



FRIENDS OF
THE MEAD

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AUTUMN 2019 NEWSLETTER



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Friends of The Mead

Who We Are and What Do We Do

Tammy McIntosh (Secretary), Alice Patience (Vice-Chair), Matthew Grogan (Treasurer) and I (Emma Kent, Chair) make up the executive committee of FoM. FoM is a charity and the committee's aim is to run fun events that bring The Mead community together outside of the classroom and in turn raise funds for FoM. These funds will then be used to enhance our children's education over and above what the school already provide. Our mission is to ensure that whatever money we raise, is spent as soon as possible, so the children can benefit straight away.

This academic year has got off to a fantastic start with some great events for both the children and adults. We've had our welcome coffee for new parents on the first day of term, movie night and parents' drinks, own clothes day, the Starlight Ball and we still have our Christmas morning for the children on Friday 13th December. We hold regular meetings and all are warmly welcome to join us and we'd love to see any new faces. Dates of future meetings will be communicated via the school office. We have our own website at www.pta-events.co.uk/friendsofthemead where further details can be found on forthcoming events and lots more. We can be contacted at fom@thameadschool.co.uk with any queries, suggestions or feedback.



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Starlight Ball

School was transformed by thousands of lights into a winter wonderland by FoM, for our recent Starlight Ball. To be honest, we were amazed at the transformation ourselves and felt a bit emotional on the night. Everyone arrived looking glamorous and the drinks started flowing early doors. The start of the night was kicked off with a fun game of heads and tails and David Absolon won the prize of £150! Throughout the evening we were looked after by Hattons Events and the food, wine and service were all first class. Fundraising Auctions ran the auction event for us and we were blown away by all your support, as this raised £13.5k of funds for the FoM, which is a record breaking event for us. This money will be used to enhance our children's education and details of how it will be spent will be communicated out in the new year. We ended the night with two hours of dancing and we were having so much fun, no one wanted to leave at midnight when it all ended.

It has been wonderful seeing all your photos on social media, particularly the ones from the photo booth and I think the main thing to say to everyone is thanks so much for your support. From the donations of lots for the auction, to the people bidding on the lots, to the sponsors and all the people that came over the weekend to help with set-up and clear away, we couldn't do it without you. Lastly, thanks to everyone that came and made it the best night ever. We are so proud to be part of this amazing school, with such a wonderful heart. The atmosphere on the night was truly one of the best we have ever experienced.



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Parent Power

Over the past year, the current FoM committee have been blown away by the generosity of some of our parents and what an amazing network of contacts we have at The Mead. One of The Mead's strongest assets is its community and we feel that there are so many ways we can help each other.

If we look at the support we have had for some of our recent events – particularly Meadfest and the Starlight Ball – we had some amazing local, independent businesses owned by Mead parents step forward; from Maddison's Residential (estate agents) on the Pantiles, to FJR Studio (architect) on Warwick Park and Sleepy Wilson also on the Pantiles (luxury sleepwear). None of our events could happen without these sponsors and we really encourage you to look on our website under the sponsorship section and support their businesses in return if you ever require services in their field.

In addition, we have had so many parents come forward with prizes and lots for raffles and auctions. A special mention goes to Jenny James at 360 Private Travel in Sevenoaks (jenny@360privatetravel.com) who donated two amazing lots for our auction, Fred Finan who generously donated the Washington Apartment for a week stay, Ayme and Darryl Flay for donating a 4 ball and their Courchevel Chalet, Sian Haines for the Lucy Claw artwork, Tammy James for the Mount Edgcumbe, Tamasin Absolon for getting Handelsbanken to sponsor and gave us memorabilia golf balls for the auction and Nathan Kent for the Goodwood VIP tickets. Thank you also to the Ball sub committee for all your hard work in getting this most recent event organised – Ayme Flay, Nicky Roche, Tamasin Absolon, Sian Haines, Clare Curran, Claire Chattenton and Emma Moss.

There is also plenty of hard work that goes on behind the scenes to provide other benefits to the school community, including the second hand uniform shop and summer ice cream stall. We would like to thank Gemma James and Aydee Garcia who spend time in the FoM shed every week sorting and organising our Second hand uniform shop and Jenni Sach who runs our very popular ice cream stall in the summer term.

Without all of the above happening, these events wouldn't exist. We have already had interest from other parents for our Summer event Meadfest next year and if anyone else is interested in sponsoring or donating prizes for our raffle, please contact us on FOM@thameadschool.co.uk. As well as having a fab time at these events, we raise funds to help enhance all our children's education and as you will see further on in the newsletter, they really get put to good use. Thank you!



JENNY JAMES

PRIVATE TRAVEL

Jenny@360privatetravel.com

07786 076308



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Where the Funds Go?

As a committee, FOM have been delighted to purchase some fantastic new resources for the school this academic year. As most of you will have noticed, the area outside the Kindergarten entrance has been transformed into a new play area for Kindergarten and Pre-Reception. The new space, funded by FOM, gives the children the freedom to move freely between their classroom and the outside area. FOM has decked out the space with their very own little workshop, tools, kitchen scales, rainwater kits and much more.



Mrs Ovenden says: *'Most exciting of all has been the woodwork bench and real tools. The benefits of woodwork are endless – supporting skills such as problem solving, creative and critical thinking, coordination and developing a can-do attitude. We feel very lucky to have this new area that the children can access anytime during the school day.'*

FOM funds have also been used to buy new art materials, a new picnic table and cover and a new water table for Reception. We have also recently purchased some wireless microphones for use by the Performing Arts department at church services and performances and will soon be purchasing some netball dresses for Key Stage 2. Watch this space for news regarding exciting plans for the old Kindergarten playground!

At our most recent meeting we had some queries from the parent body regarding FoM events supporting charities. As FoM is a charity itself, we must abide by the charity commission guidelines. These state that when running fundraising events we must be open and accountable about what we are raising funds for and that our fundraising aims and achievements are clearly communicated to the public and to all donors to the event. Any fundraising for other charities must be driven by the school (e.g. the current Christmas collection for Nourish), or as a stand alone committee (e.g. when Jane Cobbold organised the Macmillan coffee afternoon) in order to provide absolute clarity.

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Library Plans

Our school library is packed full of interesting books to suit all ages, abilities and interests. Alongside paying for four annual magazine subscriptions, FoM dedicate £1500 of hard raised funds each year to add new curriculum enhancing books to the library, for all students to enjoy.

We are currently working on plans to develop and implement a new library system and add in some new books. Matthew Grogan, our FoM Treasurer and a partner at Thomson Snell and Passmore has been able to recruit Gillian Mayrick, an experienced law firm librarian to help us introduce a new library system. A big thank you to Matt and Gillian; we are very excited to launch this initiative in early 2020.



We are hoping Year 6 students and parent volunteers will help us run it! For more information or to volunteer your time, please contact FoM@themeadschool.co.uk

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Easyfundraising

For those who don't know, there's a great website called easyfundraising.org.uk, through which you can effortlessly help raise money for Friends of The Mead whenever you're shopping online with over 3,600 major retailers, such as Amazon, eBay, John Lewis, Argos, Next, Booking.com and many more. The way it works is that the retailers make a small donation to say thank you and easyfundraising gives those funds to charity - in our case, FOM.

Please register using this unique link:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/fomeadsch/?invite=GW8OGK&referral-campaign=s2s>

Then search for 'Friends of The Mead School - Tunbridge Wells' and click 'support us'.

As an added bonus, once you've signed up and raised £5 in donations, easyfundraising will then give FOM an extra £5. There's no catch or hidden charges and FOM will be really grateful for your donations. Several of us have been doing it for a few months now and it really is as easy as it sounds. Once you've registered and are shopping online with one of the participating companies, you'll be prompted to click on a link to access the normal retailer's site through the easyfundraising portal and that really is all there is to it. You also get a monthly summary of what you've raised. Even if we all just do it every time we're ordering something from Amazon (which in our house is at least a daily occurrence) it will make a big difference. Thanks for looking!

Local relationship banking



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Matched Funding

We have recently been alerted to another initiative that we can use to help increase our funding for FoM. Matched funding is a scheme that over a hundred companies have signed up to. If you work for one of the companies detailed on the photo, and volunteer an hour or so of your time to help on a FoM event then that could double the funds raised.

For example, if you volunteered to help run the bar at movie night and parents' drinks and that took £500, then your company would match that amount and give us a further £500. This is a very simple way to get free money for doing very little.

If anyone does work for one of these listed companies and is willing to help out at future events, then please contact FOM@themeadschool.co.uk so that we can ensure we are raising as much money as possible. Thanks in advance.



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Yorkshire Water

Do you work for one of these companies?

If so, you might be able to help boost our fundraising efforts as the above companies sign up to the Matched Funding scheme.

e.g. volunteering an hour of your time at the Christmas Fair or at a Cake Sale could double our funds raised on that stall.

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