

Friends of Foremarke Chair's Report **September 2015 – October 2016**

'Every Parent is a Friend of Foremarke'

This last year has seen support for the Friends of Foremarke grow. We have benefitted from an active committee comprising of parents old and new to the school, spanning the school years in terms of their children attending Pre-Prep, Lower School and Upper School. Support has been stronger from other parents too, with many putting their hands up to take the lead on organising our events. As a result, we have been able to put on a full and fun programme for parents and children.

Christmas Fayre – November 2015

The Friends of Foremarke Christmas Fayre (held in the Sports Hall) is always anticipated with excitement and this year was no different. Stall holders came to school early to set up their wares, the smell of hot Christmas food (or was it burgers?) filled the air, and everyone knew it really was time for Christmas when Mrs Bloor led in her angelic choir. The only thing left was for Santa to arrive – and of course he didn't disappoint. Suggestions for the fayre for next year include reducing the number of adult-oriented stalls and increasing those aimed at children with, for example, games to play rather than items to purchase.

Many thanks to RACHEL LUFT and VICTORIA SMITH for taking the lead on this event, and to all who helped before and on the day itself, including school staff who organised and manned the House stalls.

Net amount raised: £1795-25

Mulled Wine and Mince Pies – December 2015

Scheduled to coincide with the final performance of the Pre-Prep Christmas production, we welcomed families into the warmth of the Assembly Hall with its roaring fires, where we served hot mulled wine (adults only!) and mince pies, with chocolates for the children. This was (and always is) a well-attended event, which we hope to repeat again next year.

Many thanks to all who helped me to set up and serve on the day.

Not a fund raising event.

Quiz Night – February 2016

Attended by boarders and non-boarders, families and friends, we gathered in the theatre for themed quiz rounds, refreshments and a 'chippie tea' – my car maintained an interesting fishy aroma for quite some time afterwards... We had a new Quiz Master – many thanks to Logan Mair. A fun evening enjoyed by those who attended, but falling numbers may mean we have to review this event next year.

Many thanks to RACHEL LUFT for taking the lead on this event.

Net amount raised: £376-35

Parents' Breakfasts – February 2016 and May 2016

Back by popular demand, this year saw the return of Parents' Breakfasts, the first held in Michaelmas Term for Pre-Prep mums and dads, the second in Lent Term for parents with children in Lower School and Upper School. On each occasion, a delicious hot breakfast was prepared and served by Paul Woodman and his kitchen team, and the crowds came out bright and early to enjoy the award-winning fayre. We hope to repeat these events again more than once next year.

Many thanks to DEEPA BANSAL and LESLEY PRINCE for taking the lead on these events.

Not fund raising events.

Chocolate Bingo – March 2016

Held in the Dining Hall and just in time for Easter, who could forget Chocolate Bingo? We couldn't if we tried – the boarders' cries of 'Bingo Baby!' were truly memorable. Delicious hotdogs and burgers were prepared by the school kitchen team, and the evening was kept rolling by our bingo callers Vince Smith & Tim Steele – many thanks to both. Although this event seemed to be a slow starter in terms of chocolate donations and ticket sales, things picked up nearer the evening itself, and we received good feedback afterwards; so at the moment the intention is to repeat this event again next year.

Many thanks to ANNA MARIA DIBETTA for taking the lead on this event.

Net amount raised: £334-95

'Cars & Cakes' – June 2016

The first ever Friends of Foremarke Car Festival, held on Front Square on a bright and breezy Saturday in June, was a great success. Lots of parents and children turned up for a display that was better than anything Top Gear could offer! We served a wonderful selection of homemade cakes and biscuits too; so there was something for everyone. It was a lovely day – even the rain held off. We hope to repeat this again next year, and we will probably stick with an end of school year/summer time slot.

Many thanks to TARA WATSON and RACHEL LUFT for taking the lead on this event.

Net amount raised: £208-81

Wine and Canapés Evening for New Parents – September 2016

We organised a welcome event at the start of the new school year, just a couple of weeks into term. Numbers attending were relatively low (only a dozen new parents in total), but I received over twice as many apologies to my invitation with many saying they were double-booked because the event took place on a Friday evening (as always, to coincide with Lower School Information Evening) and/or they did not have sufficient notice as they received the term card late in the summer break. We hope to hold another welcome event next year, but the timing and indeed form require review.

Many thanks to all who helped me to set up and serve on the evening.

Not a fund raising event.

Other Events

There were almost too many other successful Friends of Foremarke events to mention. In addition we had many Coffee Mornings across the school, theatre and concert bars, and our Sports Days and Open Morning refreshments; (**where appropriate, financial details of these activities are available separately from the Friends of Foremarke Treasurer**).

Many thanks to all who helped with these several events throughout the year.

Stock Exchange

We said a fond farewell to CHERYL SMITH this summer when her daughter moved on to Repton. As well as her hard work for the Stock Exchange, Cheryl is a former Chair of the Friends of Foremarke, and her input has been invaluable over the years. THANK YOU, CHERYL – for everything you've done for us!

SARAH STEELE has continued in her role with the Stock Exchange (formerly shared with Cheryl) and is now joined by LAURA LEAHY. Many thanks to both.

Net amount raised: £1961=

Form Friends

Form Friends have continued to support new parents, arrange year group activities, and cascade information through the school from the Friends of Foremarke. Ensuring that Form Friends have up to date parent lists in an ongoing matter, one on which Mrs Merriman and the Friends of Foremarke are continuing to work.

Many thanks to all Form Friends for your work throughout the school and for your support of the Friends of Foremarke.

Additional Achievements Over the Past Year

- Following the 75th Anniversary Ball, the Friends of Foremarke were able to make a donation of £3000= to Rainbows Hospice (Loughborough) at a special school assembly in June 2016 – Victoria Smith and I attended and presented a jumbo cheque.
- Considering communication, we are now sending out all-school emails, to ensure that everyone (who has formally consented to us having their details) is informed about all Friends of Foremarke events and activities. We now also have foremarke.org.uk email addresses for the four committee Officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer); these can be readily passed on when someone vacates a role.
- To help include those who have not been involved with the Friends of Foremarke before, we have created a number of 'event templates' to describe the necessary steps in organising individual events e.g. Coffee Mornings.
- We are now liaising with School Council (*via* Mrs Kelly, Deputy Head - Pastoral) and the boarding pupils (*via* Mrs Hill, Head of Boarding) in order to find out the sorts of events and 'value-added' items for school that pupils themselves may like.

The Way Ahead

- We have considered, but not yet actioned, creating an online survey to scope the ideas of parents on Friends of Foremarke events and potential 'value-added' items for the school.
- The Friends of Foremarke constitution requires review and revision; the early stages of this process have been initiated, but much more work is needed.
- A 'home' for the Friends of Foremarke is an ongoing matter for discussion, both in terms of somewhere parents can meet (for Friends of Foremarke business but also to socialise) and somewhere to safely and securely store e.g. refreshment stock.
- The Friends of Foremarke 2017 Ball, to be held on Saturday 23rd September....!

With Thanks

Throughout the last year, the Friends of Foremarke have supported, entertained and celebrated. THANK YOU to everyone who has helped us to do our bit to make this a truly wonderful year for Foremarke Hall.

Finally, a personal thank you from me to my fellow committee members: RACHEL LUFT (Vice Chair), MERI BRAZIEL (Secretary), and VICTORIA SMITH (Treasurer). It's been a pleasure working with you! My thanks also to Mr Merriman, Mrs Merriman, Mr Fletcher, and all school staff who have helped us along the way.

I have thoroughly enjoyed this last year as Chair of the Friends of Foremarke – it's been exhausting at times but a lot of fun too. Thank you for putting up with me!

Dr Donna Maria Coleston-Shields
Chair 2015-2016, Friends of Foremarke