



Dear Parents & Carers

Invitation to 'Friends of St John's' Meeting - Friday 9th February at 9am

Happy New Year! We are writing to invite you to the first meeting of the New Year. This will be the inaugural meeting of our new community body which will incorporate both the existing PTA and Parent Council. The meeting will be held at 9am on Friday 9th February and will be chaired by Mr Sweetingham. Please sign in at the school office when you attend.

Why Change the PTA and Parent Council?

The current constitution for the PTA was adopted in 1991 when we originally applied to the Charity Commission for Charitable Status. It has become apparent that this old constitution is no longer fit for purpose; consequently we agreed at the PTA AGM in November to adopt the model constitution produced by PTA-UK which has been pre-approved by the Charity Commission.

The Parent Council has developed some great initiatives and has provided us with a spring-board with which to reconsider how the school works best with its parents, carers and the wider community.

All associations need a constitution. This document establishes the fundamental rules by which an association is governed and describes the aims of the association and its powers, its membership, the size of the committee and how members are elected and the need for an annual audit and general meeting. Likewise, it became apparent that there was a great deal of crossover between the PTA and the Parent Council and that it would be beneficial to the school to merge the two.

We hope that you will agree that the changes will bring our school community in line with best practice and secure it as a respected, efficient and stable support for our school and children.

What has changed?

- **To be renamed 'Friends of St John's' / 'St John's Community Association'**

In a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), members are limited to parents, carers and teachers; we wanted our association to reflect the support we receive from our church, grandparents and local community and to appeal to males and females alike.

- **Our committee structure has been clarified**

We have streamlined the committee in line with best practice. The committee is a team of volunteers who are elected at the association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) to manage the association on behalf of the members and the Trustees. Whilst Trustees have a legal duty to ensure the charity is meeting all its charitable requirements, decisions should be made collectively by the committee. No one individual will take sole responsibility

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for a committee decision or activity. Our committee will be comprised of the following:

- The Chair: Headteacher (currently Mr Sweetingham)
- The Secretaries: usually parents (currently Fiona Good & Catherine Goumal)
- Treasurer: usually a family or church member (currently a grandparent, Keith Jones)
- Extra member from school staff: Deputy Head (currently Mrs Mitri)

We felt that two representatives from our SLT and two parent representatives, plus our current treasurer being a grandparent, gave us a good all-round perspective on views to make decisions going forward. We also needed to have five members to ensure an unequal number when it comes to voting decisions.

Please note that this committee meets to ensure the smooth running of the organisation and to ensure spending decisions are made transparently and correctly. It does not replace the essential work of the class reps and the wider group of people involved in helping to fund-raise or improve the school in other ways.

Meeting Frequency and Times:

In order to maximise the availability of parents and teachers to attend these meetings, we have changed our meeting times as follows:

- 1 x meeting at 9am on a Friday
- 1 x meeting at 6:30pm on a Wednesday
- 1 x meeting at 8pm on a Wednesday

We will then have sub-committee meetings (for example the Year One parents for the fetes) to enable members to focus on specific events/funding/school improvement discussions.

In all of these changes, our focus has been to ensure that we are utilising best practice in terms of how we run our charity and to be operating the most efficient model for all those involved. As we are a growth mindset school, we welcome any feedback and we will revise our approach as necessary.

Lastly, we look forward to seeing you at the new meetings! Please diarise the following dates for this half term (all meetings will take place at school). If you would like to attend please inform the school office:

9am Friday 9th February (the agenda for this meeting is attached)

6.30pm Wednesday 14th March

9pm Wednesday 25th April

9am Friday 1st June

Yours faithfully

Mr Sweetingham, Fiona Good, Catherine Goumal

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