

## **Friends of Foremarke Chair's Report** **October 2016 – September 2017**

### **'Every Parent is a Friend of Foremarke'**

It has been another busy year for the Friends of Foremarke, keeping us on our toes as yet again we organised, set up and manned a series of events for all the children and parents. Support for the Friends has not been quite as strong as it was last year. Whilst we still benefitted from an active Committee, input has been less from other parents, with fewer people putting their hands up to take the lead on organising our events. This was particularly so in relation to the Friends of Foremarke 2017 Ball (work for which began before Christmas 2016), but nonetheless a smaller number of us have been able to put on a full and fun programme for parents and children alike.

### **Christmas Fayre – December 2016**

The Friends of Foremarke Christmas Fayre is always the big event of Michaelmas Term and this year was no different: we had stalls laden with Christmas goodies, the delicious smell & taste of hot food, the sound of Mrs Bloor's angelic choir, and Santa arriving with his elves to fuel the festive spirit.

*Many thanks to RACHEL LUFT 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: £1509**

### **Mulled Wine and Mince Pies – December 2016**

If there was any doubt that Christmas was on its way, our Mulled Wine and Mince Pies event at the end of Michaelmas Term provided tasty confirmation. Scheduled to coincide with the final performance of the Pre-Prep Christmas production (as always), we welcomed families into the warmth of the Assembly Hall where we served hot mulled wine and mince pies, with sweet treats for the children. This is always a well-attended event, which we hope to repeat again next year.

*Many thanks to VICTORIA and MICHAEL SMITH for taking the lead on this event.*

**Not a fund raising event.**

### **Parents' Breakfasts – March 2017 and May 2017**

Back by popular demand last year, Parents' Breakfasts continued this year for Pre-Prep mums and dads and separately for parents with children in Lower School and Upper School. Once again we thank Paul Woodman and his kitchen team for the delicious hot breakfasts they prepared and served for us. We hope to repeat these events again more than once next year.

*Many thanks to ALEXANDRA WILLS and ANNA MARIA DIBETTA for taking the lead on these two events.*

**Not fund raising events.**

**NB – money was raised for our Ball charity Cancer Research UK instead.**

### **Chocolate Bingo – March 2017**

Just before Easter – this year planned (with Mrs Hill) to coincide with an extended boarders' weekend – we had another wonderful Chocolate Bingo. Held for last time in the old Dining Hall (before the start of the new build), delicious hot food was prepared for us by the school kitchen team and the air was filled with enough sugar-fuelled excitement to fray even the calmest of nerves! As before, the event seemed to be a bit slow initially in terms of chocolate donations and ticket sales, but things picked up

nearer the evening itself and again the feedback afterwards was good; so the intention remains to repeat this event next year. The boarders might not forgive us if we didn't...  
*Many thanks to ANNA MARIA DIBETTA for taking the lead on this event.*

**Net amount raised: £256**

### **Wine and Canapés Evening for New Parents – September 2017**

As previously, we organised a welcome event at the start of the new school year, just a couple of weeks into term. Once more the event took place on a Friday evening and unfortunately numbers attending were relatively low. Those few parents who came enjoyed themselves, and for the Friends this event will continue to be worthwhile even if only a small number attends. We hope to hold another welcome event next year, but we will try to open it out to all new parents who have joined the school throughout the academic year, rather than just those who have joined at the start of Michaelmas Term (as may have been the case up until now).

*Many thanks to those who helped me, especially to set up and serve on the evening.*

**Not a fund raising event.**

### **\*\*\* The Friends of Foremarke 2017 Ball – ‘The Great Gatsby’ \*\*\***

This year of office saw the bulk of the work for the 2017 Ball, scheduled for Saturday of the first Exeat of Michaelmas Term. In the absence of a Ball committee, this was a major task for Victoria Smith (Vice Chair) and me. The theme of The Great Gatsby was chosen by parents and a very good choice it was too! We had lots of fun planning the colour scheme and décor, music and entertainment, food and drink... We came up with the idea of a Speakeasy 100 Club to replace the auction so that parents unable to attend the Ball could still get involved and donate, and we saved lots of money (for now and in the future) by buying decorations that we can use again and again, rather than hiring them in.

Our Ball charity was chosen by parents – the final decision was almost unanimous and this year money raised will go to **Cancer Research UK**.

Thank you to everyone who has donated to our Ball charity throughout the year, at Coffee Mornings, Parents' Breakfasts, theatre bars, and Sports Days.

*Many thanks to Lisa Parkin (for amazing graphics!), Roz Hepworth and Natalie Groves for helping Victoria and me along the way.*

*It also seems appropriate to thank those who have given their services or equipment free of charge for this fabulous fundraising event, as below:*

- Official Photographer (Alethea Simpson)
- Alcohol for Arrival Drinks (School Caterers)
- Additional Ingredients for Arrival Drinks (Dons)
- Crockery for Arrival Drinks (School)
- Bar Including Service (Full Measure)
- Napkins (Saffron Catering)
- Ball Pamphlet (Dons)
- Artwork and Design (Lisa Parkin)
- Stage (School)
- Photo Booth and All Photos (Mike - In The Frame Photo Booth)
- Luxury Lavatories Upgrade (Andiloos)

### **Other Events**

There were many other successful Friends of Foremarke events too. 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 for these activities are available separately from the Friends of Foremarke Treasurer.**

***NB – money was raised for our Ball charity Cancer Research UK at many of these events.***

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

### **Stock Exchange**

LAURA LEAHY & SARAH STEELE continued to run the Stock Exchange. This is a big job that often goes unnoticed but which provides a vital service to the school, supporting parents old and new with not just clothing but advice on school kit. Many thanks to both.

**Net amount raised: £1968-99**

### **Form Friends**

Form Friends have continued to support new parents, arranging year group activities and cascading information through the school from the Friends of Foremarke.

*Many thanks to all Form Friends for their hard work and for their support of the Friends.*

*Thanks also to Mrs Merriman for her efforts to ensure that Form Friends have up to date parent lists.*

### **Additional Considerations Over the Past Year**

- Communication – we continue to send 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. This seems to have been a success, with lots of feedback in support of the inclusivity this promotes. The foremarke.org.uk email addresses for the four Committee Officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) proved to be troublesome, but everyone seems to be able to get hold of us when they need us, using our own email addresses.
- Work has continued on the Friends of Foremarke ‘event templates’ (describing the essential steps in organising individual events) and it is hoped that these will be completed next year, to help those who have not previously been involved with the Friends if they wish to volunteer their input – only two remain to be done.
- We have continued to liaise with School Council (*via* Mrs Kelly, Deputy Head - Pastoral) and the boarding pupils (*via* Mrs Hill, Head of Boarding) to find out about events and ‘value-added’ items for school that pupils themselves may like.

### **The Way Ahead**

- The Friends of Foremarke Constitution still requires revision. While the early stages of this process have been initiated, more work is needed and this has not been possible while preparations for the Ball have taken priority. This task will however, be continued in the future.
- A ‘home’ for the Friends of Foremarke (somewhere for parents to meet for Friends’ business and to socialise, and somewhere to store stock safely) has been an ongoing issue for a while, but it looks as though this matter will finally be resolved when the new dining area is up and running. We very much look forward to that.
- The Friends of Foremarke 2017 Ball – ‘The Great Gatsby’ – on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September!!!!!!!!!!!!

### **With Thanks**

Throughout the last year, the Friends of Foremarke have done all we can to support and entertain. THANK YOU to everyone who has helped us do our bit to make this another wonderful year at Foremarke Hall.

A personal thank you from me to my fellow committee members: VICTORIA SMITH (Vice Chair), ANNA MARIA DiBETTA (Secretary), and LAURA LEAHY (Treasurer). Special thanks and goodbye to Anna Maria who was able to continue the role only until the end of Summer

Term when her daughter moved on to Repton. Thanks also to Mr Merriman, Mrs Merriman, Mr Fletcher, School Office staff, Paul Woodman and the catering team, the housekeeping team, and all school staff who have helped us along the way.

This last year as Chair of the Friends of Foremarke has been exhausting at times, particularly in relation to Ball preparations, but it has been a lot of fun too and it is good to know that what we do is appreciated – it makes it all worthwhile!

So finally, thank you to those of you who have taken the time to say ‘thank you’ – it has been a pleasure.

**Dr Donna Maria Coleston-Shields**  
**Chair 2016-2017, Friends of Foremarke**