

Report from Chair of Chepstow School PTA – Helen Steele, Sept 2025

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.

In the last 12 months I really feel we have established ourselves as a team and are now well known and routinely integrated into the school calendar. I feel we have grown in strength as well as resilience following our chilly quizzes and tropical BBQ's! We have routine with our annual and termly events and we have a positive reputation from our governing body, from within school and from parental and student support.

How the PTA is run

We are a group of volunteers with a mix of parents of students from year 8- year 12 as well as several staff and SLT (Senior Leadership Team) on our core committee. We met 6 times in the last academic year (i know it feels like more than that!!)

Our mission and purpose continue to be to arrange fun events for the school community that (in most cases will) generate an income . This income is used to purchase essential items for the school that benefit a wide range of, if not all, students and enhance their school experience which in turns increases their ability to learn and to do their best. I believe we are most definitely meeting this purpose.

The last academic year in summary:

We kicked off the year with our second Bingo night. As always we have a lot of laughs thanks to the ingenuity of our host Hannah and her wonderful calling and prize giving.

To spread out our events as well as hit Christmas with something other than a fayre we moved our Year 7/8 Disco to December and gave it a Christmas theme which went down well as we mixed in a few games which brought in extra income too.

In February, we ran our second and super successful Quiz night thanks to Steve Curran and James Hodgkinson. Although we shivered through the evening, the quiz was a lot of fun. Caught off guard our quiz masters had to come up with a tie breaker as we had two teams with top scores. Based on feedback, I think it doubtful whether we dare brave a Feb evening in the hall again though.

In March - We supported our talented school drama kings and queens and served refreshments at the production of "Beauty and The Beast "and our audience enjoyed

alcoholic and soft drinks while watching the fabulous show. Following a discussion around UPF and wellbeing and Thanks to Sarah's time and energy spent in a variety of supermarkets and Costco outlets we had a new variety of snacks and moved on from just crisps and chocolate to nuts, flapjacks and milk shakes. It's not our role to influence but it felt good to offer alternatives.

In May we had yet another "Rags to riches" collection. But felt they were becoming too frequent so cancelled a couple and will try with just an annual collections. Next dates are 11th Nov 2025 and 10th Nov 2026. Currently 25p per kilo, so perhaps need to shop around on this one. I'll be looking for a volunteer for this if anyone is interested.

Now on to our inaugural summer event. After a great deal of planning and preparation regarding ticketing, sorting acts, ordering catering, generator considerations, gazebo booking, risk assessments and local flier distribution we held our Summer extravaganza "Beats and Eats". It was well supported and there was a fun, energetic vibe to the afternoon. The sun was strong, the music loud and entertaining, the hog a plenty and the crowd were happy. It wasn't a huge money spinner but it was a success.

July was a busy month as always as we supported a number of end of term events:

We provided our extended range of refreshments at the awards event "Sports Personality Of The Year" (SPOTY).

Then finally the super busy sports day where in fact we had fantastic weather and were run off our feet. We managed to sell out of every drink and snack as well as ice pops!! We also secured complimentary fruit from Tesco which can be requested again next year and seems to go down well.

We weren't available at this years Yr 7 parents evening but we made our newsletter available to all our future parents.

On top of the events Kath has worked hard to raise the profile of the availability of pre loved uniform. We have spent many an afternoon in the dark cupboard sorting out donations and have had it on display at a number of events.

How the PTA has benefited pupils

In summary we had a profit of £6000 of which almost £5,000 has been reimbursed to school for items such as: sports equipment, library books, English books, cameras, annual app subscriptions for science, ALN resources, canteen seating and Golden Hour items. This is down from last years £8000 profit. Nevertheless this is a strong figure and has enabled the school to purchase these much needed items .

Our Key successes

Membership continues to grow on our Chepstow PTA Public Group Facebook page. We have more than doubled our membership in 2 years from 204 followers in Sept 2023 to 470 in Sept 2025. (359 in Sept 2024)

Easy Fundraising continues to grow but at a very slow rate. We have nearly doubled our sign ups from 45 supporters in Sept 2023 to 85 in Sept 2025. (75 in Sept 2024) I did a push over summer to offer a prize to our 100th sign up but it had little effect. Still only half of those signed up ever actually click the button and of those 40, 10 have done it only once.

(In 2023 only 21 have ever raised funds. 32 in 2024)

Action continues to be needed on this as and as more and more of us do most of our shopping online. Top ten:

(BS £449, HS £118, KM £100, JH £96, AT £88, anon £66, LT £66, MT £64, AW £57, JO £46). I was successful in securing a banner which should arrive any day which school are happy to display. It has a prominent QR code on it so sign ups are made much easier. Watch this space.

“Your School Lottery” – we have 52 supporters, down 5 from last year which is a recent drop since our last year Year 11’s have moved on to new schools/colleges. That said the recent winning amount is £12.60. Thank you all for playing. Again, ideas needed on how to get our readers and school supporters to sign up to £1 a week.

Facebook has been my platform of choice and I think you all know I’m quite active on that but I’m conscious that the next generation of students are likely to have parents who are more familiar with Instagram so we still need to work on this.

What is planned for the next academic year

With the success of 4 full academic years behind us we are a well recognised a highly appreciated part of the school. I am always open to feedback and new ideas to help us move forward with an opportunity and still keen to get the student voice more involved.

Pre loved uniform – has had a great start to this academic year with the whole cupboard having been sorted and dedicated to uniform and Mrs Amy Kite happy to be point of contact for requests.

Finally some thank yous:

Thank you to Kath our Secretary who is an absolute whizz on Canva producing great posters for our events as well as keeping us on track with minutes, actions and agendas. She has also been instrumental in sorting the Pre loved uniform and getting us more space for it.

Thank you James for being our 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 the SLT who have rotated their support at our meetings. We are very lucky to have such senior support.

Thank you to other support staff too: Karen and Liz on reception, Victoria Bradford, Amy Kite, Gareth Davies and the team of caretakers. Thank you to all for their help with bags of rags, pre loved uniform, parents' correspondence, website updates, admin, site access, my random mails and much more.

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

Thank you to the school caterers Aramark, who provide the chip butties on our Quiz and Bingo nights.

Thank you to all of you – our committee who rock up to all our events and the our staff room meetings and enjoy tea and biscuits while trying to make decisions that are: creative, practical, ethical, affordable, economical, environmental. You give up precious family, personal and sometimes your professional time to support this PTA and our school. Thanks also to our extended team of helpers. You all play a role. 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 our next school year 25/26 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 once again been a joy and privilege to be Chair of the school PTA for our 4th year.

Helen Steele, Chair, Sept 2025