

Head's Report for AFS AGM, Wednesday 1 March 2017

Thank You

The AGM gives me a chance to acknowledge the great debt the school owes to the AFS. And I do so with a great sense of gratitude; your generosity – with your time, your talents and your money – means such a lot to me. I find it so encouraging to know that our parents are willing to contribute with such willingness to making this school an extraordinary place.

I realise that being a Committee member is an onerous task, so I want to thank those of you who have had such roles. Safina: I remember the way you stepped in last year, taking on a job that you didn't really relish but which you regarded as so important. Thank you for that sacrifice and for the commitment you have shown to the AFS this last year. Another new appointment was Kalvinder, stepping into the role of Secretary with great efficiency. Talking of efficiency, Charles Wood has, of course, been an utterly reliable Treasurer for several years now; it's good to know our accounts are in safe hands and such good order. Thanks to Charles as well for his management of the 100 Club. There are a couple of other long-term servants of the AFS to be mentioned, too: Rupert is such a source of good advice drawing on his long experience of supporting a vast range of school activities; and I can make a similar comment in thanking Jeanette for her many years acting in a school liaison role. That title doesn't make clear the extraordinary time and effort she puts into ensuring AFS activities work smoothly in the day-to-day life of the school. I am very grateful to Gwen for stepping in to the role of Vice Chair, another example of someone stepping up to a responsible post when they recognised a need. Max has kindly taken on the job of co-ordinating volunteers – not an easy role and I'm grateful to him for his willingness. And well done Sallyann – I'm so glad you've become the Staff Representative on the Committee; neither the Committee nor the Staff could have asked for a better person to fulfil that important job. A thank you too for the superb annual quiz – what a great job as usual by Graham Spalding (and family) in running that. Of course I also extend my thanks to all those who come along to AFS meetings – thank you for your tremendous support of the Committee and of the school. Thank you to the AFS for all the work done supporting school activities - 11+ exam day, Open Meetings, Concerts, Carol Service, drama productions, sports day, alumni day, Y7 social evening and presentation evenings.

You are particularly the ones who have given generously of your time; you are also among those who have given generously financially, too. This year seems to have been a good year for project suggestions coming from the school and being supported by the Association:

- The Duke of Edinburgh scheme thrives here because the AFS supports it with such enthusiasm
- You have also supported
 - The RS Department with religious artefacts
 - The PE Department with table-tennis tables and tee-shirts for the sports leaders
 - The Chemistry Department with specialist pumps
 - The DT Department with materials for the F1 in Schools project
 - The SEN Department with materials for a handwriting club
 - The Art Department with framing materials

- The Biology Department with nursery items for the greenhouse and 'Big Brother'
- The Tech Team with lighting and fixtures

Report

- Our expansion continues! We now have an additional 26 boys in Years 7, 8 and 9. I'm planning to take an additional 20 boys into Y12 this year (September 2017).
- Our Pupil Premium policy is working well. The cut-off for Pupil Premium this year is 226 – our highest yet.
- This year's most exciting change was the addition of additional teaching rooms (3 classrooms and 2 labs) which we started to use in July but which we officially opened in September – 60 years minus one day after the first pupils joined the school.
- In July we began a campaign, jointly with Camp Hill Girls, to raise £1 million towards better facilities for the 6th Form. That campaign has raised just shy of £350 000 already. CHG got off to the faster start but, excitingly, the boys campaign seems to be gathering momentum and we've nearly made up the ground. Not that I'm competitive.

AFS Donations

AFS supports the school with colossal time sacrifices. It also raises considerable funds for the school, regularly contributing to support our extra-curricular activities. I have listed specific projects supported this year, but the AFS supports the enormous breadth of enrichment activities that are such an essential part of the boys' lives not only in sport, music, drama and outdoor pursuits, but also in a myriad minor ways – transporting boys to quizzes and competitions, paying for boys to attend the Model UN, paying for chess teas and maths competition lunches, paying for competition entry fees.

I expect every school talks about the three-way partnership between pupils, teachers and parents. But I doubt whether there's a school where the reality bears out the theory more than it does here. I am constantly astonished by the enrichment that the staff provide for the boys – I'm not saying that it isn't often a pleasure, but I am saying it always involves work, worry and effort; the staff do it because they really do feel the boys are worth it – the boys don't add to the difficulties (much!) and they bring in compliments and praise; and you, the AFS, show how much the parents support and encourage that ethos in the school, giving freely of your time and finances.

So I value this annual opportunity to say...

...Thank you!

Martin Garrod

February 2017