

SURBITON HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1058888

CHAIR'S REPORT 2008/9

GOVERNANCE

The aims of the Parents' Association (PA) remain unchanged:

- To serve the interests of the school community;
- To enhance the social wellbeing of the parents; and
- To raise funds for distribution within the three schools.

The PA is a Registered Charity and is bound by the regulations in place for the governance of charities. It is managed by a General Committee consisting only of parents and an Executive Committee which also includes the Principal and senior staff. There are six committee meetings each year (one general and one executive each term), which are formally minuted, the minutes of which are open to inspection by members on application to the Secretary.

Changes to the Safeguarding (child protection) policies came into effect in September '09 which impacted us as a charity and which the Charities Commission recommended we adopt. In June '09, the PA formally adopted the same policies which Surbiton High School had recently put in place. It was agreed that any officer or committee member who had any concerns would follow the school's policy.

The Treasurer has prepared the Annual Accounts and these have been independently examined by Paul Bloomfield. We are once again grateful to Mr. Bloomfield who has performed this service for us on a pro bono basis for a second year running.

Expenditure of PA funds is authorised using a Wish List process. Each of the three schools pass their requests for contributions through an Approvals Sub-committee comprising the Chair and two or three other committee members. Approval for expenditure of PA funds rests with this sub-committee and must also be signed off by one of the members of the senior staff. For larger items, it is now the practice for requests to be presented to the entire parent body of the Parents Association committee, and passed by a formal vote at one of the committee meetings.

ACTIVITIES

Fundraising is by means of subscription, surpluses from events held, and through sales or commissions from, most notably, the second hand uniform sales.

The **Christmas Fair** proved again to be the biggest fundraiser of all our events. In light of the harsh economic climate at the time, our profit of £5488, just slightly more than the previous year, was a wonderful result. The event is always well attended by parents and students from all three schools, with caroling, mulled wine and mince pies, activities, games and Santa's Grotto helping to mark the beginning of the festive season. The Wii with Wii Fit raffle prize was a huge hit and will be hard to beat next year. Many thanks to Ruth Parsons, Debbie Weaver and Valerie Palmer who put in a huge amount of effort organising the internal and external stalls and catering.

Another firm fixture in the calendar is our **Quiz Night**, which ran with a 'Blast from the Past' theme this year, producing many colourful combinations from parents' wardrobes. It was the second time we successfully used the Activote system and the first time we used our own caterers. It worked well having a break in the middle of the quiz to go down to the dining room for chicken, chips and salad, followed by black forest gateau. A local wine importer supplied and manned the bar which helped ease the work on the PA. A big thank you to Diana Jarvis and Valerie Palmer for their tremendous efforts with this event.

We ran the 4th Annual **Year 7 Welcome Supper** and, on the back of its success, introduced a similar event for the Junior Schools, combining parents of Year 3 girls and Reception boys and girls. Parents from their children's year group had a first chance to really get to know each other. There was much fun and laughter and all enjoyed the dinners put on by our school caterer. At both sets of dinners, we asked the parents for permission to obtain and circulate their personal details to those in their class, as well as the PA. In doing

so, we hope to create a closer knit community within the schools. Well done to Sue El-Hakeem, Debbie Weaver and Hilary Hart for their great efforts with this event.

The **Dad's Family Camping Event** is, perhaps, the most highly anticipated event of the year. This is a first come, first served event, with more than a few people missing out on the 185 places that were permitted this year. Those who attended revelled in the opportunity to freely explore the safe part of the woods, or participate in the football, rounders, tennis and cricket games that were organised throughout the afternoon. They were then treated to a barbecue feast before toasting marshmallows in front of a blazing fire and finally falling exhausted into their tents. Thanks to Geoff Day, Jim Vanstone, Steve Kelly, Patrick Kidney and Neil Bradley for keeping everyone safe, warm, fed and entertained.

After much discussion, it was recognised that a different tact was needed with the summer event. We heard that the parents did not want to be on a boat, in fancy dress or paying too much per ticket! We came up with a plan to host a musical event at Hinchley Wood where people could bring their own picnics, and so **The Posh Picnic in the Park** was born. We chanced the weather and were treated to a beautiful summer's eve, complete with perfect sunset and starry skies. The live music included harp, flute, piano and live band music, plus operatic singing and solos from popular musicals. Those who attended claimed it a fantastic success, including some of our Hinchley Wood neighbours who were also invited. Although we made a loss, we believe we have set the right foundations with the Posh Picnic as our summer event and hope to build on its success next year. We hope that parents will see this event as the perfect event to celebrate the end of year together. A great job in a short amount of time was done by Judith Jones, Ruth Parsons, Mary Elliott and myself in orchestrating this event.

This year the PA also provided assistance to the Art Department at the Senior School. Each year Kate Ross, Cheryl Furlong and the rest of the art staff put on GCSE and AS/A2 art exhibitions requiring a huge amount of effort. Martin Morgan-McNeil of Brookwood Caterers provided all of the food and drink for these two events which the PA then set up, served and cleared away. The Art Department were very grateful as they were able to concentrate solely on the exhibition itself. Thanks to Ruth Parsons, Diana Jarvis and Karen Goddard for all their help.

The September junior events were again a huge success. Thanks to Tamsin Tomlin who single-handedly organised the **Junior Girls' Disco**. The girls enjoyed dancing to Dynamix and his Dancers and loved the glowsticks which they proceeded to wear round their necks, wrists and in their hair. As the first PA event in the Junior Girls' school year, it is always nice for the parents to stay and catch up over a glass of wine. And it was another fantastic day out for the boys at the **Prep Family Fun Day**, who loved the football coaching, bouncy castles, tug-of-war and other activities. Pimms and beer as well as teas and coffees were sold for the first time ever, with much success. Thanks to our organisers: Tamsin Tomlin, Geoff Day and Sue El-Hakeem.

Karen Goddard, who has successfully run the **Second Hand Uniform Sales** for many years, stepped down from this role and resigned from the committee at the end of last term due to the fact that her daughter was to leave the school in July. We thank her for the huge amount of time and effort she contributed over the years. We are very grateful to Jane Morrison and Jane Ioakimides who have jointly come forward to fill the vacant position. Already, both ladies have done much to further promote the second hand sale to all three schools. We are pleased to continue to provide this vital service to the parents of all three schools - a green way of recycling clothing whilst saving parents money and adding to the PA funds.

We all look forward to the introduction of several new events next year. Specifically:

- Cauliflower Christmas Cards - responding to Parents' wishes to bring this particular event back into the calendar;
- Christmas Tree Sales - a new fundraising event; and
- Race Night - for the parents in all three schools, but specifically as there are fewer socialising events for those in the senior school.

Northbrook Fundraising carried on again with success in the Junior Girls school and at the Prep. Thanks to the parents who purchased these fine quality Christmas and birthday gift wrap which are sourced from European sustainable forests, for which we received 22% for each item sold. www.buy.at/shs continues to provide growing revenues. Using this webshop, parents can access retailers' usual websites such as Tesco, M&S, John Lewis, Amazon, etc and the PA receive 3% commission on each transaction.

We held termly class rep meetings and we continue to find the exchange of views and feedback very beneficial in planning and marketing events. Thank you to all the class reps for attending and helping us with PA activities throughout the year.

APPROVALS

Towards the end of last year, a move was made to fund larger, more substantial items of capital expenditure. Accordingly, as requested by the schools, the PA purchased a 16-seater minibus for £29,000 which has been in constant use by all three schools since its unveiling in February '09. The PA have also contributed to the Junior Girls' School playground refurbishment by supplying wooden toadstools, benches, music panels and totem poles worth £5300. The new garden was unveiled earlier today to the delight of the junior girls.

We currently have only one item on our wish list though it is a major expense. We are currently looking to help fund the updating of the performing arts equipment at the Surbiton Assembly Rooms. Although we are in the early stages of planning, this will most probably minimally include curtains, lighting and sound equipment.

Thanks to all the Committee members who have thrown their energy into organising the events this past year. Special thanks go to Neil Bradley for chairing the Parents' Association so successfully right up until July '09 when his son left the Prep, and to our Committee members who are retiring this year: Ruth Parsons (Secretary), Mary Elliott (Treasurer) and Debbie Weaver, each of whom have done a wonderful job in their executive roles and had great success with the events they helped run. Mary deserves an extra hurrah for serving a total of four years on the committee.

The PA could not do their role without the help of a great many people. Thanks to our caretakers, Peter Stirling - our groundsman at Hinchley Wood, Martin Morgan-McNeil and all the catering staff at Brookwood, and all the administrative staff in the three schools for their help in organising, preparing and rolling out each event.

To all of the parents at the School, thank you so much for supporting our events. We hope that you and your children have enjoyed each one and that the gatherings have enabled you to grow closer to other families in your children's classes as a result. We look forward to seeing more of you this year.

Cynthia Mitchell
Chair