

Chair's Report 2017/18

First, I want to celebrate the fact that we gave over £10,000 to the school last year- phenomenal achievement for our little group. Really proud of us all and the contribution we have made and really grateful for all the help and support over the year.

FOTS donations to school 2017/18 £10,000+

- Thornden Young Carers £550
- Simon Says at Thornden £500
- 10 Resuscitation Dummies £500 plus extra 10 dummies donated...
- **Year 7 Courtyard garden £1000 via Aviva**
- K'nex for STEM club £500 via NATS
- Visualisers for RE £160
- History Block Wall Art £500
- Duke of Edinburgh Kit £900
- Warhammer Club £70
- Software support for dyslexic students £1000
- Design and Technology Lego Robot competition £480
- MFL Plays, Spelling Bee and Oktoberfest £450
- Pastoral Support Resources £250
- Wessex Literary Festival programmes £80
- Hockey Goalkeeping Pads £360
- **New Y7 'Challenge Tuesdays' £100**
- The Hub's Netflix subscription £80
- Classroom library trial £50
- Women's Group £100
- Thornden Live! Blog domain £80
- World Challenge £200 loan
- Young Health Champions £900.
- Graphics department: a replacement flatbed sublimation heat press for use in lessons and available to clubs - £250.
- Tech department: a replacement linebender / strip heater £343.
- RS department artefacts to help enrich lessons £100.
- **Transition resources for potentially disadvantaged Y7 children- £100.**

- The Music department: Magix Music Maker software for KS3 - £432

Huge thanks to David who calmly gets on with all the treasurer stuff. Maths is really not my thing and so it is fantastic to have someone who understands it and makes it look effortless. I know that a lot goes on behind the scenes in terms of admin of the donation scheme and this year also getting us GDPR compliant as well as preparing for tonight, so a massive thank you, David.

Tricia Crowther is stepping down from FOTS. Some of you may not know her well as she has had a period of ill health but she has been part of the team for many years (longest serving member) and has been an invaluable resource as she is on the staff as well as having had kids here. The Shed and its courtyard and the y7 courtyard garden are just part of her legacy. Impossible to replace her but it would be fantastic to have another staff member get involved if possible...

We are very grateful to Rob and the time and energy he puts in to FOTS, drumming up and presenting bids and promoting us to the staff. Thank you, Rob – we couldn't do without you!

And to everyone else who has helped whether through the donation scheme or on our teas and coffees or provided cake or sorting uniform or with the Y7 event or the open day or with newsletters or finding corporate funding – really every bit of success is down to us as a team. A huge thank you to everyone here who has helped in any way over the past 12 months and to our kids who help out and families who release us to do stuff. I understand that people need to dip in and out of FOTS as life gets in the way but even being able to email an increasing list of names for help is encouraging. Last year I was feeling very overwhelmed so it has been a huge help having other people taking on bits of responsibility and I hope that we can continue to share the load going forwards.

Looking through the minutes from last year, there are still things that we can improve on. It's a shame I didn't meet up with Su or attend a staff meeting to talk about FOTS – maybe you could help facilitate that Rob?, we are still off the school's radar a bit so for example we are not automatically on the list for a calendar, we wanted our own fots newsletter but the implementation of GDPR got in the way though it is worth a revisit, we ought to get some donated by fots stickers, most teachers still don't get back to us and thank us by email for successful bids...

So why do we do what we do? Why do we come and serve teas and coffees or donate cakes or sort uniform or turn up for an AGM or sign up to the donation scheme? Aside from the obvious glamour... 😊 Speaking personally:

Because I recognise that these are formative years for kids, that having access to experiences at school can spark a lifelong passion or interest, via clubs and activities that enrich our kids' life now and in the future, not just for my kids but for all the kids who go to Thornden.

That targeted resources can help great teachers do an even better job

That for some kids, life is really tough and school can play a massive role in supporting them and enabling them to build resilience so they can cope with challenges in the future.

That it is important to build a sense of community and partnership so we support school but also engage parents because we can help lighten the load

For me, it's these reasons – for you it might be something totally different...

Hopefully we are ready to do it all over again this year!