

Great Wood PTA meeting

Monday 19th September (7pm)

Attendees: Vicky Lofthouse (Chair), Louise Lyon (Treasurer), Lucy Robinson (Secretary), Alison English, Daniel Grimmitt, Jhuliana Haslam, Amy Hewitt, Hannah Jackson

Apologies: Laura Drury, Natalie Fielding, Megan Matthews



1. Welcome & Introductions

Vicky Lofthouse welcomed everyone to the meeting and attendees introduced themselves.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting (held 08.07.22) were agreed.

Matters Arising:

- VL highlighted to the group that since the last meeting it had been agreed (via the WhatsApp group) to increase the yearly trip contributions from £2 to £5 per child in light of the current cost increases and the length of time it had been in place.
- VL mentioned that the Y6 end of year contributions were increased from £4 to £10 per child for 2022 leavers but that we may as a committee decide to reassess this later in the academic year. LR explained that the Y6 Leaver's Celebrations are usually organised by a group of Y6 parents independently of the PTA (though there is sometimes crossover of individuals).
- The EYFS welcome party will not be happening this year, due to lack of preparation time, though it is something the committee are keen to reinstate. Several attendees stated they wish it had been possible when their children started.

3. Finance Update and Requests for Funding

- LL confirmed that accounts were healthy with a good balance in the bank as well as in float. Books are currently with the accountants.
- VL advised that, other than confirmation of the PTA's commitment to subsidising class trips, there have not been any requests for funding. Mr Ross has advised of a booking he has made for a storyteller in January that he will be hoping the PTA will fund. There was a general consensus that we would keen to fund as it is a 'whole-school' experience.
- HJ highlighted that it would be good to share information on funds raised more prominently and what has been funded. AE suggested it would perhaps be best to highlight funds raised on a termly overview rather than for individual events to avoid expectation of immediate use of those funds. HJ shared a picture from a PTA Facebook group of a bubble diagram a PTA had used to show total funds raised and big expenditures. General consensus that this would be a good idea. HJ happy to assist with working on this over the coming year.

4. Christmas Cards & School Calendars

Christmas Cards:

The Christmas card project is in hand and ongoing.

School calendars:

- VL informed the group that the printers previously responsible for the calendars are no longer willing to do them. VL explained the typical format of the calendars for any new parents. She highlighted that the biggest issue has been that other calendar suppliers only do a single image per page, rather than the 30 individual portraits, unless we could find a local printing company willing to create.
- VL mentioned that this was possibly an area where we do not have to continue doing exactly what has been done before. JE was keen to continue the tradition of calendars, along with several others.
- LL stated that it would need volunteers to ring round local companies to see if continuing the previous design is possible. VL suggested this might be a task for members who had been unable to attend the meeting but had requested tasks.

5. Charity

VL explained it has been customary for the PTA to have a nominated charity alongside fundraising for the school, with the donation primarily being made up of funds from raffles held at the Christmas Nativity Plays. There were no specific suggestions from the group but it was proposed that it would be a good idea to have input from the wider parent community. LL suggested a poll conducted on the Facebook Group and is willing to set this up.

6. Forthcoming events

Autumn Disco:

- VL explained that the disco is earlier than usual due to a combination of half-term, Parents Evening and availability of the hall & Mrs Marcellini. As such it is not a Halloween disco but an Autumn disco.
- LR queried if anyone had any ideas for reducing the waste produced by the number of cups used. She said that the PTA had purchased paper cups over the past year to attempt to improve the environmental impact but it was still a lot of waste. There was some discussion of options but it was decided not to make any changes for the Autumn disco due to timescales.
- HJ queried the treats and if we would be using Londis again. LR explained that in the past couple of years Kelly Allen of Seaborn Stores had provided us with the treats at cost price on a 'sale or return' basis.
- There was some discussion regarding treats, including where to get them and what to get. Discussion points included allergies and the presence of gelatine in jelly sweets.

Christmas Fair:

- VL explained the previous format for the fair is similar to the Jubilee Fair held earlier this year with classroom games plus the possibility for a bake sale, chocolate tombola, craft stalls. EYFS staff also run a Secret Present room, where children can choose and wrap a present for a friend or family member.
- Mr Ross has mentioned that we will probably need to find a new Santa for the Grotto. There was discussion about Santa's Grotto, including the logistics of finding someone suitable, the location and whether there would be sufficient slots. LR stated that Grotto slots were often opened up to EYFS first due to the limited numbers, then older year groups. However, it was discussed that this raises issues as a result of the lack of fair over the last few years, meaning none of the infants year groups have previously had a chance to see Santa. A few suggested that they would not have expected to see Santa at a school fair. It was decided to try the fair this year without Santa's Grotto.
- JE suggested a walk through experience might make a good alternative to the Santa's Grotto – paying a fee to walk through a decorated area (e.g. with trees decorated by the children) perhaps with elves giving out treats at the end. This was generally thought to be an idea worth considering either this year or for future.
- LR queried if we hoped to continue the Chocolate Tombola tradition. After the Summer Festival, Natalie Fielding has suggested the idea of a 'Bottle Bola' to minimise the risk of melting chocolate. It was agreed this would be an idea to discuss as a possibility for a future event.

- VL suggested that it may be a good idea to see if any crafters would be interested in running stalls at the fair – with the possibility of renting table space.

Summer Festival:

- The Summer Festival was briefly discussed – a provisional date has been entered into the school diary (17th June). It was agreed that the committee were keen to go ahead with putting on the event again.
- VL highlighted that it would be important to get a stage booked in order to confirm the date as this was the cause of the date change of 2022's event.

7. Any Other Business

- It was queried if the children would be attending panto this year. LL explained that Mr Ross had said it was in progress, with plans for the younger children to attend the Winter Gardens, while the older children will go to the Dukes. LR explained the PTA had paid for the online panto streamed to classrooms in 2020 and for interval ice creams in 2021, both in light of the limited opportunities for the children due to the pandemic, but that the PTA has largely not been involved with the panto trip prior to this, however this is something that we can make a decision on going forward.
- HJ suggested that it would be worthwhile the PTA looking into 'passive income', for example things like Amazon Smile and match-funding by banks, as she feels this is a missed opportunity. LR advised that she thinks match-funding was used in the past for a specific fundraiser due to a parent at the time working for the bank. It was agreed that it would be worthwhile looking into the possibilities of passive income. HJ happy to investigate.

Next Meeting: Proposed for first or second week after the half-term break.