

Harewood School PTA Chair's Report 2022-2023

I would like to start by welcoming everyone to a new academic year and take this opportunity to also welcome our new families, not only to our school community but also to our "Parents and Teachers Association". All parents and carers are automatic members of the PTA just by having children at school, our work makes a big difference to their educational experiences.

To give you a brief summary, the aim of our PTA is to help enhancing school resources by organising fundraising activities to benefit all the children. We hope our events are also fun and a chance for families to get together, developing very important social and educational links between our families, children and school staff. As a registered charity, the association is managed by a small committee, which I joined back in 2022, alongside Emma Silverton (Secretary) and Nicola Dobson (Treasurer) who thankfully wished to continue in their officer roles. We work well together and are happy to announce that we will all stand for re-election during our upcoming AGM.

Fundraising targets

For the last two years we have been working hard to raise enough funds to replace the iPads used to enhance learning activities at school. This was a big target but we are delighted to say that the full set of 30 iPads and charging trolley have now been purchased and are ready to go! Other resources funded by the PTA in the last year include: sports equipment, Christmas treats and crafts, costumes for school performances, help towards cost of school trips and transport, Year 6 leavers meal, classroom resources, and support for initiatives such as Young Voices and Archbishop of York Awards.

We would like to thank our wonderful PTA volunteers for your time and effort, all our school families for your generosity, and many local companies and parents who wished to sponsor us in different ways. It has been amazing to see everyone coming together and supporting our PTA!

New and improved!

Wanting to find a better system to manage our events, we decided to set up our very own website using the platform "pta-events". Some of the features which have helped us streamline admin tasks include online bookings and payments, a pre loved uniform shop, volunteer logs, event reports and even paid advertising opportunities. The website has been a great addition to modernise the PTA in times when most transactions are online.

We also implemented a slightly new approach to our textile recycling, offering more flexibility and convenience. I already mentioned that our second hand uniform shop has moved online, with all items available to buy directly from our website. The other change was an outdoor clothes bank placed permanently at school to replace bags2school collections. Both initiatives are not only a great way to re use items, but also reduce waste while raising funds for school at the same time.

In terms of events, we organised our first ever “Cycling Fundraiser” at the Brownlee Centre in Adel. The children loved it and made a big effort to complete their target number of laps, making their generous sponsors proud while enjoying a healthy outdoor activity. The weather was glorious for a sporty day out, we will need to bring picnics next time! Certainly one to repeat considering it was so much fun and raised over £1700!

Other highlights

We organised our usual seasonal events through the year, starting with the “Pumpkin Party”, where children dress up and get to enjoy a disco party at school complete with games and refreshments. We had a fantastic selection of decorated pumpkins and costumes, and the children had lots of fun. We also had the usual Christmas Cards fundraiser and Christmas themed “Movie Nights” for KS1 and KS2, with popcorn and drinks. As for the Christmas party day at school, the PTA provided gifts, Christmas crackers and crafts for all children to enjoy.

In the Spring we put together a “Mother’s Day Sale” and saw the return of our much loved “Easter Bingo”, after years of not being able to run it. We had unprecedented numbers for the Bingo night, creating a great atmosphere and such a fun evening for all the family! A token system was introduced for this activity and worked very well to avoid the need of children handling cash.

Then to finish the school year we had our largest and most anticipated event: the “PTA Summer Fair”. Unfortunately, the weather was far from summery, but it didn’t dampen our spirits! Many school families and local residents joined us, making the most of the afternoon by enjoying the giant bouncy castle and slide, games, crafts, drinks and refreshments. To support this event we secured grants from Leeds 2023 and the Harewood Parish Council, together with some incredibly generous sponsorship from parents and local companies. Thank you to all who came and to our amazing volunteers who made this event not only possible but a big success, raising over £3000 after expenses.

Last but not least, we also continued with our regular smaller activities like “Bun Sales” and “Ice Cream Fridays”, which are very popular with the children. Small but mighty, every little helps... 50p at a time!

Thankfully, we have such a hard working and dedicated group of volunteers that make it possible to run our events... but help is always needed. By joining the active PTA team, you don't need to commit long term or specific number of hours, just help in any way you want and whenever suits you. Any help is warmly welcomed and hugely appreciated. We encourage everyone to join our WhatsApp chat to keep up to date, please ask your class rep or any other PTA member to be added.

Thanks again to all our volunteers, parents, school staff and Mr Ratcliffe for your continuous support. It was certainly a busy year for the PTA and here we are ready to do it all over again!

Thank you for your support,
Carolina Lascelles (PTA Chair).