Chairman's PTA AGM Report 2023

When we met a year ago at the last AGM, we knew that 2023 was going to be a big year but none of us could have imagined quite what a bumper year it would turn out to be.

From Silent Auctions to Danceathons, and Mini Marathons to 90s discos, there isn't much we didn't cover in our quest to meet our fundraising targets this year, and we are thrilled that all the hard work and commitment paid off. And it really was hard work at times! Being such a small team, we relied more than ever on the support and generosity of our community, and it was very special to see everyone pull together to deliver the results needed.

Here's a rundown of the events we ran in 2023 and funds raised:

Lego Competition (January) – £11.98
The PTA Lego Competition is fast becoming a firm fixture in the school calendar, giving the children a chance to put any Lego sets they received for Christmas to use and giving parents a way to keep children occupied when it's too cold and dark to venture out! Our 2023 competition had over 50 entries with some truly fantastic builds, making Mr Howe's judging job very tricky indeed. In the end, there were 5 worthy winners who received Lego vouchers and certificates, with one child being declared the overall winner and receiving the '2023 Lego Master trophy'.

Online Auction (March)– £2877.26
The online auction always has us glued to our phone screens for a week, watching the bids rise and the competition heat up! This year was no exception and, thanks to all the wonderful support we received with donations of lots from local businesses and families, we were able to raise close to £3000 for the school. The most hotly contested items included a whole lamb from Southborough Butchers, glamping in Groombridge, meals out, the TAs for the day, the class hampers (well done to Pippin class for raising the most with their Mexican hamper), and, of course, the music lesson with Mr McCheyne (won by a fan in Sheffield!). We will plan another auction for the end of 2024/early 2025.

Mini Marathon (April) – £4087.89 plus Gift Aid
Originally planned for the last day before the Easter holidays, we made a last-minute decision to postpone the Mini Marathon due to the bad weather. The new date arrived and so did the April showers but rather than disappoint for a second time, we decided to go ahead and what a fantastic, if slightly soggy, day we all had! The children didn't let the weather hamper them or dampen their spirits and they all ran their socks off to raise as much sponsorship money as possible for our school. This event always brings the whole community together, with parents acting as marshals and running with the children, and local businesses sponsoring the day to allow us to add the special touches. NB - Gift Aid still needs to be claimed for this event.

Wine & Cheese Evening (April) - £839.01
This was the first Wine & Cheese evening under our current PTA and what a brilliant event it was. We were treated to a fabulous selection of wine to sample (in very generous quantities!), all provided by The Secret Cellar, who also joined us for the evening to share their expertise. Cheese boards were then provided by The Cheese Shop, and we also held a dessert auction with desserts made by parents…we've never seen people so determined to get their hands on profiteroles! A very successful and enjoyable evening which we are looking forward to running again in 2024.

Family Fun Day (May) - £1735.35
What luck we had with the weather for the second year running! Over 80 school families (including several of the new 2023 Pippin starters) joined us for a wonderful afternoon of sunshine, games, activities, food and more. We had dance & kickboxing workshops, a cricket competition, Tug of War, arts and crafts, inflatables, Beat the Goalie, a 'Find the Royals' trail…and King Charles even made a very special appearance to greet everyone on the gate. The Family Fun Day really brings the school community together by offering families a chance to catch up within our beautiful and secure school grounds. Whilst we keep the entry ticket prices as low as possible and ensure all activities are free of charge, the food and drink sales make it a great fundraiser for the school.

Coronation Dress Up Day (May)– £78.44
We couldn't let the Coronation go by without some form of royal-themed celebration and there's nothing we love more than seeing the children stroll through the gates in the morning in their fancy dress outfits! Thank you to all the children for making such a fantastic effort and well done to the worthy winners in each class who each won a keepsake Coronation medal.

Music Concerts (Spring) - £314.55
At the start of the year, we were very fortunate to be contacted by a former Speldhurst School pupil who is now a music manager, who asked whether the PTA would be interested in collaborating with him on a series of music concerts he has scheduled to take place in the village hall. We jumped at the chance to provide refreshments at 2 events, which, together with a donation from ticket sales, raised over £300 for the PTA.

Coronation Tea Towels (June) - £556.25
What a difference a year makes…our 2022 tea towels were Jubilee-themed whereas our 2023 ones were celebrating the Coronation of our new King. The children did a wonderful job with their drawings and a fantastic number of orders were placed. Still a great fundraiser for us and one we will continue to plan for the end of each school year.

Sports Day Café (July) - £660.78
The Sports Day Café was a huge success this year, taking over £900 on the day (which is £300 an hour!). We had a great group of helpers who formed a fantastic coffee/tea production line, and the pastries and fresh berries were definitely hit, as were the much-needed ice lollies after the races. After costs, we raised £660 – not bad for a morning's work!

90s Coco Bongo Disco (July) - £1215.05
Coco Bongo returned to Speldhurst Hall with a bang and we all dusted off our record bags and puffa jackets, ready to be transported back to the 90s for this fabulous evening! There were some super fancy-dress outfits on display on the very busy dance floor…and we lost track of how many vodka jellies were consumed! A wonderfully fun social event for parents and a great fundraiser which we now look forward to every year.

School Discos (July) – £473.54
How brilliant it was to have the school discos back! Both the KS1 and KS2 children appeared to have a ball and really let their hair down whilst learning dance routines with their friends (or just showcasing their own unique moves!). The children all behaved beautifully and made the job of the supervising parents and organisers super easy. A great way to celebrate nearing the end of the school year.

Bag2School (September) - £90
This was our second Bag2School collection, timed to allow people to have a closet clear-out as we transition from Summer to Autumn clothing.

Quiz Night (October) – £851.68
Quiz night is always such a popular PTA event and this year was no exception. Jon Virgo did another sterling job of putting the quiz together and the team did a fabulous job of organising. 'The Wild Ones' were triumphant yet again, despite a strong challenge from 'Donald Trump's Barbers' who held the teachers to a very respectable 3rd place. Sadly, this was Sandra and David Berlin's last time organising the quiz as they have moved up to Sheffield so we will be looking to put a new committee together in 2024.

Kitchen Disco Danceathon (October) - £7238.44
What a memorable day this turned out to be! The first event of its kind, plans for the danceathon started small…and then grew, grew and grew some more! We received messages of support from countless well-known faces, all of whom were so kind as to take the time to wish the children good luck, and then, before we knew it, the BBC were joining us too. It was so fantastic to have captured snippets of the day on camera and to see the excitement as the children spotted themselves on TV. So much hard work went into the event but special mentions need to go to Holly from D2Dance for running the dance sessions and putting on a brilliant playground performance for parents, Phil Harrison for giving up his day to spin some tunes for us, and to Steve from Diamond Interior Contracts for sponsoring the event and allowing us to provide all the children with their very own danceathon t-shirt. After costs, we ended up smashing our £5k target and raising a phenomenal £7238 for our kitchen fund. It also showed JustGiving worked brilliantly as a fundraising platform – one to consider using for future events.

Bonfire & Fireworks Night (November) - £6646.09
The Bonfire and Fireworks event on the 5th November went off with a bang! Tickets sold out, the stalls were busy, kids loved the glow gifts, sweet tombola and giant candy floss, and the fireworks were simply spectacular. We are delighted to have raised a record amount of money for this event – a whopping £6850! We had over 100 volunteers helping out on the day so it was a real team effort on the day but the fabulous Fireworks committee did all the hard work in the build up and we are so pleased their efforts paid off.

Christmas Jumper Sale (December) - £148.32
This was our second preloved Christmas jumper sale and it went really well, despite the jumpers getting a little soggy when on display in the rainy playground! We are very grateful to parents and children for their donations of Christmas jumpers-past, and for their support of this eco-initiative.

Christmas Wreath Workshops (December) – £171.59
We were very excited to have hosted our first wreath-making workshops in December, in collaboration with The Tunbridge Wells Flower Company and with the help of Naomi Green. Our beautiful Orchard Library was the perfect setting for letting festive creativity flow and we were seriously impressed with the end results. So wonderful to know everything used to make the wreaths was grown locally too. A really lovely, festive event which we can hopefully build on for next year.

Christmas Cards - £438.67
A huge thanks to Katie Harle who helped co-ordinate the creation of 200 plus Christmas cards for us again this year! The Christmas cards all looked fabulous when they arrived and we made a very respectable amount of money from them. The production and ordering process with the company we use is proving more cumbersome every year though so we will be looking at alternative options for next year.

Christmas Grotto - £478.71 (before Pantomine costs) & Carol Service – minus £20.97
The school Christmas countdown started with our Grotto day on 1st December - all of the children had a magical day, choosing gifts for their parents and meeting the big man himself! There was even a small snow flurry to add to the excitement! The celebrations then continued with a pantomime performance of 'The Wizard of Oz' from The Cat's Grin Theatre company the following week. Judging by the laughter coming from the children, they certainly enjoyed the show! The final week of term was host to the Christmas lunch, where the PTA provided eco-friendly crackers for the children, and the KS2 carol service where we served mulled wine and mince pies to parents.

Other:

Amazon Smile - £78.95
Amazon closed this facility in February so sadly this is no longer an option for us.

Cake Sales - £825.77
The class cake sales continued to prove popular, with most sales making between £100-£150. Rather than spending the funds raised on individual class items, this year the teachers have decided to club together to put this money towards much-needed new playground and sports equipment, with the PTA covering the difference.

Easyfundraising - £91.81
This is definitely an under-used simple way of making money for the school whilst you shop. One to start promoting again in 2024.

Pre-loved Uniform – £324
The pre-loved uniform team had a fantastic year with 3 table-top sales taking place, including at the Pippin parents' induction. The old ICT suite worked well as a location for the Winter sale and will now be used for future sales too.

Our School Lottery - £713.00
Our School Lottery launched in the Summer and in the first 6 months, we've raised over £700 for our school and have had over 30 winners from the school. This is a great regular source of income and one we can certainly promote more over the coming months.

South East Water - £500
We were fortunate to be provided with a charitable donation of £500 from South East Water – this was funded from a community fund they set up by way of apology for problems with water supply in the area earlier in the year. This cheque was presented to us by Greg Clark MP at a ceremony in Tunbridge Wells.

How the PTA supported the school?

Through the events outlined above, the PTA has raised **£30,920** for our school in 2023 and has donated a huge **£42,335** towards a variety of vital school projects. What a Herculean effort from all involved!

We started the year with a sizeable donation of **£15,000 to the SEN Hub** – a space which has already made such a difference to both pupils and staff by providing a calm and secluded environment for additional support and learning.

After this donation, all attention moved towards the **new school kitchen**, with funding from the Diocese being granted early Spring. We decided to throw everything into our fundraising efforts and are delighted that we were able to donate **£22,200** to the kitchen fund as a result. In addition to this, we managed to secure a charitable donation of **£5000** from the John Collings trust which also went towards the kitchen costs. We know the children are thoroughly enjoying the meals which are now freshly prepared on site, and it was such a joy to be able to attend the official opening of the kitchen in November and to sample the food for ourselves.

We are also delighted to have donated **£1500** towards the school's ongoing **counselling and wellbeing** programme, and **£1850 to school trips and experience days.**

Other lower value items purchased using the PTA money included:

- **New keyboard stands**
- **Year 6 dictionaries**
- **Contributions to the Year 6 yearbooks**
- **Pencil cases and stationary for Year 3 students**

The treasurer's report details all costs and proceeds.

Looking to 2024, thanks to the runaway success of events such as the Kitchen Disco and Fireworks, we are opening the year with a very healthy bank balance of around £15,000. This has put us in the very fortunate position of being able to already start to plan for our next projects. It's safe to say we won't be resting on our laurels and have already put the wheels in motion to begin the long-awaited renovation of the old ICT suite, with a view to transforming it into a multi-purpose Arts Space. We have received quotes for the work and are hoping this will begin this side of Easter.

At our last PTA meeting of 2023, we also agreed to funding new sports and playground equipment for the children, such as hockey sticks, cricket bats, hula hoops, a highstepper (one to Google!) and more. This will benefit all of the children in the school and will also give our wonderful Year 5 & 6 sports leaders the chance to plan some exciting new lunch break activities for the other children using the new equipment. We also need to say a very big thank you to Wells Spa Plumbing for agreeing to sponsor 2 new sets of KS2 football kits for use in competitions. We are certain the children will be wearing the kits with pride as they score goal after goal for the school.

We are exceptionally proud of what we have achieved as a PTA in 2023. We certainly asked a lot from our committee members and from the school community, but we hope everyone can see the huge difference this additional funding is already making to the children and staff.

We really must thank our fantastic committee members and event leaders for the continued hard work and energy they put into making every event a success and, just as importantly, fun!

Notable mention needs to go to the truly remarkable Charlotte Williams who is stepping down from the PTA at this AGM. It is Charlotte's last year as Speldhurst School parent and we will be incredibly sorry to see her go. Charlotte has contributed so much to the school – we have her to thank for our stunning Orchard Library which she designed and project managed back in 2019, and for countless events, especially Quiz and Fireworks Nights. Even in her last few months with us, she is helping us push on with the Arts Room project, being so generous with her time and expertise. She will be much missed by all of us in the PTA and wider school.

A thank you too to all the families and local businesses who have contributed to and volunteered at our events to make everything we do possible.

Last, but by no means least, a very big thank you to Mrs Hayward, Mr Howe, Martin Steibelt, Katie Harle, the office team and all the teachers for their ongoing support. enthusiasm and encouragement.

Sean Willis (PTA Chair, 2023)