



St Matthew's Primary School PTA - Registered Charity Number 288436

Chairs' Report for 2020/21

At last year's AGM, the **committee** were elected as follows:

Co-Chairs: Kat Astley and Gabby Uncles

Treasurer: Marysol Bell

Secretary: Laura Franks

Campaigns: Seb Wills

Events Coordinators: Emma Willis and Susie Ross

We are grateful for the hard work and support of the committee and for the amazing ongoing support we received from **Sarah Barratt**, who took on the role of teacher representative while Sophie Martin-Hawkins was on maternity leave. Sophie has now returned to school and will take on this role again, with Sarah providing Senior Leadership Team (SLT) input as required.

The global pandemic has meant that we've sadly not been able to hold meetings in person this year, but have continued to hold committee meetings via Zoom. We've also been unable to hold many of our regular events such as our Mr Marvel magic show to welcome new Reception families to the school, the ever-popular spooky and summer discos and events for parents, such as our annual quiz night.

However, we have managed to run a range of new events and ensure a steady, if reduced, income stream, allowing the PTA to continue to support the school and its activities.

We'd like to say particular **thanks to the office staff and teachers/TAs** who continued to support the PTA during a period of extreme uncertainty and additional workload.

We have continued to build on the improvements to **PTA communications** this year, through use of our website and social media accounts. Thanks to Tone for her help with Instagram this year and Emma for managing our Twitter account. We aim to continue to make it easier for parents to find out what the PTA is doing and distribute information to them.

Classlist continued to be an important way for us to quickly get messages out to parents and help enable communication among parents. We have also used it for online ticket sales and for Christmas/Greetings card orders for the first time this year which proved popular with parents. Thanks to Tone for all her help and support with Classlist throughout the year.

We are grateful to our **Class Reps** who are another effective channel of communication to and from parents, particularly when we were unable to hold in-person meetings and events.

Thanks to Marysol and Seb working together to get the PTA bank account online and for Seb's ongoing support, patience and technical assistance in moving the PTA into the digital age!

Our aim for the year was to retain a sense of 'normality' as much as possible by running regular events and fundraisers where we could and with agreement from the school to ensure we were able to help them maintain a safe environment for everyone. Our focus as ever was on activities for the enjoyment and fun of St Matthew's families, while also raising money for the school.

Events we were able to run included:

Dress-up days: We held a Spooky dress-up day, a Festive dress-up day & a Summer Carnival Dress-up Day, all fantastically organised by Emma Willis. They provided a much-needed sense of fun for the children, while also raising money through online donations and bucket shaking.

It was agreed, given the challenges many local families were facing, that the **Festive dress-up day** would raise money for **Cambridge Sustainable Food**, a local organisation working with the City Council and the Cambridge City Foodbank to support vulnerable families across the city, including those in the communities local to St Matthews. In total we raised £725 for this good cause.

In the absence of the Festive Fair and the usual pantomime trips and other celebrations, we wanted to do all we could to generate a fun atmosphere in school at what was a difficult time, while choosing activities that didn't put any additional burden on the teaching staff.

We provided a bag of **Christmas decorations** for each classroom, which were very well received. Unusually, we felt, given the ongoing challenges they were facing, it was appropriate to give a small gift to each member of school staff as a sign of appreciation on behalf of all parents. Marysol's crafting skills enabled us to distribute 90 beautifully packaged gift-bags which were very much appreciated by all.

We paid for access to an **online pantomime**, Jack and the Beanstalk, which the children watched in class and which proved very popular.

Tone ran the **St Matthew's Advent Calendar** on Instagram this year, featuring artwork from the children, which was a lovely festive activity in the absence of our usual events.

We organised the traditional **Christmas/Greetings card fundraiser**, which raised £1300 for the school, which will be spent on the library refresh which is planned for later this year.

We had an idea for an inclusive and fun activity, encouraging the children to get outside over Easter by running a **Photography Competition**, with the theme of 'Out and About'. We were delighted to receive so many entries from across the school and also that local photographer Martin Bond, of A Cambridge Diary, kindly agreed to judge the competition. He was impressed with the quality and creativity of all of the photos and provided wonderful feedback for the winners and those shortlisted.

We were able to continue to run the **Bag2School collections**, which have raised almost £2400 in total to date.

In the Summer term, Sarah Barratt was keen to find a way to encourage the children to get active and the **Round the World with Banana Woman** emerged from the Banana Woman-themed assemblies that had evolved during lockdown. This was a fun, light-hearted collaboration between the school and PTA, to encourage the children to walk, run, scoot or cycle after Banana Woman when she went on the run around the world. Together we travelled almost 10,000 kms and Banana Woman was spotted in Paris, Rome.

Istanbul, at the Pyramids, at the Taj Mahal, in Dubai and up Mount Everest. We gave a Banana Woman badge to each child, but to this day Banana Woman's identity and current location remain a mystery!

The money raised from the **Summer Dress-up Day** went towards playground equipment and new kit for our school sports teams. Thanks to a generous donation from Asda we were able to provide an ice-pop as a treat for each child. Many thanks to Marysol for organising this.

Thanks also to Susie, Laura and Marysol for running with the **Bags of Summer Fun** idea, providing envelopes of activities for each week of the summer holidays.

We organised **Year 6 Leavers hoodies** again, this time using a new company that parents could order from directly. Although the cost was higher than in previous years, the feedback from parents and children was very positive. Once again, those in receipt of Pupil Premium had their hoodie funded, the cost of which was covered almost entirely by a pay-it-forward scheme.

Following discussions last year about air pollution and road safety in the local school environment, the PTA were asked to help set up the **School Streets scheme** through the closure of Broad Street at school drop-off and pick-up times. Henry Fletcher has done an amazing job of coordinating this for us and a big thank you to all the parent volunteers who have manned the barrier in sunshine and showers to ensure a safe space for the children.

Money raised through events, as well as donations and through schemes such as the Giving Machine and Amazon Smile, is spent fulfilling funding requests from teachers as well as school-wide projects. Despite the PTA's income being lower than usual this year, we have been able to fund a range of requests - more on this in the Treasurer's Report to follow.

Finally, we would like to thank the school for their continued support of the PTA. In particular, thank you to Tony Davies and the Senior Leadership Team for their support, to the office and other staff and especially Sarah Barratt.

Last but not least, thank you to all the parents and carers who have helped out in so many different ways and who continue to support the PTA and the school, especially during such unprecedented and challenging times.

Gabby Uncles & Katrina Astley
Co-Chairs
October 2021