

## **Friends of New Row**

### **AGM 2022 – Tuesday 4th October**

#### **Chairperson's Report for 2021/22**

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I'm delighted to present my Chairperson's report for the 2021/22 year, and to be doing so in person. It is wonderful to be able to come together again for a physical meeting.

Our last AGM took place on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021, with the election of officers for all roles conducted by Mrs. Deirdre Graffin.

This past year, alongside the fundraising events that were held, much of our focus was on supporting our people and their families, many of whom have been struggling in the aftermath of Covid, and with the rising costs of living.

We are so privileged to have the unwavering support of staff, families and the wider community, allowing us to generate funds to do just that.

#### **Year in review**

The Covid-19 pandemic caused considerable pressures for many families in our communities. Last year, we committed to doing more to support our pupils and their families, and we were extremely grateful to the whole community for their support with our fundraising efforts, which allowed us the opportunity to do so.

Some examples of how Friends of New Row were able to support families in New Row throughout the last year include:

- Our hardship fund for help towards groceries and/or fuel
- Provision of break for students entitled to free school meals in December/January
- School Pantomime trip subsidized to reduce cost for families
- School trips transport subsidized
- Uniform 'grab and go'

Special mention needs to go to our second uniform 'grab and go', which was a huge success, with so many donations of all sizes to pass on. It is such a wonderful, beneficial event, and we were thrilled to see virtually everything taken away to benefit pupils coming back this year.

We were delighted to be in a position to hold some fundraising events this year, trying to be mindful of the demands these may place on families, whilst still providing enjoyable, memorable experiences for the pupils.

It was a New Row first this year, with a trip to the Panto in the Opera House last December, and what a memory those children will have. We were delighted to support the school with covering costs for this, to ensure all pupils who wanted to go would be able to. Seeing their faces returning that day was just unforgettable, and I felt privileged to be a part of our committee, and this school.

Alongside our old favourites, such as Neon Day and the sponsored walk, we were quick to mark the wonderful achievements of the Derry team with a few 'red and white' themed days, and a hugely successful guess the score competition.

Our Annual School Calendar was back for its fifth successful year. We could not do this without the hard work and commitment of two of our committee, Carmel and Madeleine. Massive thanks to Madeleine for all of the photographs taken for the calendar, and to Carmel for all of her work securing sponsors and working with the printer. We were privileged to benefit from the continued support of many of our local businesses. On behalf of the committee, thank you to all who sponsored and purchased the calendar.

We were brave enough to run an end-of year School Disco in June, where the children absolutely had a ball! It was heart-warming to see both big and small enjoying the evening, and the free goodie bags!

Development of the school's resources is an on-going commitment, and FoNR are so proud to have been able to contribute to some of the wonderful new facilities the school has introduced in recent years. The outdoor equipment in the playground is due to be replaced shortly.

Just to conclude, a few thank yous! Can I say a huge thank you to the committee of Friends of New Row – each and every one has played their part in helping over the past year, and this could not happen without you. The school and the pupils are so fortunate to have such a committed team behind them.

I would also like to say a heartfelt thank you to Mrs Graffin and all of the staff at New Row. Our children are so, so blessed to have a team of staff here that truly care.

We have many, many others who have kindly given up their time to volunteer at our events over the year, thank you all.

Mrs. Marianne Cushley  
**Chairperson**