

2023 / 2024

ANNUAL REPORT



PREPARED BY

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a year's overview

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Overview

Welcome to the Friends of Poplar Farm School (registered charity number 1208009)'s Annual General Meeting report, a testament to our year of fundraising and donations to Poplar Farm School. This report outlines our accomplishments, financial transparency, and future ambitions.

At the point of this report, Friends of Poplar is comprised of a Chairperson (Gemma Bryant), Secretary (Kelly Blake), Treasurer (Arete Sakellariou) and a number of Committee Members (Kerri Marjoribanks, Liz Weatherill, Tina Evans & Gemma Dixon)

We are a registered charity, with a charitable purpose as defined within the Charities Act 2011. We also operate in line with our constitution, as provided by Parent Kind, of which we are members.

A Year in Review

FOP has delivered a full schedule of events throughout the 23/24 academic year, with lots of success. As a group of volunteers, we continue to grow and develop, learning to adapt to the needs of the school and our new charity status requirements, all whilst delivering a combination of fundraising events and experiences for the children of Poplar Farm.

This year our attention was focussed on delivering well known events with confidence, rather than bringing in anything new and untested, ensuring that in the background we can put into place everything required for our newly granted charity status. It is a huge milestone for our organisation and means we can now access a wider range of support, grants and opportunities.

FOP continues to forge strong connections both within the school and the local community, recognising who and where we can seek support for our events. This has been integral to delivering events and maximising fundraising opportunities.

As we enter this coming academic year, with our school at full capacity, we will be looking ahead to bolstering our volunteer group and boosting the FOP community, as we prepare to say goodbye to some of our longest and most reliable volunteers as their children move up to secondary school.

*We are now
a registered
charity!!!*

last year's

FUNDRAISING SUMMARY

A total of **£6,721.15** has been raised over the course of this academic year. The treasurers report will detail more about how this has been raised and where funds have been spent

This year we stayed within the boundaries of events we know well and can deliver efficiently, whilst exploring other avenues of fundraising through schemes like Lottery SK. Our aim for the coming year will be to explore other fundraising avenues, including supermarket rewards schemes and match funding.

In total we have contributed **£2364.06** in funds back into school projects, including the end of year ice creams, seeds for the eco-warriors, pantomime visits and christmas gifts from Santa. We will continue to use our funds raised, to support the school in providing these extras and look forward to exploring more opportunities to support.



Events Analysis

As we focussed our attention on achieving charity status and making developments behind the scenes, we ensured that our events for the 23/24 period were reliable and easy to deliver, to ensure there was no undue strain on FOP.

- The Colour Run continues to be the shining star of our events offering. An event that brings together pupils, families, staff and FOP in a big celebration all whilst raising lots of funds. This event seems to be a firm favourite across the board and something the children in particular look forward to.
- We will continue to explore the benefits of re-cycling and fundraising, with the continued success of our 'Decluttering Event', we will explore ways to engage with the wider community to maximise this event and others.
- Spending money on experiences continues to be well received, the ice cream man and the pantomime, to name a few, brought the children a lot of joy and parents could see where their funds were being spent.

We are starting to encounter some challenges with the delivery of events, that we are looking to remedy for the upcoming academic year. These challenges include but are not limited to the following;

- Lack of volunteers - the number of active volunteers seems to have reduced considerably, which means the delivery of events and the general running of the organisation can sometimes be strained.
- Communication of events has sometimes caused issues with the inconsistent delivery of events, particularly where we rely on school involvement. We have mitigated this challenge by identifying key staff members to act as a point of contact, and sending 'event briefings' to school to be distributed to staff in advance of an event taking place.
- The volume of students and the now wider age range, is presenting a new series of challenges as our audience is now so much bigger and with varying engagement expectations. What is suitable for EYFS & Y1, isn't always appealing to Y5&6, as such consideration needs to be given here.

The Year Ahead ...

As we approach the 24/25 academic year, we find ourselves at a huge milestone, with the school now at full capacity. The unique nature of FOP has always been that it has grown with the school over the years, adapting alongside the school. We are now at a point where we are considered at 'full potential' and are now in a position where we can refine our practises to suit the size of the school and make adjustments to our events schedule and spending to better suit the wider audience of children.

This milestone does also bring along new challenges, as we will begin to say goodbye to volunteers as their children graduate the school. As such, our attention needs to focus on bolstering our volunteer group and ensuring we have a strong team across all year groups to ensure the steady and consistent delivery of events.

As we navigate changes to our committee structure and our volunteer pool, we will be looking to expand our fundraising opportunities through bid writing, grant applications and exploring other third party schemes like the Asda Rewards. These areas require minimal resource from a volunteer and parent perspective but can bring in considerable funds to support our projects.

For the 24/25 academic year, we have a renewed focus on the delivery of the PopBus project, and will be focussing our efforts on raising funds specifically for this project. Now that we are a registered charity, we have more opportunities available to us, in terms of obtaining grants and donations.

We will also be looking to deliver our first Y6 Leavers events and establishing some traditions, as we say goodbye to the first year group of Poplar Farm.

A note to parents, carers & staff...

"We want to express a huge thanks for your continued support of Friends of Poplars' fundraising efforts. Your presence at our events and your dedication to volunteering make a world of difference to our organisation. Not only raising essential funds but also creating a sense of community that enriches our school. We would love to build an even stronger relationship with our parents and carers, and would welcome any feedback, ideas and support you would like to give. Simply email fop@poplarfarmsch-cit.co.uk and let us know your thoughts! We can't wait to share another academic year of fundraising with you and your children"

Thank you



Friends of Poplar - Committee Structure

Our Friends of Association is defined by a clear structure, in order to ensure the smooth running of the group. As you will note, there are changes to this years' structure, to reflect changes that have occurred within FOP. This year will see our numbers reduce significantly and to ensure the structure of the our FOA remains manageable in the long term we have made the decision to operate a structure as outlined below.

Chairperson

To lead the committee, ensuring the FOA is run in line with its constitution and according to the wishes of all members.

Secretary

To ensure the FOA runs smoothly and efficiently through the preparation and organisation of the committee's paperwork and communications.

Treasurer

To manage and control FOA funds according to the wishes of the committee.

Committee Member

To ensure the smooth running of the FOA in line with the constitution through voting to pass or reject motions put to the committee, typically in regards to spending

Volunteer

To support the FOA through the dedication of time and resources. Putting into fruition plans and providing feedback on plans and ideas.

The Community

All staff, parents, carers, family and friends are considered part of the FOA family. Through the participation of events, sharing of opinions, all of this contributes to the success of FOP.