank you. (funds raised: £520)
14. **Drama Club Bar:** we are grateful to Tracy Beales and her team for organizing the well received drinks accompanying the school's Drama Production. (funds raised: £185.85)
15. **Store Donation Schemes:** Eleanor Hargreaves kindly arranged for Waitrose and Asda to place MRPS as one of the community projects that these stores donated money to depending on the number of tokens received from their shoppers. (funds raised: £215)

MRPS School Fund

The School Fund has been run by myself and Ali Farmer for just over a year now. It is intended to boost our fundraising efforts, especially in light of MRPS's woefully underfunded school budget (£3000 per pupil per annum in comparison to the national average of £4500). The School Fund enables us to help the school with bigger projects.

So far we raised just under £10,000.00, which is fantastic - thank you to all who donated! Around 15% of MRPS families are currently participating in this initiative, either as one-off donations or as a monthly standing order contributions. We would like to achieve around 70% participation – help us do more for the school and join the School Fund initiative!

The possible funding priority projects for the future have been identified together with the school and they are:

1. Invest in Computing Resources and Equipment (Estimated Cost £15,000): a portable suite of computing devices to support dynamic learning.
2. School Environment Revamp (Estimated Cost: £15,000): improve tired surroundings - revamp pods, bike sheds, supply recycling bins, water fountains, signage.
3. Astro-turf Muddy KS1 Playground (Estimated Cost £20,000): replace struggling grass with astro-turf for all-year play.

We will work closely with the school to identify the top priority big project that the PTA can help the school with.

How funds were spent

Staff can apply for funds to the PTA at any point during the year. There are no financial restrictions, but the applicant is requested to run the funding request past the Headteacher before submitting it to the PTA. The request is discussed at the subsequent PTA meeting and either voted on if sufficient information is supplied or returned to the application for clarification and more information.

In the past year the PTA funded (in total £8,609.07):

- Outdoor classroom
- Working walls projects
- School boiler
- Electric lock at reception
- Early years outdoor area refurbishment
- PA system
- Year 1 software
- Radio mics (for performances)
- History resources pack
- Year 6 leavers present: yearbooks
- Year 2 cameras and memory cards
- Year 1 planters and plants
- History castle figures
- Author visit
- Lanyards for School Council
- Playzone for sensory circuits and lunch time play

Purchases: staff Christmas presents, cool box, jugs, weighing machine, stationary, PTA-UK membership, folding bags.

A special mention goes to the Outdoor Classroom project. Helen Crisp and Ali Farmer took initiative in coordinating this big project that the school identified a couple of years back. We are hugely grateful to Helen and Ali for volunteering and donating countless hours and their professional skills to this project. Many people helped out and there was a real community spirit when everyone was involved: from the children with their ideas for the design of the outdoor classroom, to the parents and teachers helping out digging and planting. Due to so many helping hands, we only spent £1392.73 so far. Plans are now around kitting the outdoor classroom with seating, storage and learning resources. The outdoor classroom was officially opened on 1st of July 2016. It will be an evolving project as the garden grows and matures, and as the school uses it for its outdoor teaching and learning.

Events and initiatives for the future

All events from last year are planned again for this year with some minor improvement tweaks. Watch the parentmail for notifications and pleas for help. We need many people to help in small ways to make these events successful.

In the past we ran a second-hand bike sale. We are on the lookout for a person who is willing to organize this again.

Communication

The PTA uses a number of channels to communicate with the parents, and Liz Simmons has been coordinating this via:

- emails via parentmail,
- contacting, informing and soliciting help via the class reps,
- a section in the school's bi-weekly newsletter,
- PTA dedicated web pages on the school's web site.

We have also been working on building good communications channels with the school, especially with respect to informing teachers about funding requests, about the learning resources for the outdoor classroom, about participating at the PTA events, and particularly about the school's funding priorities.

People

The PTA Committee meets twice a term - please get involved. The more hands on deck, the less work for each one person. The PTA is also great for making friends, for contributing to the community, and for taking part in our children's experience of school.

We are very grateful to the managing staff at the Co-Op on Chesterton Road for their continuing and very generous support of our school's events. Every time we go and ask them for something, they say yes!

Such an amazing year of PTA activities would not be possible without the help of a huge number of volunteers. We would like to thank all the school's staff representatives for their help: Ali Hall, Nic Burgess, Susan Dobbs, Carol Bretten, Renata Gouveia, Lucy Watts and Julian Blakeman. We are also very grateful to all the class reps for recruiting parent helpers from their respective classes – this was one of the keys to the success of the PTA this year. Thank you to all you parents and carers who continue to come and enjoy these events! Finally, I am also hugely indebted to the wonderful PTA committee who has worked so tirelessly during this past year, and would especially like to acknowledge the following parents for all their help: Ali Farmer, Helen Crisp, Natasha Forster, Katie Symons, Liz Simmons, Dave Bettinson, Raquel Azevedo e Silva, Eleanor Hargreaves, Tracy Beales, Judith Harrison, Katie Farrell, Erika Johnston, Lydia Aers and Daniela Morris.

Finally, it has been a complete pleasure for me to chair the PTA and work with so many so amazingly wonderful people – thank you!

Mateja Jamnik Bierman
MRPS PTA Chair