



Friends of Longstone School (FOLS)



Chair's Report 2017/2018

FOLS AGM – 22nd November 2018

FOLS is the Friends Association at Longstone C of E School. We are an open organisation and welcome parents, teachers, grandparents and members of the community to attend our meetings and get involved. As a registered charity, FOLS is governed by the charity commission and we raise funds by organising regular events, both in and out of school. These events succeed in bringing the whole school and wider community together, whilst raising vital funds for the school.

There have been many successful events over the past year, which shows what FOLS can achieve when the school community works together. The main event highlights of the year for me were the Christmas Bazaar, which made £1,586.86 and the Winter Quiz and Supper, held at the Royal Oak at Hurdlow, which made £840. The Bazaar was a great success with a new Grotto, which looked fantastic and a lovely Christmas spirit ran through the school. I had several families come to me and thank FOLS for a lovely evening that their children really loved, from the games and activities to seeing Santa's reindeers. The Winter Quiz and Supper was a replacement event for the previous event of Quiz and Curry night. This event ran very smoothly and was relatively 'easy' to organise thanks to the support of Rachel Clarke and the staff at the Royal Oak. Members of the wider community, as well as parents of the school attended and commented on what a great night it was. It was an enjoyable evening for all the FOLS team too as they were able to get involved and enjoy the evening instead of manning a stall or cooking the supper!! The introduction of a new event in the spring term of the 'Sponsored Bike Ride' was a huge success, again which was relatively easy to organise, raised a fantastic £439.50. I would like to take this opportunity to say a big 'Thank You' to all of the parents and individuals that have been involved with FOLS and supported the committee, over the past year.

The main success for me this year, apart from the events, was the installation of the climbing frame during the Easter holiday. FOLS have been working towards this piece of equipment for over a year and put a lot of time and energy into researching which frame to buy and from which company, as well as applying for funding behind the scenes and planning fundraising events to raise the £15,989 to get the frame installed. I would like to thank every child, parent and member of the school community that helped to fundraise for this equipment, whether it was bag packing in Morrisons, buying a glow stick at the Winter Disco or buying a wine at the Summer Sizzle, every penny counted, so THANK YOU! The children love the climbing frame and I also like that it has become a bit of a hub for parents at the end of the school day to talk to each other whilst the children play.

The monies raised from these events are used to fund activities, equipment and special experiences, to support and enhance the learning of the children of Longstone School, in accordance with the objectives of our constitution. In the past year we have approved the purchase of 5 laptops, library furniture, basketball hoops, an outdoor storage shed for the Foundation Stage, and cushions for the reading areas in the classrooms. We have also funded a member of staff to run the 'Gardening Club' during school time and have funded half of the cost of an 'Internet Safety Day' for children, staff and parents of the school, which we all agreed was an extremely important session to spend money on. The feedback from the staff was great and parents that attended found it extremely eye opening and informative!

I would like to thank the rest of the committee for their help and support during my first year as FOLS Chair. I believe that we have all worked extremely well as a team and have pulled together to make this year's events a success, despite the diminishing number of people in attendance at FOLS meetings.



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Looking forward to next year, I believe that one of our key objectives will be to increase member numbers and attendance at FOLS meetings. This will hopefully be achieved through the election of a new committee member who may be able to reach a wider variety of parents within the school. We will also continue to promote FOLS meetings and events, via regular communications with parents, on our FOLS noticeboard and on our Facebook page.

Arrangements for this year's Christmas Bazaar and Winter Quiz and Supper are already well under way and a number of further events have already been suggested for the upcoming months. In response to requests from a number of pupils and following on from our success earlier in the year, we are hoping to hold another Winter Disco for the children. We are also hoping to continue to hold our annual event of the Summer Sizzle and the recently introduced Sponsored Bike Ride. However, as always, FOLS are very open to suggestions of how to improve or change these events for the better or completely new suggestions for a new event.

As a Friends Group we welcome feedback from parents, children and teachers on what equipment and activities they would like to see the funds we raise spent on. We welcome all of your suggestions and invite you to come along to the meetings to discuss and develop these further.

Once again, I would like to express my thanks to everyone that has supported FOLS over the past year. We are extremely grateful for your continued donations, offers of help and support at events. We could not do it without you.

I sincerely hope that we can continue to build on our success of the past year and increase our membership numbers, in order to allow us to continue organising enjoyable events for the children and their families and raise vital funds for the school.

Many Thanks

Emily Swindell - Chair