

## **Friends of Finstock School**

### **Trustees' Report to support accounting period ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016**

#### **What is FoFS trying to achieve?**

As our Constitution states, our objective is to enrich the school through resources or activities in order to enhance the environment for our children and the wider school community. This means aiming to organise fun and social activities to further improve the school society and/or raising funds to enable us to purchase items and make donations to the school. We also try to ensure that any spending benefits all children and that it is done in a timely fashion. This year, we have certainly organised a variety of activities, recognising more than ever that a successful event does not necessarily need to be a high income one – and fully embracing this vital element to FoFS' mandate! Last year we set ourselves the aim of agreeing fundraising targets prior to events for specific purchases and ensuring that the items were bought as soon as is possible to ensure maximum benefit was felt and that families could directly see how their fundraising support translated into improvements to our school. This has become a regular part of our planning and we need to ensure that this continues to grow until it is an integral part of our fundraising and planning tactics.

#### **How is FoFS trying to achieve these objectives?**

During the year, we have tried to capitalise on our fuller committee to continue holding familiar events and also arrange both new and adapted events into our diary such as the Pamper Evening, Carol Singing and enhanced raffles, now held at Christmas and in the Summer and our hugely successful joint Summer Fete with the Finstock Festival. Unfortunately, a Finstock 10k Run was not held during this accounting period as the date has been moved from Autumn to Spring in our calendar. We have also been greatly supported by parents at the school in arranging a First Aid training evening and a Sponsored walk, which although the funds are to be paid directly to the school in due course, the monies were donated to FoFS for accounting purposes. We continue to strive to improve communication within the school and have made great progress through use of the dedicated FoFS Noticeboard, appointment of Class Representatives, compilation of a fact-sheet for new parents and a regular piece in the weekly school newsletter. We have also produced another FoFS Newsletter in April 2016, used Facebook and the Finstock website to our advantage and kept the school community aware of how our fundraising is going against our targets. Furthermore, we are proactively seeking feedback on our events and ensuring we have a full debrief of events as part of our committee meetings and ensuring that our banner is displayed at all our events.

#### **Has FoFS achieved these objectives?**

Yes! We have successfully launched new events this year which have been a great success both financially and socially. We have made donations to the school of over £11,500 during the last year which has been a varied mix of large and small items -both a mixture of items suggested by the school in recognition of their needs and items suggested and chosen by discussion between FoFS and the school. We have also recognised times when FoFS can give something very small but special back to the school such as buying Ice Lollies after sports day – a very small but special way to make our children feel appreciated for their efforts! FoFS has a much improved profile within the school and our fundraising and spending is now far more transparent and clear for people to see and understand. We have also continued to recognise the reserves we hold in our bank accounts and

agreed to additional suitable spending when it was identified, indeed we donated roughly twice our income this year to the school! Obviously, we are still acutely aware of the need to spend our monies wisely as can be shown by us changing Pantomime providers for this coming year in order to secure a better value for money performance. Our targeted fundraising has given FoFS more direction and has helped to incentivise the school community to support our events.

### **How does FoFS intend to work better in the future?**

There is still much work to do to make all families feel fully aware of FoFS and a part of what we do. This would be furthered by fully utilising our fabulous new fundraising tree situated near the school office, ensuring the regular display of our new advertising board promoting ourselves and of adopting as standard the need to take photographs of our events and purchases to really show how we add value to the school. It is also vital that we have a high profile at such events as the school's annual Open Day – a chance for existing families to see what we are all about and to encourage them to support us. Additionally, being more vocal at our events would be helpful in launching our targets, announcing how much money we have raised and helping to clarify in people's minds what FoFS is all about.

We are endeavouring to find new ways to raise funds such as our plans to produce a recipe book, and to exploit other fundraising means such as "Easy Peasy" fundraising methods and accepting offers of fundraising opportunities with other organisations where it is felt we can commit to the workload demanded.

### **What is FoFS' focus for the future?**

Although our committee has been strong in terms of numbers during this year, we could have made more progress in working more productively as a team and in sharing responsibilities amongst the committee, ensuring that we play to everyone's strengths. Communication amongst the committee is also an area on which we could improve and our general organisation.

Therefore, in order to promote stability and experience for FoFS we have agreed to share the leading and organising of events amongst the whole committee. This will help the overall confidence and expertise of the committee and ensure that knowledge and experience is not lost when committee members leave as there is a clear expectation to securely pass on planning information gained from the past. And, although we now time our committee meeting agenda items which has helped speed up our meetings, this will also help us to this end. We also need to remain mindful of overall succession planning to ensure our future stability and have a more robust system to ensure that crucial information is kept up to date and reviewed periodically such as the FoFS page of the school website, information recorded with the Charities Commission, our Constitution and our fact-sheet for new parents to the school. We also need to discover ways to get more parents and families from the school involved in what we do, whether that be as members of the committee, making suggestions and giving feedback, running certain events on our behalf, helping with one-off events or in using their personal expertise in some way to assist FoFS. It is vital that we made positive efforts to widen and strengthen the FoFS committee over the coming year – the school is entering the next phase of its evolution and FoFS needs to be in a strong position to respond to the changing demands of the school and its fundraising requirements.

**Rachel Mackenzie (Chairperson /Trustee)**

**Racheal Coombes (Treasurer/Trustee)**

**Dawn Simpkins (Secretary/Trustee)**