

Chair Yearly Statement

I would like to start by thanking the PTA committee who took position from January, Fran (Treasurer) and Stephanie (Clerk); I would also like thank Cat for helping the PTA to get to the position they are today and to Tony for always being there to help.

Without doubt it has been a very challenging time given the current economic climate. Donations from business and monies raised from fund raising has been down compared to the previous year. This has not been due to lack of effort, far from it. It has taken an incredible amount of effort to raise the monies and has been very time consuming. I praise each of the committee members and volunteers for their dedication to the PTA. It is this dedication that allows us to provide items or experiences that enrich the lives of the students.

Since September 2023 a total of 24 Funding Requests have been approved by the committee, these items have ranged from Board Games, Drums, Puzzles and Activities, Sensory Toys, Light Up Toys, Prom Décor, Outdoor Play Equipment, Seating Benches, M&M Theatre Production for the whole school and of course the Sensory Garden which has yet to be finished to name a few.

All of these items were either directly requested by the Teachers or from the Student Council. The feedback has been fantastic and the students have been thrilled to receive the items and can’t wait to finally use the new improved Sensory Area. Unfortunately, there has been delays due to weather and the goats needing to temporarily utilise the space. We do however, have £1243.10 to spend on the sensory garden and a number of other things to add to make it even better. This will provide a sensory area, music area, planting area and seating area. We hope to have the new extended area complete by the end of the summer holidays. The sensory garden will continue to be a work in progress, adding to it as we can to make it the best we can for the students.

The sensory area so far has taken a considerable amount of time to bring it to where it is today, and special thanks need to go out to a number of people. They joined me at the weekends and afterschool including school holidays to get to the stage we are today. Fran, Tony, Jodie, Barbara, Rio, Riley and Bethany spent a lot of hours painting the area a number of times to make it as vibrant and welcoming as possible.

Also, special thanks go to Paul Cole of Drakes Construction for donating his time to build the new partition, make some corrections to the floor and for fitting the new polycarbonate roof. Paul is also going to help extend the area by digging out the grassy area and laying a new rubber matt safety floor paid for by the PTA. This will provide easy access to the sensory and music areas for wheel chair users, plus new seating and planters will be added. A total of £2500 was put to one side to pay for the Sensory Garden.

Jay has applied for a grant from the Coop and if we are successful, it will be used to extend the area further and provide more features.

The largest funding request granted this year was the pantomime Aladdin by M&M Theatre Productions. Although the production cost £1999, it was very touching and quite emotional seeing the reactions of the students. The whole school got to enjoy the pantomime; many of our students may never get to see something like this in a theatre, and to think the PTA have provided an experience like this at school, is what keeps me focused.

Happy Days Charity also provided funding for M&M Theatre Productions to return for a second time, this time The Hobbit. Cat worked very hard putting together all the information required and was successful in her application. Her hard work alone enabled yet another fantastic experience for the students. Well Done Cat!

The sponsored walk raised nearly £1300 to purchase new seating and to date, 2 x 8 seat benches, 2 x 6 seat benches and 1 bench specially designed for 2 wheel chair users and 2 people to sit with them have been purchased. Finally, a play bench for EYFS was added bringing the total expenditure for this project to £1215. The committee are also looking at purchasing some traditional benches for the top field in the near future along with parasols with bases should the sun finally come out.

Going forward into the next financial year my personal goal is to try and get more people involved with the PTA directly. New roles to be created such as people who source the prizes for the raffles, donations to sell at the fair, people to help arrange events by working directly with the event coordinator and also to get new ideas on how to raise funds or projects to get involved in. A new base of volunteers we can call on would also be very helpful going forward. This matter will need to be discussed and agreed upon at the next meeting and approved by all committee members to move forward with an advertising campaign.

Communication with parents/care givers is another aspect the PTA need to work on. Another letter requesting email addresses will be sent out and hopefully we can open further communication channels by sending out mail shots with the latest PTA news.

So, I would like to sign off by thanking the staff of Mill Ford for their support; especially Claire, Simon and Keith, the volunteers who help with events, the people who donate goods for us to sell, the people who have purchased items or raffle tickets at an event, the student council for their hard work collating the ideas and requests from the students, the parents/care givers and local community for supporting our events and especially to the committee. It takes an incredible amount of dedication and personal time to organise the events, and we will continually strive to raise as much money as possible.

**Bank Balance as of 01 September 2023 - £5593.23**

**Monies raised breaks down as follows:**

Events £5539.34

Easy Fundraising £119.24

Bank Interest £9.42

**Total £5668**

**Expenses:**

Events Expenses £1212.46

PTA Expenses £461.05

**Total £1673.51**

**Total Amount Raised After Expenses September 2023 to July 2024 - £3994.49**

**Funding Requests and Sensory Garden Total September 2023 to July 2024 - £5711.57**

**Current Bank Balance £3876.15**