

Friends of Thornden School (FOTS) AGM
14 November 2023 7.30 pm, E2

Present: Rachel Beesley, Andrea Berry, Polly Gleeson (chair), Jess Lacey, Nic Lansdowne, Lou Peaston (Thornden rep), Delia Yang

Apologies: David Holdsworth (treasurer), Catherine Stephou, Ann Edmeades, Susanne Fredrich-Thornton

Minutes: Jess Lacey

1. Welcome

Welcome to all particularly Lou, Rachel and Andrea joining us for a first FOTS AGM.

2. Minutes of AGM 2022

Minutes were read and approved. Proposed Jess Lacey; seconded Delia Yang.

3. School report

Lou Peaston gave a report on behalf of the school.

The school is hugely grateful for the support FOTS give the school – thank you! FOTS provide things that are not in the school budget and enable the school to provide a rounded education to all students. The particular focus on giving to PE over the last couple of years has made a big difference to the status within the school. There has been money for a really wide range of departments and clubs and activities and this enriches the experience of students at the school in ways which core funding doesn't. The bid system for teachers seems to work well and FOTS consider what is affordable and will benefit the widest range of pupils given the available funds. There will be an increased focus on community going forward and it would be good to have engagement with FOTS in that.

4. Finance Report

In David's absence, it was reported that 2022/23 had the highest distribution of funds given to bids - £22,095.26! Available funds for this meeting £4,500. Gift Aid had not yet been applied for last AY, nor had money been received from school for the own clothes day. So, this amount will increase in due course. See finance hand-out for figures. Our financial accounting period ends on 31st August and the GA is usually claimed in August so it is helpful for any money owed to us by the school whether from the own clothes day or from online donations to be with us by end of July at the latest to allow accounts to be accurate at year end.

It was noted that FOTS like to keep short accounts and get the money out working to benefit pupils as soon as possible, however the past 2 years had seen a larger amount to distribute as fund had accumulated since Covid.

5. Chair's report

Polly Gleeson reported that for the second year running, FOTS had seen the most money given to school for bids. FOTS is a very small team given the size of the school, but they achieve great things. A wide range of departments and clubs within school have been supported and the team input is vital to ensure fair input into the distribution of funds.

In the first year Polly chaired FOTS back in 2015 just £750 was given to the school. Since then over £86,000 has been donated to the school – a great achievement! A large part of this money is from parent contributions. Currently there are 161 active donors who contribute approximately £12,000 per year to FOTS. It would be great to be able to increase the number of donors, then even more bids could be accepted!

The start of the academic year was busy as usual with the open evening and Year 7 welcome event, then it is generally quiet apart from second hand uniform requests until the summer y6 eventing. Lou suggested there may be an opportunity to assist at a revised Year 9 options event – more details to follow. Nic did an amazing job once again dealing with uniform going above and beyond to make sure that people get what they need, particularly for ensuring our Ukrainian students received free uniform, and ably assisted by Annekie, Sumiaya, Jess, Delia and others. Wates Family Trust gave £500 for student mental wellbeing which was much appreciated.

A huge thanks to David for his help as Treasurer over the past 8 years – we wouldn't be in the position we are without him. We wish him every happiness in the future! A replacement is still being sought – please get in touch if interested in this role.

It is great to have Lou as staff liaison – thank you for your time and support for FOTS. Thanks also to the site team for shifting our heavy stuff, front of house staff for dealing with uniform, finance team, Aly Murray and all those involved in the school transition team.

Thank you to the team as a whole and, thank you to Jemima Gleeson for all her help with uniform/events and for help from other FOTS family members – it all makes a difference! Also, thank you to Delia for maintaining Facebook. Anyone else like to help her please make yourself known.

6. Election of Officers

A short discussion of how we structure the formal roles. We have a current simple set up of 2 officers (chair and treasurer) and agreed that whilst this works well, it would be good to have a deputy chair also. Our constitution allows people to re-stand/be re-elected if no other candidates. Polly was happy to stand again and there were no other volunteers. The Treasurer position is currently vacant – subject to finding a replacement. We can limp along for a bit but we really need someone to take on this role. DY happy to help someone in post.

Re-election of Polly Gleeson as Chair: Proposed Andrea Berry, seconded Delia Yang
Election of Nic Lansdowne as Vice Chair: Proposed Jess Lacey seconded by Andrea Berry.

End of the formal AGM 9.00pm

7. Bids meeting

£4500 in the kitty

- i. English fast feedback machine – requested 16 machines, agreed to trial use of 4 machines. £240 AGREED.
- ii. Modern Foreign Languages play – requested further funding for MFL plays for Y7,8,9 following £900 and £600 last academic year. £300 AGREED.
- iii. Pastoral Support – requested equipment for a new, larger wellbeing den. Suggested asking for donations for some items in the school newsletter. £350 AGREED.
- iv. Pastoral Support: Young Carers – requested funding to support group for the AY. Part agreed and advised to request more funding in next bidding round. £500 AGREED.
- v. Pastoral Support: Achievement badges – requested £1800 for reward badges for students in Y7&8, however cost was considered too high and not sustainable. Happy to consider again with revised costings possibly custom badges made with 3D printer? DECLINED.
- vi. ELSA funding – Wates donation allocated to ELSA support. £500 AGREED.
- vii. Food Tech – requested money to replace aprons. £300 AGREED.
- viii. Food Tech – requested money to replace chopping boards. £400 AGREED.
- ix. FOTS – to purchase storage boxes and light for FOTS shed. £50 AGREED.

Total of bids agreed – £2,640

8. AOB

There was a brief review of the constitution at the meeting. Clause 2 refers to the Local Education authority as this was last altered in 2007 and is no longer accurate. We need to refer to the Charity Commission to change the wording of this particular clause so we should make this approach to them before the next AGM

9. Next meeting

Will be arranged in the Spring term.