

FRIENDS OF DOWNS VIEW

Chair's Report for the year September 2019 – August 2020

Our year of fundraising began like any other, with plans in place for our annual events and others sketched in to be firmed up nearer the time. We were optimistic that we would see our plans for the trampoline room moving forward, along with the redevelopment of the school site itself.

Little did we know back in September that our fundraising activities would be halted by the Coronavirus pandemic really taking hold in March.

Like all organisations, we moved our meetings to Zoom and resumed those in May as a way of keeping things ticking over and discussing opportunities for new ways to raise funds with virtual events.

Although this year has been like no other for the Friends, I am so very proud of what has been achieved. It has still been a lucrative year, despite all the disruption, challenges and anxieties the pandemic brought with it. But more than ever this year, the support the Friends committee members have shown, not just to the charity, but to each other, has been invaluable and much appreciated. I feel we go from strength to strength each year, continuing to help provide much needed equipment and resources and also, just as importantly, the chance for families to come together. I look forward to when this can happen again.

Mention must be made here as well of Adrian Carver's retirement this year from his role as Executive Head of Downs View. He was so much more than a headteacher, not least because of his dedication to the Friends over many years. Fortunately for us, he agreed to become our Honorary President. Vanessa Hickey, the new Executive Head is hugely supportive of us and the committee members are excited to have her on board.

My biggest thanks, however, go to the committee members themselves. Everyone's contribution is valued and I'm very aware of all the hours of time that are given so generously. I hope you all know how much it is appreciated. Special mention must be given to Peter Mapledoram as Treasurer and Michelle Edser as Secretary for all that they do to underpin the smooth running of the charity and the enormous amount of support they give to me. As does Nickie Poulton. I think it's fair to say she is at the heart of our events and makes them happen. Long may that continue when we are able to have face to face events again.

What follows is a breakdown of the events we were able to hold and donations that came in :

Fundraising Events

We held two of these before March –

- **The Christmas Fayre** in early December was a great success once again. It always takes a huge amount of organising and relies on the goodwill of the staff as well as the committee members, especially to create and set up the grotto which was a triumph again. Months of preparation go into this event, not least the securing of fabulous prizes for the raffle which is a highly popular part of the day. Many thanks to Lana Hall for putting together the stunning hamper as the first prize. It looked amazing! The atmosphere was very festive as families

and friends arrived and enjoyed wandering from stall to stall. Nickie Poulton coordinated the event and ensured it ran smoothly. No easy task!

- **The Quiz and Curry Night** at the end of January was the biggest it has ever been! The hall was packed with teams and the atmosphere was brilliant. As always, Mani, a staff member, made a delicious curry for everyone to enjoy, assisted by other school staff. Adrian Carver created and delivered the quiz which got us all thinking as usual! A big thank you to all involved.
- **The Brighton Marathon Weekend 10k Run** in April had to be postponed due to the pandemic. It was rescheduled twice and then had to become a virtual event with runners completing the distance in their own time. We had six runners taking part, one of which has completed his run and raised nearly £3000! Technically, it will be part of next year's financial report as it was after August, but the event was one that was originally scheduled during the report for this year. The others will do their runs in due course and they are all very much appreciated.

Donations

There is no doubt this area of fundraising has been significantly affected by the pandemic, with no external events happening and therefore no one taking on challenges to raise money for the charity. However, a donation was made for £5000 from the Dischma Charitable Trust after hearing Adrian Carver discussing the challenges facing the school on a radio programme!

On a more sombre note, we received three very generous donations from the families and friends of Matthew Gallagher, Sophie Kennard and Arthur Turk, who all sadly passed away this year. Our heartfelt thanks to their loved ones.

Events For Families

We sadly only managed one of these this year. They are enormously important events and mean DV families can get together in a relaxed and safe environment and they are enjoyed by all who come along.

- **The Spooky Winter Disco** held in November was really well attended and a lot of fun! It proved to be a good time to put on a family event. Very successful. Thank you to all who helped run it on the night and in the preparation for it.

All things considered, another successful year for the Friends of Downs View. We are still on course to achieve the trampoline room and hopefully next year will see things move along with that.

My thanks again to **all** members of the Friends. You all play your part and give your time and energy selflessly. Here's to the resumption of our usual 'real life' events soon!

Lisa Burgess, Chair.