Colyton Grammar School PA
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Chair Kathryn Klaentschi

Colyton Grammar School Parents' Association
Registered Charity No. 273999

Chair's Report

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
9th October 2024

Achievements over the past year:

1. **Fund Raising Events:**
    a. **Festive Fair -** The Festive Fair 2023 was a fun-filled event with over 40 local crafters, makers and artisans coming to the Cottrill Hall to sell their wares. Footfall wasn't as large as we hoped for, but the weather was against us. Stallholders found the pitch price high compared to other local fairs but there needs to be an alternative revenue stream for the PA to maximise on this event otherwise the revenue does not match the woman hours put in to putting it on. We had a wonderful Colyton student who played festive music; more school involvement in terms of footfall and performance would be welcomed. My thanks to Nell Robertson for leading on this event.

    b. **Garden and Food Festival** – We had the most stalls that we have ever had and good footfall on a day where the weather was kind to us. Our advertising was enhanced with the addition of Andrea Hodges to the team, bringing Instagram and general marketing expertise. We re-introduced a sponsorship option and managed to attract a well-suited sponsor with Rocket Gro. Seaton Majorettes performed for us as well as demonstrations from stallholders. We learnt a lot from running this event: we were light on the garden element as we needed to advertise for garden related stallholders at the beginning of the school year; the bar does not sell well and is unnecessary for future fairs; cream teas did not sell well as we had an amazing array of homemade cakes from our parents.

    c. **Summer Fete** – The PA ran the usual 2nd hand uniform, 2nd hand books, BBQ and cake stall. All stalls were very successful with 2nd hand uniform benefitting from lots of sales to incoming Yr 7 who had been invited to the fete.

d. **Colyford Goose Fayre** – The PA continues to run a 'Roll a Penny' and a 'Hoopla' stall. We were able to attract some new local families to help this year and hope we can add more to the mix next year so that Heidi L can finally 'retire'. Thanks to Heidi for running with this opportunity every year.

e. **Menopause Talk** – we were very fortunate to have a parent, Dr Kathryn Patrick, host an evening where all things menopause were discussed and questions answered. With over 100 in attendance, early feedback has been fantastic. My thanks to Clare-Louise Hutchinson for instigating the evening and to Hannah Oram and her team for picking up the reins and enabling the event last night.

2. **Fund Raising Activities**
   a. **2nd Hand Uniform** – Second hand uniform continues to be an important service offered by school with increased demand from both new and existing parents. Donations can be sporadic and regular reminders in PA news help at key times of the year - summer when years 11/13 leave for example.

      This year we have also been able to support pupil premium students financially by providing free uniform bundles.

      School events really help promote the service and we sold lots of items at the Christmas Fair, Taster Day for year 7 and Garden Fair in particular. School reception taking in donations has been beneficial.

      PE kit sales have really struggled with the introduction of the new kit. When this starts to come through, sales will improve - estimate overall sales down by 50% this year.

      The most popular items (and money makers) are coats, blazers, ties and skirts (and PE kit when available) - anything with a school logo is a win. I've also seen an uplift in sales of other items such as cricket whites, bats, hockey sticks, even trainers might be an option for the future.

      My thanks to Sarah Hawkins for running the 2nd Hand Uniform service over many years including regular attendance at events.

b. **Winter Draw - T**ickets were launched on parent pay with option to buy in bundles of 5 or multiples thereof. After several reminders via socials, PA news and WhatsApp groups, ticket sales were a healthy £2285. This compares with £2815 sold in Dec 2022. Prizes included a few donated vouchers, some of which had been donated earlier in the year, with a total of £285 vouchers paid for out of funds.

c. **Summer Draw** - Tickets were also launched on parent pay with option to buy in bundles of 5 or multiples thereof. We also made ticket purchases available via the PA Website. With the usual reminders via socials, PA news and WhatsApp groups, ticket sales were a healthy £1770. Donated prizes included 2 Exeter Chiefs tickets, CL Aesthetics laser hair removal course, 4 Pecorama tickets, 2 x £50 vouchers for VX3 (PE Kit supplier), 4 x Row to Fit classes, 4 x Reboot Roller Disco group skate tickets and a £10 Thomas Moore voucher. We also spent £245 on vouchers included John Lewis, M&S, Darts Farm, Greendale and Honiton Sports.

   My thanks to Frankie Phillips for running both Winter and Summer Draws.

d. **500 Club** – with 216 members last year, we created a total profit £3,400. Take up has been slow at the beginning of this year but this will jump with recent comms and the ability for friends and family to purchase tickets outside of ParentPay.

   Thanks to Jenny Wood for running the 500 club over recent years and most recently to Stephen Carp who has picked up the mantle from her.

e. **Refreshments** – we have continued to offer refreshments at various evening concerts and drama productions over the year typically raising close to £100 at each event. Thanks to everyone who has helped at the events and particular thanks to Caroline Pearce who often saves the day manning the servery with members of her family.

3. **Community building**
   a. **Website** – our thanks to Seb Swana who has taken over management of our technology including re-writing the website, modernising it to follow a similar style to the main school website and enabling a 'shop'.

We hope to build on the shop capabilities over the coming year to extend our fund-raising capabilities to audiences beyond the immediate parents and guardians of students. The site includes some never-before-seen aerial footage of the school on our home page. Our New Parents page has been extended to include a parent's perspective on the support offered for pupil premium students.

b. **Social Media** – our thanks to Kirsty Ford who did an amazing job on our Facebook site, notably with her stallholder stories ahead of events. Further thanks to Andrea Hodges who has now elevated our presence on Instagram, making use of our YouTube channel too.

c. **WhatsApp Groups** – we now have years 7 to 11 with PA supported WhatsApp groups. Notably this year we created the groups ready for the Year 7 Induction Day in June. This was received very positively by parents enabling them to support each other prior to the children starting school with some classes having summer meet ups ahead term start. Thank you to Caroline Thomas for administrating these and pushing out PA Comms when requested.

d. **PA News –** We took the opportunity to publish PA News using Microsoft Sway this year giving us the ability to track reading levels. We believe that we are not engaging sufficiently with a weekly edition. Recognising that we now have class WhatsApp groups throughout the lower school where we can send out timely messages, we plan to re-imagine and re-launch the newsletter on a monthly basis next term. Our thanks to Louise Huntley for diligently producing PA News over the last 2 years.

e. **Book Clubs -** We have 6 thriving branches of book club in Exeter, Exmouth & Budleigh, Seaton & Colyford, Bridport, Sidmouth and Somerset. They meet every half term and there is always great feedback on the books, often the groups are split over whether they liked it or not and very occasionally there is a standout book loved by all. This year we have had 15 new joiners from year 7. The leaders of each branch are really helpful and can be easily contacted for meeting details and newcomers are warmly welcomed. Chat is not confined to books and many find it a great opportunity to talk about school life and get questions answered from those with children who are further up the school.

My thanks to Caroline Pearce who co-ordinates across the bookclubs, regularly promoting them through PA News and the dedicated Facebook page as well as running the highly successful 2nd hand book stall at our events.

f. **New Parents' Tea Party** – this was a very busy event this year and we ran out of mugs! Lots of chat as parents connected with the parents of their child's friends.

g. **Old Style PE Kit –** our thanks to Sasha Whitaker who has enabled 78kg of old-style PE Kit to be re-used in the poorest areas of South Africa. She will try and do more of this as more kit is outgrown.

4. **Support for the School**
We provided £15,000 of matched funding to the school on Giving Day and were then able to donate a further £25,000 to the school at the Summer Fete. The monies have been used to upgrade the sound and lighting equipment in Cottrill Hall and provide new furnishings to Take Five (now known as Maddy's).

5. **Volunteer Engagement**
We have had some amazing support at events this year although it is regularly the same core group that works on events ahead of the event day. We invited new Y7 parents to join the helper group for the PA at both the Y7 Induction Day and the New Parents' Tea Party resulting in over 20 new helpers. We have sadly lost a handful of familiar faces as their children leave the school.

Challenges Encountered

Despite all our successes last year, we continue to struggle to fill roles in our committee and find event leads. It is with sadness that we are unable to run the Festive Fair or Garden and Food Festival in the coming year. Our struggles are, in part, due to a legacy of Covid with some year groups poorly represented in the PA helper group coupled with a knowledge loss from the period of PA inactivity, particularly for running community-based events. As a result, the core committee members take on multiple roles whilst building their knowledge of event management from scratch. We recognise that we have not helped ourselves as we do not have 'run books' detailing how to successfully run an event thus making leadership roles more onerous. This is therefore an area of focus for the forthcoming year.

Plans for the Upcoming Year

1. **New fundraising events:** we are looking at new ways of fundraising that are less onerous for organisers. The events should have a wider catchment for the CGS community e.g. online quizzes.

2. **Better exploiting external fund-raising opportunities:** we would like to have focused marketing activities to increase the update of easyfundraising and ask the CGS community to access charitable funding that their employers may offer.

3. **Extend the committee:** making roles smaller so that they are sustainable over multiple years to retain and share knowledge.

4. **Policies and procedures:** improving the governance of the PA through leveraging our ParentKind membership for policy guidance and create handbooks/run books for roles and events to make them easier to run.

Conclusion

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the parents and volunteers who have supported our efforts this year. Your engagement and commitment enable us to provide much needed funds to support the student experience at the school and support the parents.

As we move forward with new faces on the core Committee, I encourage all parents to participate actively. Your ideas and feedback are invaluable. Together, we can make a lasting impact on our children's education and experience at Colyton Grammar School.

Kathryn Klaentschi
Chair, Colyton Grammar School Parents' Association