



*Raising money for the 'extras' which enrich the experience of all pupils at our outstanding School*

*and developing a sense of community*

February 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

Every parent or carer with a pupil at Thornden automatically becomes a member of the **Friends of Thornden School (FOTS)**, Thornden's equivalent of a PTA. Today, with the full support of the School and the Governors, FOTS are launching a **Gift Aid Donation Scheme** and we hope that you, as one of our Friends, will consider contributing to it.

As a mum of four, when my oldest started Thornden in 2012 I have to admit I was very relieved to find out that those seemingly endless requests throughout Primary School for 'cake-on-a-plate for the PTA' were finally over! We attended the FOTS Year 7 Welcome Event as a family but, other than seeing a sign for a car boot sale and picking up some second hand uniform at the Open Day, we were - I suspect like many - oblivious to any PTA activity.

That was, at least, until last year when I happened to attend my second ever FOTS meeting and was asked to be Chair...

As it turns out, over the years FOTS have raised thousands of pounds for Thornden. Indeed it's the financial support from our Friends in the past which is still benefitting all our current students. FOTS' money has contributed to the existing resources of many clubs as well as to Thornden Hall, History days, Library events, school minibuses and team sports kit to name but a few.

FOTS have just released the penultimate £1000 from our reserves which will be spent this term on resources for The Hub and the Go-kart club, Spelling Bee prizes, Food Tech equipment, an Author event, some more team netball kit as well as my personal favourite, a tortoise for the Science Department! Money raised by the first FOTS Own Clothes day on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February will be shared between the fantastic Thornden Young Carers Group and the future furnishing of the Quiet Room project, which will provide a readily available safe space for any pupil who needs some emotional 'time out' for whatever reason.

As you might guess, the need for money for the 'extras' has not gone away over the years. In fact, if anything, it has grown. Thornden is facing unprecedented government cuts to its core budget and yet it still wishes to provide the tremendous range of free clubs and educational experiences which inspire and enthuse our children. The need is growing – yet, for several years now, FOTS has struggled to raise significant sums from the events which it runs and we now just have a few hundred pounds left in the bank.

This is where we hope that you, as one of our Friends, will be able to help.

In a world where we all find ourselves increasingly 'time poor', we recognise that the vast majority of our Friends are *always* going to be unable to commit their time and energy to FOTS' meetings or special events - though we are incredibly grateful to the small group of parents and staff who are able to do so.

However, we also believe that very many of our Friends would still welcome the chance to support our School and the opportunities available to our children in a tangible way. For this reason, FOTS consider that the best way forward is a Donation Scheme.

It would be wonderful if, through the generosity of parents and carers like you and me, the School could be released to focus their budget on their core purpose and the body of Friends could come together to provide the financial support to fund things like the clubs and extra-curricular experiences which help make an education at Thornden really special.

**Today we are asking all our Friends to consider setting up a regular Standing Order to FOTS.** Even if families in the school were able to give just £2 or £5 a month (or an annual amount of your choice) that would make an enormous difference to the opportunities available to all pupils.

FOTS will be able to **Gift Aid** money donated through the scheme as we are a charity. The security of a regular income will allow us to release money regularly to the School to benefit current pupils and create a legacy for future ones. As a Friend, this is *your* charity, so you will always be most welcome to attend FOTS meetings and have your say in how the money is spent. There will be regular updates in the newsletter and on the website too.

Whilst we hope that all our Friends will feel able to give of their time or their money, we do naturally recognise that not everyone is in a position to be able to give financially at this point. The Donation Scheme is voluntary and will be run entirely separately from the School so there will be no possibility of partiality or prejudice. If you have any questions about the scheme, further information can be found on the FOTS page of the school website. Alternatively, please email me, Polly, at [fots@thornden.hants.sch.uk](mailto:fots@thornden.hants.sch.uk) and I will do my best to answer.

Please would you pop your completed Gift Aid and Standing Order forms in an envelope and return them to Thornden Reception marked for the attention of the FOTS Treasurer who will then process them on your behalf.

**May I take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your generosity which will benefit all Thornden pupils, both now and in the future.**

Yours faithfully

Polly Gleeson (Chair of FOTS)

PS It would be great if you were able to return the forms promptly as it will give me the opportunity to update you in the March newsletter as to the early success of the Scheme. Thank you very much.