

Chairman's report 2015/16 for the PFA of St Cuthbert's Windermere

I've never been a chairman or a trustee of anything before but having been voted into the post of chairman and trustee last year I was determined to do the best I could for both the committee and the school. I'm supported by a small team of dedicated ladies who almost always say yes. Their ideas always end up happening and I'm inspired by their dedication and their 'can do' attitude towards projects and events. We have a strong team and it's been a marvellous year not just for fund raising but for forming friendships and strengthening bonds between us all and with the school staff.

We also have a new treasurer, Adrian, who is also another trustee. He introduced Gift Aid which has been a great move and we have increased our fund raising now by 25%. He compliments the team, by keeping us all on the right path and, at times I think he is bemused by some of our ideas to make money, but I value his skills and loyalty to the PFA and his friendship. The other trustee is the head teacher of the school, Peter. We must drive him mad with our constant chatter and laughter when we get together at meetings and at times he must be glad of Adrian being present. He's one of the most enthusiastic people I have met he is totally dedicated to the children and his staff at school. But he can also be seen with a brush at the end of events and up to his elbows in fairy soap suds.

The year started well with the school Christmas fair at the end of November. A friend of mine was downsizing and for weeks my conservatory was full of bric a brac, toys and ornaments awaiting the table at the fair. We decided to have a Santas grotto and known for liking a bargain I went one weekend to Morrisons and negotiated with the manager who allowed me to purchase 80 selection boxes. My own daughter couldn't believe her eyes when I opened the boot of the car and she saw enough chocolate to drown in!!

Staff at school came up with a brilliant idea and suggested making a Bauble tree. There would be 100 hand made baubles and over a third of them would win a prize. All purchased baubles would be put into a draw at the end for a main prize of £100. Staff helped the children make the baubles which looked amazing. The Christmas fair made a lot of money the bauble tree sold 85 baubles!

December saw us Carol singing at Lakeland. It was snowing on the morning of the event and I thought we would be the only ones in the shops. How wrong I was, customers came from the cafe to see the children singing and playing samba drums. Some of the children had been learning to play the drums for the Autumn term as part of a project funded by the Bowness and Windermere community care Trust and facilitated by The Brewery Arts centre.

January saw a group of children and mums supported by visiting staff bag packing at Booths, February saw the first disco of the year with around 40 children attending. March and April was busy, selling Easter raffle tickets for the draw with the first prize being a signed photo of the Red Arrows, which incidentally was won by the head teacher at school!

May saw the joining up of two organisations. St Cuthbert's became members of the town twinning association with Diessen, Germany being our twin town. We held a cake and coffee morning sale with the ladies of the church, governors and local hoteliers all donating beautiful cakes which were all duly sold.

National Vegetarian week in May also proved to be successful thanks to the support of parents making traditional vegetarian dishes from their own country. Windermere school catering team agreed to plan ,make and deliver twenty portions of vegetarian cuisine at cost price only. We secured funding for the event and the theme was traditional food stories from across the world. The PFA agreed to commission Taffy Thomas, local story teller to come to school and tell food stories to the children followed by an afternoon 'tea and try' at the hall with parents and friends. Over 70 people attended the hall and sampled the foods , everyone had a good afternoon. It was a super event with lovely food and happy faces. May also hosted a second disco , this time with party games and glow sticks on sale. Over 60 children attended the disco, a fantastic signal for the PFA that the children liked the discos with only 10 children unable to attend. We sold all the glow sticks, and most of the sweets and pop we had.

I've also been trying my hand at grant applications and we have been successful and have managed to secure money for sports equipment, science resources, toys for ks1 and glockenspiels and some time out at the foot print project for the whole school. We got a grant towards a new fire alarm in the hall and of course the veggie event.

And plans for Next year 2016/2017

We hope to sell jute bags and bespoke tee towels at the Christmas fair. We've already began collecting raffle prizes too.

I'm currently looking at securing grants for the children to go on a school trip and to take part in national science week in March.

We are also trying to set up a family centre for young pre school children with parents and friends from our international community and thanks have to go to Windermere prep school for donating a large amount of toys to the project.

And we are planning a talent night to bring the parents together following the success of the veggie event.

I am excited about the new year ahead and I'm sure we have been successful because of the relationship we have with each other. It's a small school but we have supportive families and staff, this combination makes our small school great.