

AGM July 2023

Chair's report

Before I start with the Chair report, I just want to thank Jayne and Lana who have been amazing this year taking on the Secretary and Finance positions for the PTA. We do aim to make it 'lite touch' if possible and the minimum amount of work and responsibility, but they have both gone above and beyond (am thinking the crazy road trips to Cost Co for starters!). Johanna Horn isn't here this evening but she is another parent who unfailingly puts her hand up to help with everything, including recently sorting, washing and drying all the second hand uniform for the sale. Lorien and the bar teams have coped well volunteering to serve thirsty parents and kids at school events – whilst they have this honed to a fine art, we know that it is full on when everyone wants serving at once so we thank them all for their time and patience!

The last year has seen the growth of the Friends of The Norwood School fully into all school years. The year group Whats Apps are active with parents helping each other, demystifying homework, school apps and lost property. We now have a WhatsApp for the parents of children with SEN and they have regular meetups outside of school to support each other. Some years have also set up their own class groups. They mostly self-police but we have a 'rep' in each who can keep an eye on things if required. The face book page and page on the school website support this with the promotion of events/dates and factual information.

We set up a new starter group each year for when the year 6's receive their school allocations, reaching out to parents to contact their primary schools. This year it took off and we have 124 parents already active in the group, arranging meetups before school starts in September, helping each other and generally easing the passage into secondary school for their children, something that many of us didn't have due to Covid. We even had 3 parents volunteer from this new group to help us with the uniform sale on the 18th July before they had even formally joined the school! Thank you to Emma, Mey Yee and Ania.

Events-wise, the school year started with the Macmillan coffee morning, where the PTA helped the school raise money by running the cake stand and providing cakes and treats for sale. We are involved in many events over the school year, whether it is running bars to support school events such as The Norwood Factor, So You Think You Can Dance and the PAPAs or PTA events such as Hot Chocolate Friday's, the incredibly popular Comedy night (where tickets sold out in 7 minutes!) or second-hand uniform sales. These raise much needed funds from ever generous parents and friends of the school and provide our regular fund source.

Another regular source of income has been the estate agent boards twice a year. Unfortunately, with Douglas & Gordon going into liquidation in January, we lost our sponsor. We were fortunate to receive our monies from the January board run after a little digging and pressure but won't be able to continue with them sadly as they paid very well. We have a potential new board sponsor, Northwood Estate Agents, who we will hopefully commence with in October 2024. More details will follow in due course and a revamp of how this is done. Easyfundraising.org continues to drip feed funds having now raised nearly £850. Regular reminders to join this are posted in the WhatsApp groups and facebook. There is also a link on the website PTA page.

In terms of outgoings, we keep these to the minimum we can so that as much of the monies we raise go back into the school. We continue to pay our annual subscription to Parentkind the UK PTA body which also covers our insurance and is a source of information and ideas.

The school hasn't managed to purchase the alcohol sales license as yet so we continue to do this event by event which is not ideal but does work.

Because the PTA started from scratch, there was no collateral to inherit. Therefore we have had to invest funds in buying items to help the PTA function – the largest item purchased this year has been the PTA shed which was kindly assembled by Chet and a team of helpers on a very wet and windy morning! This is located down behind the sports hall and contains the PTA bar alcohol, soft drinks and snacks, cups, cake sale items like platters/jugs/cake domes plus racks, hangers and bags of uniform for second-hand sales and books that have been donated for sale. We still need to purchase some shelving from IKEA in order to make it more organised inside and this needs to be actioned in September.

The fun part of the PTA fundraising is spending it! Our intention is that funds benefit as many students as we can across the school or ongoing. As Chair, I contacted the school to request staff to come back to us with their requests multiple times over the last 12 months and goods have been purchased on a 'first come, first served' basis.

We have completely kitted out the Food Tech department with many items from industrial stainless steel shelving to rubberised spoons and pyrex jugs. Members of staff were bringing in their own items to support the learning so we purchased dipping bowls, interesting shaped plates, fish kettles, cake stands and plates so that the GCSE students could expand their skills and show their food off appropriately. If you follow Norwood Eats on Instagram I am sure you will agree that across all the school years, the ambition is high and students will have honed this important life skill for themselves even if they don't go on to study for GCSE or A Level.

We have provided garden equipment for the garden club and chess sets for the chess club. Visual Arts had 3 new digital SLR cameras plus other items. The Graphics Department received 20 new wireless mouse/mice? We purchased robotic items to enable gifted science students to take part in an international robotics competition, and supported the new Film Studies course with headphones, light diffusers, iPad microphones, battery chargers, lightboxes for portrait photography and dolly systems for filming moving shots.

The new library space looks extremely smart now with the cube seating in the school colours and multiple racks, shelf separators and book poster holders to promote reading. You can follow their progress and suggestions on Norwood Reads on Instagram!

We have provided the Textiles departments with ongoing funds which so far have included 3 new sewing machines, storage carts, heavy duty tabling, steam irons and ironing boards, tailors dummies, 10 Wacom drawing tablets and 2 scanners to help with all the GCSE/A Level submissions this summer. We also supported science with microscope accessories, cameras and a fire syringe. I'm still interested to find out what that actually is!

Because of Covid, many of the students at Norwood had missed out on proms so we provided £750 to go towards the 6th form and year 11 proms this year plus £2000 towards the cost of transporting all years on their day out on the 18th July. This meant the school could use their funds to help students who otherwise might not have been able to afford to go.

We are in conversations with the sports department with regards to installing a bouldering climbing wall as a longer term higher value item and the SEN department is due to undergo a refurb to make it a more welcoming environment, suggested and funded by the PTA (although the school may be contributing funds as well). This will be paid for by the upcoming Quiz night organised by the SEN WhatsApp parents and part-funded by a donation from the PTA.

We are also looking to fund 3 new Vango 3 man tents for Duke of Edinburgh and I have recently received a list of musical instruments from the music department that can be addressed in September.

We have also had an amazing offer from Jaime Gili, renowned artist and parent within the school, to produce a mural in collaboration with the students. It is worth noting that all staff have been approached many times and the departments that have benefitted from PTA funding are those that have come back to us requiring additional items. Other departments may have what they require already. I will ensure that this is the case again in September with Jessie Nicholas.

Unfortunately along with the highs there are also lows, and we were all deeply saddened to hear of the death of Jefferson Jefford in the latter half of the summer term. I have been in contact with his mother to pass on our condolences and to suggest that the PTA could contribute to some sort of memorial. It might be that we plant a tree or offer an annual cup/bursary amount to be given to a student in year 9 who has the same interests or passions as he did. This is up for discussion and we can pick it up in September.

Due to delays with our accounts being signed off, we also are yet to achieve our charitable status. We do now have that approval though so this is the next achievement to tick off the list in 2023.

We should be very proud of what we have all contributed to and created at Norwood School over the last 18 months. It is hard to believe that none of this existed back then. Here's to an ongoing and successful year in 2023 and 2024.