Meeting: PTA Community Breakfast

Date: 28 Feb 2025

Attendees:

- Cathy Longhurst (Headteacher)
- Patsy Harding (School Business Manager)
- PTA reps - Rebecca Prebble (PTA Chair), Vicky Swarbrick (PTA Secretary), Mandy (PTA member)
- Community reps from various community organisations/event
- Variety of school parents and people who already help run PTA events.

Event Summary

This 'Community Breakfast' event hosted by the School/PTA aimed to bring together parents, PTA, School staff and various members of the wider community to help promote the PTA, encourage people to sign-up to get involved, have discussions about possible events and fundraising ideas, and get to know new people whilst enjoying some breakfast.

Dicussion points

Key points raised during the discussion element are summarised below:

Introductions and context setting

- Mrs Longhurst (Headteacher) outlined the importance of the PTA – what is brings to the school in terms of community spirit and much need additional funds. She outlined what previous PTA fundraising has funded at the school (including SEN equipment, ipads, leavers' gifts and hoodie, Year 5 puppet show, Marvellous Me, Queen's 60th celebrations, a washing machine for Early Years).
- Rebecca (PTA Chair) introduced current PTA committee members, gave a brief introduction to herself and her connection to the school, and talked about the importance and desire for more parents to get involved with the PTA.
- Kate (Abbey Line Community Officer) outlined a variety of community initiatives that Abbey Line offers or funds locally, and some activities that already work with the school on (such as a Year 4 creative writing project).
- Chrissy (Sopwell Residents Association) outlined a range of events and activities that the Association is organising locally for 2025.
- Mandy (PTA helper and Sopwell Residents Association member) talked about the Friday PTA coffee mornings that she runs, and about how valuable and rewarding she has found being involved in both the PTA and local Residents Association. She also outlined a variety of regular free events offered by LeeAnna's Wish at the Cottonmill Community Centre.

Previous events and fundraising activities

Mrs Longhurst noted that the PTA has previously organised a variety of events/initiatives including:

- Easy Fundraising
- Disco
- Summer Fair

- Secret present room
- Child-designed Xmas cards
- Child-designed tea towels
- Mother's day present
- Father's day present
- Bingo social
- Quiz and curry
- Pamper session
- Local community (walking) treasure hunts
- Spring event/fair
- Winter Fair
- Kindness in Cottonmill awards
- Uniform sales
- Termly newsletter

Events to continue

There was dicussion about which events/initiatives people were particularly keen to see continue. These were:

- Disco
- Bingo (or some other child and parent social)
- Summer Fair (and for this to be on a Friday evening again as per 2024). Dates for this has been provisionally set as Friday 11th July 2025.
- Personalised items such as the Xmas cards/ tea towels
- Termly newsletter
- Winter Fair
- Uniform sales

New/other fundraising ideas

- Mrs Longhurst noted that she was keen to see if the PTA could help support increased donations to the schools food bank. Ideas from the group included utilising "wish list"/"shopping list" or donation options as well as food donations, and/or getting classes to be responsible for organising a collection periodically outside the school at drop-off.
- Adding a donation option to event promotions/comms for those able to attend but who would still like to donate towards the event (via Arbor).
- Discussion of an Iftar or Eid celebration (some members of the group volunteered to lead on organising this, potentially end of March 2025).
- Kat Barket volunteered to organise child-designed tea towels.
- There was dicussion about reverting to previous arrangements whereby each year was responsible for organising a fundraising event/idea over the course of the school year.
- Focus on child-led/orientated activities and events rather than parent-only ones.
- A desire to engage people/local communities within the school who have not traditionally got involved in the PTA.
- Scarecrow festival
- Camp night at the school
- Link ups with the Ice Dip events at the Cottonmill Lido
- World food sales after school

- Estate Agent sponsorship of fairs (was noted there may be a potential link for this via staff in the School office).
- Approaching big businesses (eg Sainsbury's) for sponsorship/volunteer days. A parent attending volunteered to look into this further.
- Chrissy (Sopwell Residents Association) may be able to help with link to bands for events.
- Share/promote events in other newsletters too (eg. Sopwell Residents Association newsletter).
- Person who previously helped do a lot of promotion for Easy Fundraising no longer has children at the school – need someone else to lead on this. Richard (parent) offered to create a "how to" guide for it.
- St Albans Community Lottery, The Hundred Club, Parentkind Lottery – Rebecca to look into these.
- In terms of encouraging more/new parents to become involved with the PTA, people mentioned putting out more comms that tells people "what it means" to be involved/how people can get involved; be specific about exactly what it is you are looking for support with; give sufficient notice for upcoming events
- Avir offered to help with creation of a website or newsletter.

Next steps

- Some parents volunteered to organise an Iftar party as part of Ramadan/Eid celebrations – likely towards the end of March. Rebecca and Cathy to follow-up to help work out details.
- Richard (parent) volunteered to create an Easy-Fundraising how to guide that could help promote it.
- Avir (parent) offered website design skills to potentially create a PTA website linked to the school website – Rebecca to follow-up offer.
- Mel (parent) offered potential sponsorship and finance skills workshops for kids via her employer. She will look into this further and email the PTA address with details.
- Kat Barker volunteered to organise tea towels – PTA to follow-up.
- PTA committee to meet to reflect on discussions/ideas and plan a provisional events timetable for the year so that they can go out with specific volunteer requests.
- Rebecca/Cathy to discuss the possibility of every year group being responsible for organising one fundraising event/initiative during the year.
- Vicky (PTA) to add those on sign-up sheets to PTA mailing list/helpers what's app group.

How to get involved or contribute ideas

Sign-up sheets were circulated at the event for people to sign-up to be more involved in PTA fundraising. It was also noted that people can email pta@mandeville.herts.sch.uk.

[End of notes]