

PTFA Chair's Report

Thursday 1st November 2018

I'd like to say a very warm welcome to Withycombe PTFA's AGM.

This, as most of you know, is my last Chair's report and it's difficult to know where to start. Withycombe Raleigh has and always will have a very special place in my heart, as it's a super school with a super team and I'm very grateful to each and every one of the Withycombe team, who have helped and supported me over the last three years as PTFA Chair. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life and I've had so much fun, not only during the last three years as Chair, but over the last near-on 10 years as part of Withycombe PTFA.

When we broke up for summer in July, I went home and flopped on my sofa with a cuppa and asked myself *'how on earth did you get through the year?'* I had been hoping for a nice easy year, but sometimes circumstances change events and I found myself working full-time in school, as well as carrying out the role of PTFA Chair. This has also proved to be incredibly rewarding as I got to spend my days working with the most important people at Withycombe; the children, which for me - and I know I speak on behalf of all our super committee - is what Withycombe PTFA is all about and the reason why we fundraise. It's to make sure we're able to give the children some super-fun times inside their own school, and raise the much-needed funds which are used to fund extra-curriculum activities, equipment, trips, shows etc. which the children love. Their appreciation for all that Withycombe PTFA provides for them has been expressed via the many thank you cards & posters the children have sent into the PTFA over the years and confirms that all the hard work is very worthwhile.

We kicked off our fundraising last year with a disco in October, which as usual was high in attendance, closely followed by a Bags2School collection. Bags2School always varies in amounts raised, but continues to be a very easy fundraiser. During November we held our special Bedtime Stories night for our new foundation children; this event is probably our smallest event but is very popular and it's always lovely to see the children smile when they see the teachers dressed in their pyjamas, and their smiles get even bigger when they spot the hot chocolate and biscuits! Cauliflower Cards closely followed, which again always brings in a nice tidy sum and I think the cards are absolutely gorgeous, good quality and excellent value for money in addition to being lovely keepsakes too.

December brought the most magical and special Christmas Fair any school or PTFA could have wished for and will always be one of my highlights. It's only at Withycombe Raleigh you're going to see Darth Vader pushing a Tesco trolley trimmed with tinsel, lights and selling glow sticks! It's only at Withycombe Raleigh you're going to get to play Golden Carrots or Golden Crabs! (I still laugh every time I think about the night Louise texted me and said 'I have a new game Golden Carrot'! I only wish I could share with you some of the early planning photos of the game!)

It's only at Withycombe Raleigh you get to see Santa's Ark with our very own Withycombe Father Christmas. Father Christmas; I personally thank you for taking time out at your busiest time of the year to spend time with the Withycombe children who think you're fab and so do I.

January saw the return of PJ's & Popcorn which yet again was very popular and the children, as always, behaved beautifully. Bags2School made another return in February, and March saw everyone's favourite... Easter Bingo!

A super night, which raised a nice amount of money and a firm favourite with all the children; hopefully no child went home without some chocolate. May was time for yet another Disco and a very busy tuck shop as we made a super profit! June followed with Bags2School and Sports Day, where the PTFA sold refreshments and the very popular ice pops - over 700 in fact!

July.... Wow! Popup Circus! This is going to be my overall favourite event of all time. An idea that was mentioned by Andrea Kew a few years ago and always stayed with me. I always thought 'what a fabulous event this would be', and if I could find the right circus and talk our headmaster into agreeing to this crazy idea, what an amazing memory we could create for all the Withycombe children to remember for years to come. I have to admit I was very nervous as to whether we would sell all the tickets for both shows and luckily we did! I worried 'what if they don't turn up?!' but they did! Two show, lots of happy children and a dream come true for me.

Thank you Mr Powley for agreeing to the madness and craziness that was Popup Circus.

Our last event was a beach themed disco which as always was very popular - and my last conga!

Well, this has been a long Chair's Report and now comes the time to say thank you Withycombe PTFA you have given me more than you will ever know. I love organising and I love shopping so I've loved every moment! I have met so many special people along the way who I am now very proud to call my friends. Withycombe PTFA is a huge team effort and I am truly grateful to each & everyone one of you for everything, but I would like to give my own special thanks to Louise Stortenbeker and Tania Williams for their friendship, help, support & just always being there for me & allowing me to bend their ears.

I have had so much fun & have enjoyed every single second of being Chair. A very special thank you for all my gorgeous leaving gifts, which I will treasure forever. It is with great pride and pleasure I now hand over the reins to the new Chair and wish them every success, and I hope Withycombe PTFA continues to thrive and goes from strength to strength.

Thanks everyone!

Shelley Dixon