

LOWTHER SCHOOL PTA

Lowther Primary School. Parent Teacher Association
Registered Charity No. 1140737

Trustee's Report **Financial Year 01.09.22 – 31.08.23**

1. Trustees During Period

- Christina Hedges
- Nina Parry

2. Committee

- Nina Parry – Vice Chair
- Christina Hedges – Treasurer
- Sharon Day – Member
- Caroline Gladstone – Secretary
- Emma Prentis - Member
- Jol Choughari - Member

3. Objectives & Activities

- Development of a supportive parent & carer community.
- To Liaise with school staff on ways to help develop the school.
- To fundraise to improve & provide learning opportunities.

4. Achievements

Another strong year for the Lowther PTA as an integral part of the local and wider community. We expanded our meeting space to include meetings at the Castelnau Community Centre on Stillingfleet Road, where many Lowther families enjoy the café and the playgroup, leading to stronger community bonds.

After extensive email and playground recruitment failed to bring forward anyone to stand for position of Chair, an incredibly tenacious committee, with the backing of brilliantly dedicated Class Representatives, supported the Vice Chair to take on the leadership role. Everyone was very engaged on breakaway Whatsapp groups, through our big & small fundraisers.

Over and above fundraising, our members have been extremely active volunteering all over the school; from the allotment, including, but not limited to -gardening, welfare of the Lowther chickens, maintenance and vegetable growing; manning the library opening hours; clearing out the PTA cupboard and backing up school events such as a bar at the Y6 production; equipment for the Y6 leavers afternoon tea and providing a 'welcome back BBQ,' which celebrates the new school year and welcomes in new parents.

Thank-you to the office team, Sharon Day, Miss Tania, Mr. Green. Emily Bere. Mr. Ripley. All the fantastic staff, support staff and Ta's! Governors, Parent Governors, Past Parents, Current Parents, Carers & Grandparents.

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photographer Miss Yana, graphic designer Ella Coleman. Community support, including local businesses for their raffle donations. Kitchen and Cleaning Teams. Leaving Parents. Class Reps. Committee Members and their Partners. Thank you all!

A very special shout out to Chef Sarah who is often behind the scenes backing up the PTA for many of the above and below mentioned events!

Heartfelt thanks to Principal extraordinaire, Mark Tuffney, often available to take a 5-minute chat in the playground and extremely quick to reply to emails. Supporting the PTA always and boosting us with encouraging words "I never cease to be amazed at the fantastic dedication and enthusiasm everyone has for Lowther. Thank you all so much!"

Mark also had the unimaginable task of guiding the school through the tragic loss of our co-deputy head, Hannah Hughes. In tribute, an exciting memorial project was developed with her husband; and in May 2024 Doris' Den, the outdoor classroom was unveiled!

The Lowther PTA aims to keep the running cost of the Charity as low as possible. The Lowther PTA spent 1.4% of income in administration of the Charity, meaning up to 98.6% of the donations we received went to benefiting Lowther students. We relied on the goodwill of technology firms such as Google, Microsoft and Canva to provide us with free solutions to run our operations.

Huge thanks to Alan Doorgachurn for providing a thorough examination of the accounts.

The Lowther PTA has been left in a strong position financially for the next school year.

Dream Big 2025 Committee!

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5. Highlights of our Fundraisers

▪ **Christmas Fair**

The Friday afternoon extravaganza! Fabulous class lead stalls selling handmade delights; accompanied by a couple of independent stalls. Many classic fun games in the old hall; teddy tombola, hook a duck, cookie decorating; aimed at the younger years but fun had by all ages! Fresh hot popcorn. A War Hammer room; Face, nail & henna painting. Food service with the help of school lunch chef Mumma, of sausage rolls & hotdogs; mulled wine, and that bar!! The gorgeous bar!!! Great event. Oooohhhh and did I mention the tombola!!

▪ **Summer Fair**

The quintessential crown in the primary school calendar. Executed to perfection! Fun had by all & funds in the bank. Nb: Always have a 'Sponge the Teacher' stall! Continuing from the previous Xmas Fair, the 'cashless' ticket system gave independence to students, choosing which stalls they would visit without the stress for parents handing out cash.

▪ **Raffles**

I am giving the raffles their own section – the quality, share number and variety of our prizes for the last two years for our Summer & Christmas Fairs have been outstanding, thanks to Lowther dad Dave Hedges. The 'bag drop' model was given an overhaul to encourage wider family members to purchase online entries, to great success. Business logos were carefully curated into brilliant marketing posters to maximize exposure for both sales and the businesses supporting the Lowther PTA. Thank you Dave Hedges!

▪ **Barnes Community Association – Summer Fair**

Fun was had by all at the Lowther School stall – a collaboration between the Lowther PTA + Lowther Governors. So lovely seeing so many present/past parents and pupils. Chef Sarah's famous chilli jam sold out, lavender biscuits were a big hit, and everyone loved the addition of the hair braiding by Mez. £564.28 raised.

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- **Quiz Night**

Timeless fun! Co-hosted by Mr. T and Mr. Ripley. Classic format with additional blast from the past rounds of 'guess the crisp flavour', 'paper airplanes', and 'ping pong'. Always have one or two in a calendar year!

- **Bingo Night**

Hosted by the formidable Mr. Green! Co-ordinated by the talented and seasoned parent Louise Wright. Many familiar faces give this event a wonderful community feel. It's fast paced -so you best concentrate! Many breaks for additional games and trips to the bar for refreshments and snacks – but pace yourself, those numbers come flying out!!! Many thanks to the Castelnau Community Centre for the loan of their bingo machine.

- **Wreath Making Workshop**

WOW!! Judith Blacklock of the famous 'Judith Blacklock Flower School' in Knightsbridge, donated her time to teach a limited number of ticket holders 'The way of the Christmas Wreath!' All manner of superlatives were heard around the new hall as masterpieces came together for the seasonal doors of Barnes.

Grandma to Lowther students, it's all about who you know in this world! Thank you to Jane and Christina for curating. *£688.73 raised.*

- **Bake Sales**

Run monthly by each year group and organized by class reps, historically around £1k/year is raised through cake sales. A Cake Stall Kit with full instructions and a template poster has previously been created to help class reps run the stall and is kept in the PTA cupboard. As with previous years, we continued with one cake sale per month to show our support for the school's healthy eating policy. (Don't be afraid to add a fruit bowl to the table). During the hotter months iced lolly sales were held instead.

- **Yoga Mondays**

Another initiative continued from last year. Under new management since the departure of the lovely Elina. This session is loved by the community, and we are grateful for its continuation by yoga instructor Aggi Surma. *£712.89 raised.*

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- **Barnes Christmas Trees**

Held in the carpark of the Wetlands Centre, this seasonal company again agreed to give a percentage of sales to Lowther when mentioning the school. They also kindly donated the gorgeous Christmas Trees in the school hall and reception area.

- **World Book Day Project**

A staple in the calendar, project coordinator and past Chair Kia Morice curates' books for each classroom with Head of English Mr. Nelson and the teachers, to broaden the range of reading resources available at Lowther. Parents and children are then invited to 'buy a book and donate it to the school.' A sticker is placed inside the cover to show who donated the book, giving siblings something to seek out and enjoy. Many thanks to owner of local Barnes Bookshop, Venetia Vyvyan, who has been a great supporter of this project over the years.

- **Uniform Sales**

Emma Prentis has shone in the role of second-hand uniform coordinator following on since the departure of the fabulous Caryn. Another example of the eco culture which Lowther PTA strive for.

- **Enthuse Regular Donations**

Ongoing. *Recommended-* A 2025 school year campaign to engage new Lowther parents to this initiative, as past parents move their funds to high schools. It is brilliant for those hardworking parents with less volunteer hours to give at events and for those less organized of us to know the monthly donation get automatically sent thru.

- **Gift Aid**

It is highly recommended to organize all fundraising to have the availability of gift aid. Gift Aid is a UK tax incentive that enables tax-effective giving by individuals to charities in the United Kingdom.

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- **Lowther Branded Items**

Lowther Eco Group branded jute bags were sold at various events.

Costs vs Sales is the ongoing discussion at the monthly PTA meeting – presales of an item is a great way to monitor engagement. Create the PTA Events site page, target pick-up and drop off with sales tables. Advertise thru parent mail and the weekly school newsletter.

- **Your School Lottery**

Set up by parent Mal, this continues to generate a steady income with very little promotion.

- **Easy Fundraising**

Easy fundraising partners with over 7,000 brands who will donate part of what you spend to a cause of your choice. It won't cost you any extra. The cost is covered by the brand.

- **PTA Events Site & Online Shop**

Our ticketed events are sold online via the PTA Events website. It is a great way to pre-sell items to get numbers on food and drink.

We added a 'donate an additional ticket' and 'order a free ticket' option to keep all PTA events inclusive, regardless of financial circumstances.

In previous years popular additional items have included cases of bubbles, branded jute bags and cute Lowther Teddy Bears.

- **Barnes Literary Festival**

Lowther School is often used as a venue for authors during the festival weekend. A great opportunity for the PTA to run a refreshments stall. No volunteers stepped in to manage this year.

- **Stampastic**

Ongoing. Could use some promotion.

- **Readathon**

Raising funds for the new library space, and promoting Lowther's love of reading, children created personalized enthuse fundraising pages to engage wider friends' and family donations for their readathons. £1151.52 raised!!

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- **Skydiving by Teachers & Parents**

Brilliant day out had by all, teachers and parents alike took to the skies (the second time, after high winds on the first attempt) to raise money for the PTA. Many thanks to Annie Mordue for organizing.

Well done Albert Mordue, Xavier Craine, Garry Craine Rachael Newton, Emma Tittle, Rio Kelier, Steve Keane, Melanie Harverson and Ben Harrison!

Great exposure was utilized by using our social platform 'Lowther School PTA' on Instagram to promote.

A whopping £5,245.78 raised.

- **Coronation Street Party**

A 'Barnes Community Association' organized community event, the tenacious Kia Morice organized Lowther a corner of the action and with the help of Anna Wigley and wonderful parent volunteers; face painting, union jack tattoos, pin the tail on the corgi and hair braiding was enjoyed by locals. *£432.87 raised.*

- **Children designed Christmas Cards**

The popular Festive Card Project by Cauliflower Cards was undertaken again. Children provide artwork, which is professionally printed into cards, gift tags, wrapping paper and onto mugs. A percentage of sales is given to the school.

- **Children Designed Tea Towels**

Organized by now ex-Lowther mum Annie, who patiently went into each classroom to gather and collate stunning student and teacher self-portraits, which were then printed in red ink onto tea towels, available to purchase as Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. A lovely keepsake.

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▪ **Lowther Eco Group**

A Lowther PTA off shoot dedicated to sustainability and the environment and being eco conscious with everything we provide as a PTA.

Credit to Cibebe Fontoura, Andrea Baier and Kerry Jenkins for starting.

'Freecycle' one year on and still going strong, is one such initiative (created by past parents Kirsty + Lindsay,) it encourages Whatsapp group members to offer goods in exchange for a donation to Lowther School. This fits perfectly into the mandate.

Previous fundraising efforts of this group have provided the PTA with glassware and crockery to eliminate single use plastic at events. Awareness to recycling at events. Consciously eliminating waste such as not cellophaneing our raffle hamper gift baskets and using natural dye and non-laminated wrapping papers for student Christmas gifts. Christmas Jumper swap.

This group is currently looking for someone to spearhead and drive.

Special thanks to environmental warrior, the wonderful Susie of 'Barnes Community Gardeners.' A great resource for all things happening in the allotment, she volunteers at the school to teach children about gardening and sustainability. She is active in keeping the Lowther Allotment and Chicken Coop maintained.

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6. Funds Spent

A wonderful year, a brand-new library! On 31st March 2023, PTA funded 'The Reading Forest' was officially opened by royalty - The Duchess of York, Sarah Ferguson! She was an absolute hit with the children! (And the adults, having just released another adult fiction.) This initiative was spearheaded by now ex-teacher Mrs. Tucker; driven by committee treasurer Christina Hedges and decorated by Lowther parent and artist Roy Gallagher 'Rokit.'

The library is manned by parent volunteers whose many hours of sorting and logging books into the Libresoft Librarian school library system brought this project to fruition. Thank you, Librarians Anna, Annie, Aisha, Caroline, Christina, Ella, Emma, Nina, Mel and Sibal. This project has brought a lot of joy. *Instillation* £11,792.93 *Books* £1094.68 *Equipment* £135.45 *Top up of class Reading Scheme resources:* £1,422.51

Our wonderful allotment, a happy place to so many, is maintained by dedicated volunteers, many of whom also financially fund the space. Each year the reception students spend time in the allotment with the Lowther Chickens and learn of the life cycle of an egg – the PTA Committee was more than happy to fund the 'Living Eggs Project' which saw sweet little chicks born in the classroom! (Spoiler alert; it has always been Chef Sarah's dream to keep the chicks, if female, and introduce them to live with the rest of the brood....) *Allotment Running costs* £193.85 *Living Eggs* £285.00

Class Trips are the cornerstone of primary school, so the PTA organized brand new Branded Hi-Viz Vests for the outings. In addition, trip shortfalls were funded, and transport provided. *Hi-Viz Vests* £766.50 21-22 *Trip Shortfall* £940.00 *Coach Transport* £1,100

The boring stuff- *Printing Costs* £300.00 *Sign Stands to advertise events* £113.66

The essentials- *Class Resources* £585.37 *Playground Repairs* £392.16

The fun spending- *Christmas Gift for every Lowther Student* £639.78

PTA Admin- *Enthuse* £239.99 *Parentkind* £140.00 *Previous year Cleaning Fee* £55.00 *BCA Membership* £25.00

7. In Conclusion

With Michelle Obama ringing in our ears "You can't make decisions based on fear and the possibility of what might happen" we developed a core code of ENGAGEMENT, INCLUSIVITY, FUNDRAISING & FUN.

I have reveled in this role; or should that be rebelled?!? The art of communication & delegation are paramount to rise to the challenge of PTA Chair - I would highly recommend "do it!" to anyone on the fence of applying!!

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The sense of self, community and accomplishment at the end of events (most events the very end!) is an unapparelled endorphin high!

I would like to add an additional personal thank you to Caroline Gladstone, Kia Morice and Christina Hedges, they have been the PTA glue and rock steady at every turn!

Nina Parry
4th June 2024

Lowther Primary School Parent Teacher Association

Annual Financial Statements 1 Sep 2022 - 31 Aug 2023 Balance as of EOD 31 August 2022 £ 27,554.50
Balance as of EOD 31 August 2023 £ 32,320.97

2022-2023				
Activity	Campaign Title	Income	Expenditure	Grand Total
Donations		8,741.07		8,741.07
	Regular donation	1,052.69		1,052.69
	One-off donation: Readathon	1,151.52		1,151.52
	One-off donation	910.50		910.50
	One-off donation: charity skydive	5,245.78		5,245.78
	Gift Aid	380.58		380.58
Event		22,822.48	-7,313.55	15,508.93
	Welcome BBQ	1,157.53	-1,346.81	-189.28
	Barnes Food Fair		-73.42	-73.42
	Lowther Eco	337.47		337.47
	Yoga	712.89		712.89
	Quiz Night	343.51	-171.00	172.51
	Bingo Night	1,970.42	-903.73	1,066.69
	World Book Day	1,022.51	-674.35	348.16
	Christmas Fair	4,379.16	-538.54	3,840.62
	Wreath Workshop	734.63	-45.90	688.73
	Cauliflower Cards	388.50		388.50
	Uniforms	422.92		422.92
	Y6 Fundraising	490.50	-492.00	-1.50
	Coronation Street Party	432.87		432.87
	Bake / Ice Lolly Sale	2,327.84	-149.50	2,178.34
	Y6 Production	1,014.55		1,014.55
	Summer Fair	5,391.95	-1,283.77	4,108.18
	Y6 Afternoon Tea	124.04		124.04
	Barnes Fair	751.61	-187.33	564.28
	Tea Towels	819.58	-1,447.20	-627.62
Other Activity		1,434.35		1,434.35
	Easy Fundraising	652.82		652.82
	Stampastic	11.13		11.13
	yourschoollottery	770.40		770.40
School Expenditure			-19,761.89	-19,761.89
	Reading Scheme Top Up		-1,422.51	-1,422.51
	Library installation		-11,792.93	-11,792.93
	21-22 Trip Shortfall		-940.00	-940.00
	Christmas Gift		-639.78	-639.78
	Hi-Viz Vests		-766.50	-766.50
	Allotment		-193.85	-193.85
	Living Eggs		-285.00	-285.00
	Class Resources		-585.37	-585.37
	Playground Repairs		-392.16	-392.16
	Library Books		-1,094.68	-1,094.68
	Library Equipment		-135.45	-135.45
	Coach transport for Polka Theatre		-1,100.00	-1,100.00
	PTA printing costs		-300.00	-300.00
	Sign Stands		-113.66	-113.66
PTA Admin			-459.99	-459.99
	Enthuse Fee		-239.99	-239.99
	Parentkind		-140.00	-140.00
	Cleaning fee owed from 21-22		-55.00	-55.00
	BCA Membership		-25.00	-25.00
Banking Error		0.00		0.00
	Banking Error	0.00		0.00
Grand Total		32,997.90	-27,535.43	5,462.47

Independent examination of the accounts of Lowther Primary School Parent Teacher Association 2022-23

Report undertaken by Alan Doorgachurn at the request of the PTA.

Reason for report

- The purpose of this report is to offer an independent examination of the PTA's accounts for 2022-23.
- As the Association had an annual gross income of more than £25,000, it is required by the Charity Commission to commission an independent examination. The Association's gross income is below £250,000 and, therefore the examiner is not required to be professionally qualified.
- I am currently the treasurer for our Residents Association and have experience as a former Financial Director. I believe I can provide an opinion of these accounts and the records supporting them.
- Relevant disclosures: I have no connection with the school or the events, transactions or business of the Association other than as reviewer of these financial records and reports.

Requirements of the Charity Commission

- The Commission requires the examiner to look at three aspects of the accounts: the accounting records kept; whether the accounts agree with these records; and whether the format of the accounts is correct. The Association prepares its accounts on a receipts and payments (cash) basis.

Records kept

- The Association receives charitable donations from parents and others with an interest in the school and organises fundraising events to support the school and its pupils.
- Funds are used to support the school and its pupils through the purchase of goods and services in agreement with the management of the school.
- The Association holds a number of fundraising events. In 2022-23 they included a Charity Skydive, a Christmas, Summer and Food Fair, the commissioning and sale of Christmas cards, a Quiz Night and a BBQ. Receipts and payments are recorded for these events showing the net income for each, contributing to the financial statements. The accounts are well recorded with a clear description of all transactions.
- Expenditure is approved and recorded with an invoice being presented to the Association. Allotment expenses are administered out of the general account.
- Where expenditure is undertaken by members of the Association or members of the school staff, a "Request for out-of-pocket expenses" form is used, supported by receipts and this discipline is consistently observed. In 2022/23, the PTA transitioned between two forms of the expense reimbursement process (from paper based towards an online submission – via 'Jotform'). There are two formats of unique identifiers for each reimbursement request.
- All income and expenditure records are itemised by activity/event and fully reconciled to bank statements.

Reconciliation of the accounts and records

- Transactions are consolidated into the financial statements accurately and balances reconciled.
- All transactions were agreed individually to bank statements.
- Income and expenditure were reviewed for each recorded activity/event.

Format of the accounts

- As the accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis, the format of the financial statements is fit for purpose and appropriate for this size and type of organisation.

Observations & Recommendations

- During 2022/23 the cash balance has increased from ~£28k to ~£32k, which has the potential to add another source of income. If this is expected to continue throughout the year, the Association should consider depositing these funds in an interest-bearing account to take advantage of higher at-call interest rates without reducing the ability to fund the activities of the association.
- It should be noted that the Association is operating effectively from several perspectives:
 - Fund-raising has been efficient: of the 27 activities, 12 (~44%) had associated costs that only represented ~22% of funds raised.
 - Expenditure has been focused on a small number of key projects: The library installation, books & reading scheme and transportation.
 - Administrative costs have remained low: PTA administrative expenses totalled £460 (~1.4% of income)

Summary

- It is my opinion that the accounts are accurate, and that the quality of its record keeping is high.