

6th October 2024

Poyntzpass Primary School PTA AGM – Chairperson Report

Good evening everyone!

I'd like to start by extending a very warm welcome to you all to our Annual General Meeting, and particularly any new members joining us this evening. We are delighted to have you here as part of PTA membership. I hope you will soon feel as much a part of the team as the rest of us and we look forward to getting to know and work with you. We hope you enjoy volunteering with us and know that your time and effort committed is so very much appreciated and valued.

And I can't miss the opportunity to welcome back returning members of PTA. You know what you are letting yourself in for and you still came back! This PTA would be nothing without the hard work, dedication and team work you have all shown throughout the year and I know this year will be no different. A very big Thank You to you all!

I would also like to thank all school staff for their dedication to our children, their support with our PTA events and fundraising, and for always being up for the craic and mucking in! The respect and support staff show the PTA, which is also reciprocated, makes for quite an unstoppable force!

I'd like to acknowledge those members of PTA who moved on this year as the last of their children left school in June. We thank them for their service to the school and I'd particularly like to thank Mrs Barbara Simms for her dedication to PTA over the years and for always going above and beyond.

So, what has been our legacy for the school year 2023-24?? Well, strap yourselves in folks as it's quite the list!

We broke ourselves in last September with a quieter start to the year – NO scrap that! Did I say quiet start?? A Big tractor run there was not but I don't think you would say a mini tractor run with Paul Kelly singing at the helm was a quiet start to the year!! That was so much fun and an amazing day for the memory books!

Soon after, we turned our attention to planning a Christmas Craft Fayre on 16th November 2023. This hadn't been done as a fundraiser for quite some time. So much effort and planning went into this event and boy was it a success! Nothing could have prepared us for the amount of people who came that evening – it completely blew us away! Like with anything new we try there were a few teething issues but overall it was a brilliant evening and was talked about for weeks within the community.

No sooner had the dust settled from the fayre did we turn our attention to supporting staff with organising the Nativity performances at the Ferris farm shed. Jacqueline (and Russell) but mostly Jacqueline are always so happy and enthusiastic to lend us the use of their barn for the most spectacular and memorable performances of the year!! Thanks to the Ferris' for their continued support! And thank you to PTA volunteers who tirelessly worked to

decorate the shed, source heating and toileting arrangements and served refreshments during all performances.

Along side all of the Christmas event organising, PTA also facilitated the collection of toiletry items for Daisy Hill Hospital in lieu of staff Christmas presents and ensured that the many filled boxes were safely delivered and handed over to nursing staff. These items were so gratefully received and needed! School families really got behind this initiative and the number of items donated was amazing!

Not only was there a collection happening for Daisy Hill Hospital, PTA also supported pupils and staff with the supply of **52** Happy Hug Bags for older, or more vulnerable members of our community. This is a cross-community initiative started during the pandemic and has continued as an annual school calendar event. Thank you to Barbara Best for her part played along with the Poyntzpass Village Care Group in identifying and distributing the bags to residents.

Onto Term 2 now and in January, with the help of some PTA volunteers 6 fruit trees were planted in the school grounds (1 x per classroom) with pupils watching on showing great anticipation and excitement at the thought of some edibles in the coming seasons! The trees had been bought using the last of the Live Here Love Here grant money. I'm still waiting on my apple tart though! Mrs McAlister who do I need to see about this?!

Later in Term 2, we planned and executed a very successful Big Breakfast in the village Meeting Place. PTA members truly out done themselves in hard work, sourcing produce and volunteering on the day – with its Mother's Day twist it was a perfect morning of celebrating community, families and the power of team work. Thank you again to all who were involved both within the school community and outside of it!

Funds were looking very healthy by this stage so we were able to purchase 2 x new interactive whiteboards for school, now ensuring all classrooms had an up-to-date teaching resource allowing pupils and teachers equity of access to technology across the school.

We were also in the amazing position of being able to hand over £5000 to the school to spend on a very much needed new reading scheme for P1-P3 pupils. This has made a huge impact on the availability of books for all reading levels within those age groups. We are so incredibly delighted to have been able to do that for our children and teaching staff. It is exactly what we are here to do!

Term 3 saw the return of the Uniform Exchange – again started after the pandemic when the cost-of-living crisis really began to bite. It now remains as not only an economical annual event but also an environmental event reducing waste to landfill and re-using perfectly good condition uniform.

Term 3 also saw a new event take place – the Superman Walk. Although not as well attended as we might have hoped, it made for a lovely summer's evening with some of our school families enjoying a gentle walk, Ballydougherty Ice cream, refreshments and sunshine! This PTA is never afraid to try something new when it comes to running events!

Our final fundraiser of the year was our annual Staycation Raffle, which is always so well supported by our school families and this year was no exception. I want to say a huge, heartfelt thank you to all parents, grandparents, extended family and friends who support our events throughout the school year – without you, your attendance at events, putting your hand in your pocket, and backing us all the way – we just couldn't deliver for the school in the same way! It truly is a team effort.

You would think by now, I would be ready to wrap up this report – but I can't do that without mentioning a few of the other things PTA do around school that may not always be noticed by others. Things like painting the play house and sand house, laying new floor covering for play areas, cleaning and tidying school grounds including the Polytunnel, PTA container and forest school. Planting flowers, sourcing items for play and phoning, emailing and making new connections to benefit the school as a whole. And I can't forget to mention the long suffering, and kind-hearted husbands, partners and grandads who rock up with pallets, lighting, chain saws and everything else in between! They may not always be in the photos or there to see the benefits of their part played but they are truly appreciated!

And so, I would like to close this report with what has become our PTA mantra – “we are *some team for one team!*”

Thank you.