

JFA AGM 2008 CHAIR'S REPORT

Hello and welcome to this year's AGM. Thank you all for your support this past year, it has been a very successful year.

As always I cannot start this report without thanking lots of people but as always the hardest part of the job is remembering who to thank for what they have done without omitting any others, so before I start please let me say in advance that the JFA is a group thing, everything we do owes it's success to the hard work and dedication not just of the committee but also to the parents and staff who volunteer to get these functions off the ground and also support them with money and time to make them worthwhile so my thanks go to all of you and them.

We always lose the help of parents whose boy's move on or whose commitments change and unfortunately this year is no exception. Both long standing members of the JFA, Mary Roe, who was the chair for two years, and John Brandon have left the committee. Mary has a new job and John is studying for an MA, so there can be life after the JFA after all. It has been a pleasure working with both of them, I wish them every success for the future and I am sure we will miss their help and support.

Our main purpose is to raise extra funds for the school, but we as parents can also support events organised by other parts of the school. I strongly believe that the association should be seen to support all school departments and our activities and the money we have raised I think reflects that. We have been upgrading the mini buses over the last few years and anyone who can remember the fleet of three or four year ago would realise how important that was. It has taken a significant part of our income but we now have a modern and safe fleet which we can be proud of and that will project a positive image of the school. We have finally completed upgrading the field electric supply, which will make a huge improvement to the smooth running of the fete and we still have a substantial sum with which to support the school this year. Last year the Choir went to Austria and this year there will be a rugby tour to South Africa and while I don't think it would be appropriate for the association to fundraise for these directly I do believe our expertise and equipment should be available to enable them to maximise their fundraising. We are after all parents in the same school. However I do believe that the fundraising activities of the JFA, which does after all raise funds for the whole school including the less glamorous areas should not be compromised.

The Quiz Night now seems to be a regular part of the calendar and is a fun event and also very profitable, thanks must go to Eamonn and James who put a great deal of effort into making the night a success.

The Christmas meal at the Pavilion is now firmly established and all those who come have a very enjoyable time. Good food and good company being

Tim's aim for the evening. Many thanks to Tim O'Flynn and his team for another successful event.

The St Patrick's Night, has been led by John Brandon over the last few years, as John has retired from the committee this year we have to find a successor to ensure this traditional John Fisher event stays the success it has always been.

The Fete is without doubt the main focus of our activities. It takes an awful amount of work throughout the year, this year we spent several Saturdays at the school sorting out the marquees, organising the contents of the garages and upgrading the electrical cables used on the field. Many people spent many hours telephoning volunteers, selling advertising, cajoling parents, organising site plans, manning the garages and sorting the donations, ordering equipment, begging sponsorship and I'm sure the list goes on. We have spent quite a lot of money over the last two years upgrading the electric supply to the field and this year for the first time in a long while the electrics worked as intended with no power cuts. We have as ever recognised areas and issues that need to be addressed for next year, both in the facilities we provide and the entertainment and stalls on the field, any observations from anybody who was at this year's fete will be most welcome. Despite having a strong team we still need more help, we start planning for the fete now so there is plenty to do.

The last big event of the year was the ball. I honestly have no wish to sound as if I'm gloating but it seems these days many schools are no longer able to stage a ball and we realised when we started planning this last year that it was risky, however we pulled it off. It was a very expensive event to stage, we didn't have a great deal of luck with sponsors and the consequent high ticket cost probably deterred a lot of parents at a time of year when there are significant demands on parents' pockets, but it was a great night and was done to a very high standard and will probably be on the calendar in 2010. Not only did we succeed, but the same people behind the ball were working flat out for the fete just two months earlier. Our grateful thanks must go to the Ball Committee.

Our summer event for this year will be family event at the field, probably a mini rugby and mini football tournament as well as food, drink and entertainment, it's going to be tricky making sure it's not a rehash of the fete but it's in safe hands so another successful new event should be on the cards.

My final thanks must go to the committee members who put in so much, particularly Simon the vice chair who is kept so busy he doesn't have a lot of time for vice these days, the members' wives and husbands who allow them out to play so often, Lorraine Garrod and the ladies in the office, Malcolm and David the caretakers, all of whom have never turned down a request for help and particularly to Mr Scully and Mr Liddiard who have given unstinting support and time not only to the committee but also to the events.

Richard Mills. September 2008