

Alban City School PTA Chairs' Report: Jan 2015 – Jan 2016

I am extremely pleased to produce this report detailing the many successes of our very active, community focussed PTA here at Alban City School. This report covers the period of my chairmanship from January 2015 until January 2016 (please note this report does not include financial information, this can be found in a separate report from the Treasurer).

Structure & Organisation

PTA meetings continue to be well attended each month offering an opportunity for idea sharing, sub-committee updates and feedback as well as keeping class representatives informed.

The sub-committee approach has continued to work well, being used to a greater or lesser extent depending on the event requirements. These groups have proven to be an essential organisational tool, particularly where event planning overlaps. The sub-committee process continues to improve, but does need a little refining to ensure everyone is aware of which decisions still need to be brought to the main PTA meeting.

Class representatives were introduced in January 2015, ensuring each class has at least one parent or carer who acts as a liaison between the PTA and their class. They have become extremely valuable in supporting all PTA activities and have vastly improved the flow of communication between the PTA and classes, ensuring all parents and carers at the school are fully informed at all times.

Communication & Information

Communication between the PTA and parents / carers at the school has, as I have already mentioned, been greatly improved thanks to the introduction of the class representatives. The increased use of the Yellow PTA Post Box during morning drop-off has also helped with selling tickets for events and recruiting volunteers.

The PTA has this year enhanced its social media presence, through the creation of a PTA Twitter account by the Communications Officer. This gives us an opportunity to engage with the wider local community and this will continue to be developed throughout this year. The Alban City School parents Facebook page now has the majority of parents covered too, so we are able to use this to communicate as well.

The PTA newsletter continues to be produced each term and we have made some developments to the PTA pages on the school website to make it easier to use. The PTA web pages are updated regularly to show forthcoming events, as well as to upload newsletters, meeting minutes and other relevant information. We are also developing an 'offers page' to include websites offering cashback schemes to the PTA when parents buy from them, and exclusive offers to our parents from local businesses. This, in turn, is helping to strengthen our wider community relationships.

Events

The PTA continues to try new events, whilst enhancing and adapting existing events following suggestions from the whole school community. This year has seen us undertake an extremely ambitious number of events. Thanks to the dedicated support of the PTA, school staff and our fantastic parents, each and every event has been enormously successful, not only financially, but most importantly in building on our already fantastic school community feel.

This year, the PTA held a, definitely different, Spring Hop-Along for the whole community that also gave the school the Guinness World Record for the most people hopping on one leg. We have also introduced sociable and fun craft evenings (and mornings!), popcorn evenings for the children and, a very popular Mum's Night, to a very busy schedule:

- Quiz Night
- Valentines' Bake Sale
- Spring Hop-Along
- Popcorn Evening for the whole school
- Garden Party
- Summer Fair
- Meet the PTA
- Autumn Bake Sale
- Mum's Night
- Halloween Disco for Phase 2
- Children in Need Scooter Wash
- Christmas Fair
- Popcorn Evening for Phase 1

In addition to these events, the PTA continue to hold monthly coffee mornings, including a MacMillan Coffee fundraising coffee morning each September, and when the weather allows, ice-lolly sales on a Friday afternoon.

The PTA now endeavours to schedule different types of event each term: two events for the children, a community event (although due the length of the Spring term, this isn't always possible), and two parent fundraisers.

Looking into 2016, alongside the events held in 2015, the PTA is considering introducing car boot sales, a games night, beer & wine tasting and possibly a ball.

Supporting the School

The PTA exists solely to support our school, whether helping to build and strengthen relationships with the school and wider local community or, fundraising to provide equipment, activities and other resources to further the education of our children.

I am delighted that the PTA has raised significant funds for the school this year. Further details are set out in the separate Treasurer's report, but these funds have been used to purchase large quantities of books for the school library and some playground equipment such as balls, hoops, beanbags etc. The PTA was also able to significantly subsidise pantomime tickets for all children at the school. Recorders were also purchased for each Year 3 pupil, using our Music Fund. Further funds will be made available to the school in due course and the PTA will continue to be guided by the School Head in the best way to use them..

Corporate Support & Match-Funding

Over the last year the PTA, has been very generously supported by numerous companies and local businesses, whether through match funding, sponsorships or raffle prizes. Some of these include:

- Barclays Bank who, through a number of parents, have given us significant match funding at both the Summer and Christmas fairs.
- Frosts Estate Agents have become major sponsors of all of our fairs.
- RBS sponsored an employee at the Spring Hop-Along
- Coombes & Wright Mortgage Solutions generously sponsor our face painting team at each and every event, providing equipment and new face paints. Metrobank St Albans have supported activities at both the Summer & Christmas fairs with excellent prizes.
- Halifax St Albans joined with us in fundraising for Children in Need and also supported our Christmas fair with some great prizes.
- Aimia for match-funding school produce at our Summer fair.
- Beech House supported the Summer fair with delicious refreshments.
- Secret Nail Spa supported the Mum's Night with a very generous donation.

There are many, many more companies who have supported us, especially our generous raffle prize donors. Our events would not be anywhere near as successful or as enjoyable without their support.

To finish, I must say a huge thanks to the whole PTA team, your support and enthusiasm this year has been amazing, thank you. Particular thanks to those who have given up so much of their own time this year to ensure everything we do is marvellous...you know who you are! Finally to Mrs Goddard and her fantastic staff, thank you all so much for putting up with all of us, and our crazy ideas - we couldn't do it without you. Here's to continuing to have fun, make more friends and raise lots more in 2016.

Karen Francis, Chair of the PTA