



## Chair's Report 2018-2019

The Friends of School have had another busy year with a number of fundraising and social activities aimed at strengthening our school community.

The first half-term of the 2018 school year saw a brand-new Friends of School event: a Comedy Night organised jointly with WGGGS' Parent Association. This was the first time we had held a joint event, something both schools were keen to do, and hope to continue to do, with other events potentially planned. The event took advantage of our new fabulous events venue - the top floor of the STEM Centre at WBGGS and with around 185 tickets sold, was a lively, fun evening. We were entertained by 3 professional comedians and a compere for the evening, and with the high-quality acts interspersed with short intervals, everyone had an opportunity to catch up with friends over a drink and much laughter, as well as helping to raise around £1,200 for each school.

We had a very successful re-gifting appeal in January when parents were asked to donate unwanted Christmas presents to be used as raffle prizes at various events throughout the year. The response was very good and has undoubtedly helped increase profits at events where they have been used, and so I'm sure we will run this appeal again this Christmas.

In January this year, Katie Ramsden who had run the school uniform shop almost singlehandedly for several months had to stop doing so, due to changing work and family commitments. A plea for volunteers to help run the shop weekly on Wednesdays after school and one Saturday a half-term saw several parents step forward. We now have a rota of parents for both Wednesdays and Saturdays and so the shop is able to open and is often very busy. I hadn't appreciated until this year just what an important resource this shop is. As well as providing a valuable service to parents when their sons have mislaid or outgrown uniform and sports kit, the shop is also, despite charging very low prices, a huge contributor to our fundraising efforts, raising over £900 last year. We are hopefully moving to a new, bigger shop after half-term and are always grateful for donations of good quality, clean uniform and sports kit – these can be left in school reception at any time.

Another source of fundraising is the Family Draw, which is our lottery-style draw taking place each term. This has been somewhat overlooked in recent years, and there are only about 25-30 families registered currently. We promoted the draw quite heavily to new Year 7 parents at the Fun Day in July and at the beginning of this school year, but continued efforts are required to increase the uptake. One of the Exec. Committee members, Jean Ryba, has taken on the role of administrating and managing the Family Draw and hopefully with a new, up-dated flyer, and it being more in front of mind this year we will increase the money it makes – and in turn the prize money will increase!

The annual Quiz Night was once again a huge success, in fact the best ever - selling out 3 weeks before with around 170 people squeezing into the STEM centre and stretching their minds with a variety of questions posed by Mr Cooksey. We changed the food this year, providing a 2-course

Indian buffet, prepared by Punjabi Gourmet, which went down extremely well. As well as being a most enjoyable evening, it was a great fundraiser, raising over £2,700.

Unfortunately, shortly after the success of the other events, we had to take the hugely difficult decision of cancelling the planned Summer Ball, due to very low numbers. This, as well as being extremely disappointing, had a considerable financial impact due to the hotel's strict cancellation policy which, despite a concerted effort by myself and Mr Cooksey on the Friends' behalf, they refused to waive at all.

This led us to recognise a need to consult parents once again on the types of events and activities they wish to engage with. We didn't manage to do this last year, but hope to do so soon, in the hope of continuing to offer a programme of well-supported and financially successful events.

Towards the end of the Sumer we continued our "Special Events" programme with another of the very popular Baking Masterclasses led by Mrs Zachariah. The most recent class was on Shortcrust Pastry and a few boys attended along with their parents, making a Lemon Tart. We have asked for a donation of £5 at each of the recent classes and these donations, along with a "top-up" from the Friends, have enabled the Food Tech department to purchase a digital camera for use in lessons. Another class will be held in November 2019. Our thanks to Mrs Zachariah for continuing to support the Friends of School activities in this way. We would like to find other members of staff who would be willing to host activities such as these. We also hope to extend the Special Events Programme again next year, although this is as always dependent on volunteers.

Alongside the events and activities listed above, we have also continued to provide support for school activities through serving drinks at Parent Welcome & Information evenings; providing a bar and raffle at the Music Concerts and Drama Productions; giving much-needed refreshments to staff at Parent-Teacher evenings; providing a BBQ & other refreshments and selling uniform & kitbags at the New to Year 7 Fun Day; as well as running the Big Raffle.

Our dedicated Friends of School website [www.friendsofwbgs.org](http://www.friendsofwbgs.org) continues to serve as a valuable tool to help promote events, enable bookings and provide a source of information on the school and Friends' activities. We hope to continue to drive traffic to this as much as possible with a view to it becoming a source of revenue through selling advertising space over the longer-term.

We have a small, but very important group of parents who enable the Friends of School to continue to exist and provide all of the activities we do, and I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to each and every one of you – I could not do this role without your hard work, help and support.

Two officials of the Committee, the Secretary and Treasurer, are stepping down at this AGM and some members of the Executive Committee have also stepped down as their sons have now left the school. We therefore need to fill these positions, as well as finding more people who would like to get involved with the Friends. Whatever your skill or interest, and however much time you can give, even if just half an hour – it will always be welcomed and very much appreciated. Please do get in touch and we'd love to welcome you on board to help achieve our shared goal of raising funds to provide resources that enrich the school life and education of our sons.

Thank you for your continued support.

Amanda Rafferty – Chair, Friends of WBGS

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