**Mountfields Lodge PSA AGM 2022/23**

**Chair’s report**

It feels like the start of the school year was a very long time ago.

We decided to make more of an effort to welcome our new families to the school community at the start of the school year. We put together little welcome packs for Foundation parents/carers which were given out on their child’s first morning or afternoon at school. We also ran a free coffee morning in the hall on the day of the children’s first full day at school. There was a lovely atmosphere and it was a great way to chat to people about what the PSA does. We will definitely try and repeat this again next year.

We got our fundraising off to a good start with samosa and preloved uniform sale before October half term. We’ve found that combining a food sale of some sort with the uniform sale works well and returns a good profit for the effort on the day. Unfortunately, the weather was against us for this sale but some were grateful for the excuse to shelter from the rain in the small hall.

We managed to organise two discos this year – one in November and one in March. Both were profitable and enjoyed by the children who came. We made some adjustments to the timings for the March disco and ran 3 shorter after school discos. We appreciate that the shorter discos are a pain for parents but they did seem to work better for the children and I think we will stick with these timings going forward. The discos are also a great way for parents to get involved and hopefully this then leads to them volunteering at other events too.

Once again the school community got behind our winter hamper raffle in donating items and buying raffle tickets. The staff are getting more and more inventive with the ways in which they decorate their hampers which makes judging them harder. Class Garnet were bought various card games for a fun afternoon as their treat and to use at wet break and lunchtimes. Class Coral had a visit from Mrs Sprinkles (ice cream van).

Everything seemed to kick off in the second half of the spring term. As well as our second disco we had Year 6 leavers’ hoodies and t-shirt order forms coming in and a Krispy Kreme doughnut and preloved uniform sale. To avoid clashes with various things in the school calendar we had to organise all these close together but it’s definitely something to avoid in future if possible. We were very grateful to the extra volunteers who helped with the sale as we were really struggling to get enough volunteers who could help with setting up. This is a theme to the year, not enough of our volunteers have spare time during the working week to help with these things.

Thanks to Laura Harding, the Year 6 hoodies went very smoothly this year. It was great that we managed to get them out early in the summer term so the children could get lots of wear out of them.

This year we tried out a new project with Foundation Stage. The children drew self portraits early in the summer term and we used a supplier to create class tea towels, which parents/carers could order online. Parents/carers also had the option to buy a range of products with just their child’s portrait on. We felt it was a nice way to mark the end of their child’s first year at school and it should end up raising us just under £100. Thank you to Emily Coates for overseeing this project.

Earlier in the summer term we applied to Charnwood Borough Council’s Community Grant fund. This is to cover the cost of a new shed (to replace the embarrassment of a structure that we have at the moment!). We have actually applied for money to buy two sheds – one to become an easy access dedicated uniform storage/shop and the other to store all our event equipment. We should hear whether we have been successful right at the end of term. If we don’t get this grant then we will look for our sources of funding we can apply to and we may consider some one-off fundraising activities specifically aimed at funding a new shed. We need proper storage in order to put on the events we do and to continue with our commitment to preloved uniform.

We have started work to fund improvements to the library at school and this is our main funding focus going into next year. We have met with the amazing volunteer librarians as well as Mr Hoare, Mrs Mock and the premises team. Our plan is to have the room redecorated, buy more furniture to complement or replace what’s there and make the space more appealing to the children.

And finally, the Summer Fete. We are still equal parts exhausted and elated! It is incredible that we are able to pull off an event of this size as a team of volunteers who all have other jobs during the week. There is a huge appetite for an event like this from the school community – as evidenced by the fact that we had more than 1,100 people attending. We can’t put on an event on this scale without an enormous team of volunteers. We need at least 50 volunteers at any one time during the event! We had an incredible turnout from staff on the day and parent and grandparent helpers. But it is stressful planning the event when people are so reluctant to come forward and volunteer. We learnt so much from the previous year which helped it to go even better from our point of view. Despite rising costs and the cost of living crisis we managed to pretty much match the profit we made in 2022 – which had been a record year. Amy will update us on the finances shortly.

From our fundraising and events to the team behind it all. This year we welcomed two new members to our committee – Ruth and Paul. Whether she likes it or not Ruth is now my go-to person for all things risk assessment and Paul seemed to thrive getting stuck into the fete set up last weekend. Thank you both for stepping forward and contributing.

Thank you to the whole PSA committee for bearing with me and getting stuck in whenever and wherever you are able to. A special word of thanks to Amy for our incredibly organised bookkeeping and prompt payments and Laura Harding for always being willing to say yes to any job you can throw at her – I have started banning her from taking on too much!

Thank you too to the staff who have supported us including the office, kitchen and premises teams who are probably impacted the most by our plans and events!

Sadly we have to say goodbye to five of our committee members this year as their children move on from Mountfields. Helen Webster has been a Mountfields parent for a long time and her involvement with the PSA long predates mine, previously serving as Secretary. She’s also our source of super shredded paper for lucky dip– hopefully she can still be our supplier next year! Anne Swann is the queen of raffles and has spent more time in school processing PSA forms over the last few years than most others. It was great to see her go out on a high last weekend. Wilma Howell has brought her artistic flair and creativity to the PSA during her time on the committee. She is always enthusiastic and can be relied on to make anything look better on a limited budget. Thank you to all of them.

And finally, my Vice Chair Laura Alexander-Hardy. Where do I start with this one? Laura reluctantly took on the Chair role when it looked like the PSA would fold and for the last 3 years has been my Vice Chair. She can always be relied on to work incredibly hard both in the lead up to an event and on the day. She keeps my sanity in check, listens to my ‘occasional’ moans and backs me and the team up 100% all the time. What more could you ask for? She also brings with her a brilliant sense of humour, compassion for others and loads of common sense. All necessities for being on the PSA. She promises she’ll come back and help with the fete next year, which I am minuting here. I honestly don’t know what we’ll do without her and I hope the school community appreciates everything she has done as much as we do.

We really need to recruit ‘fresh blood’ this year. Next year Amy will stand down as treasurer, Laura will leave and I am intending that this will be my last year as chair. We want to hand over to others while we are still around so we can be on hand to help and support the transition. We have put a lot in place that will hopefully make it much easier for those who follow on and a bit less scary. Please use this year as a chance to try out getting involved in the PSA. It really is worthwhile and you will get so much from it.

Finally, on behalf of the PSA, I would like to use this opportunity to express our thanks to Mr Hoare for his hard work and dedication to Mountfields during his time as Head. He has supported all our events and fundraising despite his ridiculous workload and we have felt valued and appreciated by him for the work we do. We’ve tried to persuade him to come back for a turn in the stocks next year but I’m not expecting to see him!