

FRIENDS OF DITCHAM PARK SCHOOL AGM – September 2015

Chairperson's Report

Good evening and welcome to The Friends of Ditcham Park School Annual General Meeting. My name is Vicki Harvey and I have been the Friend's Chairperson for the past 2 years. I have a son in Form 4 in the seniors and my daughter left two years ago.

Every parent, all members of staff and the Governors of the School are all automatically members of The Friends of Ditcham Park School. The Friends is a registered charity and our aim is to organise fun social events for the benefit of the pupils, parents and staff, which in turn raise additional funds to buy things that are not directly required by the School curriculum but do enhance the life of our children at the School.

The elected committee, supported by our friendly group of helpers and school year group "Buddies" work hard to ensure we achieve our charitable aims, at the same time making sure everybody has a lot of fun in doing so ! We organise a number of social events and activities throughout the year, these include our annual Christmas and May fayre, Family Bingo Nights, quiz nights, Halloween parties and Easter fun afternoons. This year we also held a magnificent Burns' Night Ball at the Tithe Barn and we had our very first Ditcham After Dark event – a family camp over in the Walled Garden – which we already have been asked to hold again next year – only bigger and better still !

Additionally we also assist the School at their two Open Mornings in October and May.

Last year, our past Head Boy and Girl's parents commissioned a fabulous painting of the school by local artist and Ditcham parent, Louise Braithwaite, we have a framed copy of the painting here. The Friends the organised a limited edition print run of 125 prints, which is one of our main raffle prizes at this year's Christmas Fayre. The last 20 prints are still available to buy for £50. We also had cards printed of the painting which are on sale for £5 for a pack of five. These will be available to buy at all our fayres and at Open Mornings.

This last school year, we had a record breaking fund raising year – which we hope to exceed this coming year too.

We are currently asking all parents, pupils and staff for ways to spend "Our Big Ticket item" – we will have £10000 in the pot and we want the whole school to be involved in spending it on something to benefit the whole school. The children were asked for their ideas just prior to the end of the summer term, the deadline for parents and guardians is this Friday 25th September – so please, if you would like to suggest something please let us know – a form is available on the Friends website. Then, watch this space for the results!

This forthcoming year, we are already organising a family "Bingo Night" on Friday 9th October, a Halloween Party for the juniors on Thursday 11nd October and our very popular and fun Christmas fayre on Saturday 5th December.

Also, over the summer holidays, Tess Hall, one of our committee members has been busy organising a brand new school calendar – our very first one. These are available to buy for only £10. There is a limited number of 200, so send in your order form as soon as possible or you can buy them this evening.

The photos “Views from Ditcham Park School” have been taken by one of our school parents, Stuart Johnson and look amazing.

Money that the Friends raise at these events goes towards equipment and extras for the school as well as proving the children with guest speakers and cultural days. All of this would not be possible without the dedication and tireless energy of the Friends committee.

The Friends are a warm and friendly group of parents, teachers and school staff who are all very enthusiastic about giving the children that extra something special. Ditcham is a school that knows and values every child and the Friends work in conjunction with the school to enhance our children’s school experience.

The Friends usually hold half termly committee meetings with some extra sub-committee meetings being held when we’re organising larger events. We welcome all new and existing parents to come and join the Friends, to help with events and bring suggestions for new ones.

For anyone who is interested in joining the committee or would like to find out some more about us, or who just would like to help at some events, then please feel free to speak to any member of the Friends who are here tonight.

We have some forms here that you can leave your details on.

We welcome anyone to come along to our first Committee meeting next Wednesday 30th September, 7pm in the School Library, which by the main entrance – find out “what we are all about”.

I would to say a very big thank you to everyone on the Friends committee who has helped make this year such a successful one and hope that this will continue.

We normally email a weekly newsletter on Thursday to the whole school to keep them up to date on all our events and news. Please, also check our fantastic website: the friends of Ditcham Park School – this is constantly updated to keep the whole school informed.

Thank you for listening and I hope that some of you will consider joining the committee and becoming “ a Friend “ or volunteering at any of our other events – we always need plenty of helpers.

I’d now like to pass you over to Lucy Reidy to present the Treasurer’s report.