

### **Report from Co-Chair of Chepstow School PTA – Helen Steele, Sept 2024**

We continue to operate within the signed Constitution as approved by the ParentKind Association and signed in June 2021 at our inauguration. Copies of this can be provided on request by the chair or secretary. Any proposed changes or updates should be made in advance of the AGM. None received.

Since our last AGM in Sept 2023, I feel we have grown in strength and resilience, we have a pattern to our events calendar, and we have a positive reputation from our governing body, from within school and from parental and student support.

Our mission and purpose continue to be to arrange fun events for the school community that generate an income that is used to purchase essential items for the school that benefit all students and enhance their school experience. I believe we have met this purpose.

### **How the PTA is run**

We are an informal, friendly group of willing and keen volunteers with a mix of parents and staff on our core committee. We meet 6 or 7 times a year on school grounds with an aim to bring a community element into school life and to raise funds for the benefits of the students. You are welcome to be involved in any capacity.

In this last 12 months we have worked a little more closely with our Governing body particularly the financing committee, though more work still to be done. We have worked really well with Lisa Lane as our staff rep and moving forward we still have an opportunity to get the student voice more involved.

### **The last academic year in summary:**

We kicked off the year with our first and very successful Bingo night. Thanks to Parent volunteer Hannah Ramsey for being our enthusiastic caller. We have another one coming up next month.

Year 7/8 Disco in October – It was very well supported by students, staff and parents. We combined the year groups for the first time and will do so again for 2024.

Our 3rd annual presence at the Fireworks display was a much greater success. Following learning from previous years we were ready with our slow cookers full of readymade hot choc this year. Unfortunately, this event isn't running in 2024.

December saw our second attempt at a Christmas Market but with disappointing turnout and a lower income than expected so effort needed on a decision to move this forward.

We also started to work more closely with the Governors and I attended a grants workshop. I've not been able to put any of this into practice yet as no large ticket items have been fully scoped out. It had been anticipated the minibus would be our target item this academic year, but we await more news on this item to be fully costed.

Feb– We served refreshments at the production of \*Grease\* and our audience enjoyed alcoholic and soft drinks while watching the fabulous show.

March – A huge thank you to Steve Curran for running our quiz night. A follow-up one will be organised but we promise it will be a touch easier and only half as long!

April – For our year 7's we ran a second Easter themed event by the way of decorating and rolling a hard-boiled egg. This was well received by the students, giving them an opportunity to shine with their creative skills and generating some friendly competition in the rolling.

Spring saw us with a change in treasurer as Virginia Lyall stepped down. We thank Virginia for her sterling work as treasurer and welcomed James Hodgkinson into the role with Aimee White as deputy.

May – Our crafty volunteers made several small purses to carry sanitary items in. This was a fantastic voluntary effort, did not raise funds but showed our commitment to supporting all areas of our society. Thank you to Sarita for coordinating the volunteers in this activity.

June – We ran a "Rags to riches" collection. Our donations are growing at each collection. So thank you to all donors and again we look to run this regularly. Donations can be made to school at any time in any bag but please label the bag "Rags to riches". November 11<sup>th</sup> will be our next one.

July was a busy month in school and for us as we supported a number of end of term events:

We even had one student run a sweetie stall at Devauden Fete in order to raise funds for the PTA. Thank you to Lauren and Sarah Denne.

We also provided refreshments at:

The awards event "Sports Personality Of The Year" (SPOTY), which was very well supported, and the layout and complimentary fizz was appreciated.

Of the two sports days, the Field events day where year groups come out one at a time is a slow burner but if we have 1 or 2 volunteers happy to be there then it's worth us selling

refreshments. The weather hasn't been great for a couple of years and we still have a lot of unsold Ice pops! The second day where the whole school comes out for the track events is a popular day though and needs at least 4 or 5 volunteers for 2-3 hours. We also secured complimentary fruit from Tesco which can be requested again next year.

Our final event of the year was the welcoming to this year's Yr 7 families. This year I spoke and gave out fliers.

### **How the PTA has benefited pupils**

In summary we raised £8000. This enabled the school to purchase much needed items and they did this to a value of £6500, so there is money in the account ready for the next event or funding request.

Items purchased for the benefit of students in the last academic year:

Music equipment, geography field trip equipment, visits from singers and authors, chess club equipment, art items, PE racquets and balls, sewing machines, photography items, picnic benches, attendance awards. Such a broad range of practical items which all go to enhancing the student experience at this school. I think we need to do more publicity on these items.

### **Our Key successes**

Membership continues to grow on our Chepstow PTA Public Group Facebook page. It has gone from 204 followers in Sept 2023 and now sitting at 359.

Easy Fundraising continues to grow but at a very slow rate. We had 45 supporters in Sept 2023 and now have 75 but only 32 have ever raised funds, so this is up from 21 last year. We have still raised an amazing £909 from all the individual transactions since we signed up in 2021. Action is still needed on this as and as more and more of us do most of our shopping online.

“Your School Lottery” – we have finally reached our target of 50 supporters with 54 signed up as at Sept 2023 and still sitting at 54 this September. Winning amount is £14.10. Thank you all for playing. Again, ideas needed on how to get our readers and school supporters to sign up to £1 a week.

Tech – QR codes, sum up machine and the tablet on permanent loan from MCC since Summer 2023 have been brilliantly useful – when the Wi-Fi works.

### **What is planned for the next academic year**

With the success of our two years behind us we are starting to feel like we have a rhythm of events we will be running or supporting. But again are always open to feedback and new ideas. As mentioned – Bingo night coming up followed by a disco for KS3 (789).

Christmas needs some thought and we would also like to run a Summer social.

### **School wish list**

A Minibus is still top of the list. w James our treasurer is linked in with the finance committee of the governors to work on this in the background. We await news from Tesco for our blue token appeal. We continue to receive lower value requests from various departments to top up the existing funding within the school.

### **Finally some thank yous:**

Thank you to Sarita, my co-chair, for being my sounding board despite going through a challenging year personally and professionally. Sarita is stepping down from this role but will continue to support in the background.

Thank you to Sarah our Secretary for her amazing minute taking, WhatsApp prompts and her talented art work in producing so many eye-catching posters. Sarah will now step down to make way for another volunteer to have a go. I am very sorry to lose her but know she will remain on our extended team.

Thank you James for your professionalism in the role of Treasurer, you have been brilliant in analysing our finances as well keeping us sane with the sum up machine and QR codes. James is supported by Aimee White and we appreciate her efforts and support in this role too.

Thank you to Kelly Waithe, our school Head, who is incredibly supportive and appreciative of our PTA. She encourages staff attendance at events, provides prizes at the student's discos and lots of biscuits for our meetings.

Thank you to Lisa Lane who attends every meeting on behalf of the staff and always has kind words of support along with challenging requests but without whom we would not have had the clear direction that we are able to enjoy.

Thank you to Karen Roberts who keeps our website up to date and sends out our Parent mail letters.

Thank you to Luca Goddard, for being our eyes and ears and a key contact liaising between PTA and wider staff population.

Thank you Victoria Williams as the school business manager she has been a great ally. Thanks to many other staff members who do an enormous amount of behind the scenes work which does not go unnoticed.

Thank you to the school caterers, Aramark, who donate chip butties on our Quiz and Bingo nights. A really kind donation and much needed sustenance during the evenings.

Thank you to all the committee and the team of helpers who give up precious family and personal time to support this PTA and our school. It's this behind-the-scenes work that is so important and so very much appreciated. Thank you for your time, ideas and energy. You make it happen and we wouldn't be where we are without YOU. Thank you.

Thank you to everyone reading this, for buying a raffle ticket, for signing up to our lottery and easy fundraising, for reading our letters and responding on social media and to attending our events and buying our refreshments. Please keep up that support and spread the word about this PTA.

I hope that 24/25 school year will bring us more fruitful events and kind support as well great new things to enhance our wonderful school.

If you have any feedback, please reach out to me any time.

It's been a pleasure to be Co-Chair of the school PTA for a third year. I think it may be my final year so reach out to me if you fancy being my wingman or successor over the coming months.

Helen Steele

Chair

Sept 2024