

## **'Friends of CPLJS' Annual Report - March 2021**

We are very proud to share the first 'Friends of CPLJS' Annual Report at the end of what turned out to be an exciting, but extremely challenging year.

The first official meeting was held on 12th February 2020 during which it was decided that the group should be open to anyone with a genuine interest in fundraising for both College Park Infant School and Lynhurst Junior School including parents, carers, extended family members, friends of school families and school staff. In order to reflect this, the name 'Friends of CPLJS' was agreed upon. A recommended constitution produced by PTA UK was adopted for use during our first year via vote. Roles were discussed and the following people were voted in for the first year:

Laura Nightingale - Co Chair  
Stacey Clark-Allan - Co Chair  
Helen Lucas-Knight - Secretary  
Jo Reeves - Treasurer

Our initial ideas across both schools included school discos, second-hand uniform sales, costume sales (particularly tied in with school dress-up days and events) and plant sales. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic took hold, a national lockdown started and the schools had to close. With so much uncertainty and minimal access to school, the decision had to be made to put the establishment of the 'Friends of CPLJS' and fundraising plans on hold during this period.

Once the schools reopened in September 2020, virtual 'Friends of CPLJS' meetings were established using 'Google Meet.' We are pleased to say that these meetings were attended by both parents and some of our teacher representatives.

Initial fundraising requests were made by both schools to 'Friends of CPLJS'. College Park asked for some computer coding equipment and Lynhurst Junior School asked for support in raising money to replace their outdoor play equipment. Key actions were taken in order to ensure that 'Friends of CPLJS' is fully compliant with the policies and procedures expected of such an organisation / as laid out in the 'PTA Constitution' including:

- Finance

- Insurance and registrations
- GDPR and Data Protection Policy

Plans to meet with Heads of Schools and/or School Representatives to discuss an 'Inclusion Policy' and 'Communication Plan', as well as discuss further fundraising ideas, are still on hold due to the problems accessing school caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, regular email and telephone contact with school staff prevented the pandemic from hampering our fundraising initiatives. During the Autumn Term 2020, 'Friends of CPLJS' became members of 'Parentkind' which provides insurance for the PTA as well as a wealth of support and resources to help run the organisation effectively. A bank account with HSBC was applied for in September 2020. The application was delayed significantly due to Covid-19 but the account became fully active on 22nd January 2021.

### **Pumpkin Trail**

Our first major event was the 'Friends of CPLJS' Pumpkin Trail' which took place during October half term (2020). The children paid £1 for a Pumpkin colouring picture and score sheet. The pumpkin pictures were displayed in the windows of family homes around the school and throughout half term children went hunting to see as many pumpkin pictures as possible in the hope of winning a prize. It proved to be a great family task that got everyone out of the house. It was really lovely to see all the pictures and receive such lovely comments from parents.

*"Thank you so much for the prize \*\*\*\*\* received for her pumpkin trail picture, she came out of school so excited about telling me. She really enjoyed decorating her picture...."* 1R parent

*"We really enjoyed the trail ,thank you for organising it."* 1H parent

*"\*\*\*\*\* has loved taking part in this thank you."* RL parent

*"Thank you this is a great idea!!"* 4L parent

*"Thanks so much for organising this, \*\*\*\*\*s enjoyed it!"* S4 parent

*"Many thanks for organising this event for the kids at such a challenging time. Halloween won't be the same this year for the children, but with great thanks to yourselves, it should still be fun for them."* 2T parent

**'Be Bright Be Seen'** This non-uniform day aimed at promoting the importance of ensuring pedestrians are visible to cars when out walking in the dark, ironically took place on one of the sunniest days in November! The Portsmouth City Council Road Safety Team kindly donated resources for both schools and children made great efforts to come into school dressed as brightly as possible in exchange for a £1 donation.

**'Bags for School'** Families enthusiastically donated their unwanted clothing accumulated during lockdown which was exchanged for cash with the company 'Bags for School'. Both schools were blown away by the number of bags filled and returned to school. The general feedback was that families were happy to have somewhere to take their unwanted items, especially when the charity shops were closed for long periods during lockdown. This proved to be an extremely simple, but effective way to raise some money.

### **Christmas Activities**

We had very much hoped to plan some Christmas activities for the children as well as facilitate some fundraising events. Unfortunately the delays with the bank account and enormous pressure both schools were under due to Covid restrictions, meant this was not possible in the end, despite the team having several wonderful ideas including funding a virtual pantomime to be watched in school and facilitating Christmas crafts that children could make as presents for family members. We did however facilitate a free 'Christmas Trail' over the Christmas holidays and produced an instructional video on how to make origami bookmarks. This video can still be accessed via school YouTube channels if you have not yet had a chance to check it out.

We would like to take this opportunity to send heartfelt thanks to all those who have supported the 'Friends of CPLJS' over the past 12 months. This includes:

- Heads of School for communication with us during the most difficult times.
- School administration staff without whose support we would not have been able to advertise or run any of the events.
- Our teacher representatives who have given their own time to support 'Friends of CPLJS'.
- Our dedicated members for volunteering and bringing lots of amazing ideas and knowledge and skills to the meetings, and particularly those who volunteered at the 'Bags to School' event.
- The children of the school for their consistent enthusiasm and participation in 'Friends of CPLJS' events.
- Parents/carers/other supporters for supporting us in all events. We could not raise the funds for these resources for our children without you.

