

## **Focus on the Friends of Raglan (FoR)**

This week I would like to put the spotlight on our schools' PTA, The Friends of Raglan or FOR. It exists to serve your children and enhance their experience of school life as well as building a sense of community. They are currently raising funds to upgrade both playgrounds, as well as providing vital funds for some other fun and educational items. Today I'd like to share the ways that you can support FOR's fundraising endeavours with minimal input including some of the less obvious that you may not have heard of including fundraising while you shop online (easyfundraising) and doubling fundraising (matchfunding), both of which are expanded on below.

Most importantly, FOR is a group of parent volunteers. They rely on help and support from parents to organise and run events. Please don't hesitate to contact them if you have any ideas for events or would like to be involved.

## **THE FUNCTION OF FoR & CHARITABLE PURPOSE**

Whilst the name may not immediately suggest it, its function is that of the PTA. They help to raise funds for our school by organising events for children and parents of the school, such as fairs, discos, quiz nights, treasure hunts and Christmas events. Their formal charitable purpose is "To advance the education of the Pupils of the School by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities for education at the School (not normally provided by the Local Authority)". That suggests that it has been to raise funds for those extra 'nice-to-haves' not covered by the School's budget. However the reality today in the current climate of government funding cuts, is that the funds it raises are integral and essential to provide the children with the best learning facilities and overall school experience.

## **CURRENT FUNDRAISING TARGET & OBJECTIVES**

Our current aspiration and ambition, is to raise enough funds to overhaul all of the school play areas (both KS1 and KS2 playgrounds) to bring them in line with modern expectations of what school outdoor play and sport facilities should offer. I'm sure most of you are familiar with the fundamental role outdoor play has in children's development. This role cannot be overstated and stimulating play equipment is not a 'nice-to-have' - it is an ESSENTIAL element of your child's learning and development. Sadly, our current play areas, whilst still being functional, could be so much better in terms of variety and stimulating outdoor play experience.

Unfortunately, our school's budget just will not cover the cost of the works required to do this at Raglan to the standard I, and the other teaching staff want for your children. I have on several occasions over the past year pointed out the depressing situation of school budgets not increasing with inflation. To remind you once more, since 2010 there has been a 9% rise in the amount we receive for each of your children. Inflation stands at 40% since 2010 according to the Bank of England. Had we received an increase per child in line with inflation since 2010 we would not have had to make savings by reducing teaching assistants and teacher numbers across our school. Clearly the impact of this is huge across every aspect of school. In addition to this we would be able to afford upgrades to playgrounds; and to purchase more resources – including technology.

When I took up post at the beginning of last September, I asked FOR to accept a two year fundraising target of £35,000. An ambitious but achievable target, and I am pleased that with your support, they have met the first year's target. Those funds, together with funds already raised means that we are ready to order new KS1 playground equipment. We are already working on proposals for the KS2 playground, which you will appreciate is a far more involved, and therefore significantly more expensive, project. It is therefore important that we all get behind FOR and their efforts, to ensure that we raise as much as possible and can start work there too. Many of you take the time to chat to me in the mornings and afternoons which I enjoy. I know you all want to do the very best for your children and so do we. My hope is that by all of us offering our support to FOR we will be able to deliver the new play areas sooner. I've attached a visual of the new play equipment we are planning to install during the Easter holiday next year. I hope you will agree it will provide a massive upgrade to the current play experience for the KS1 children and those attending breakfast club and after-school Safari club.

## **FUNDRAISING ACHIEVEMENTS**

In the 2022/2023 school year FOR raised funds totalling £18,248.94. In addition, they also made their traditional contributions towards the annual school Christmas parties and Christmas class gifts (£45 per class) and the Year 6 leavers party (£300). They also met 50% of the cost of the African drumming sessions a few weeks ago, allowing me to book workshops where every child was able to participate with their own drum and drumming experience, rather than just watch and listen. They contributed £75 worth of books to the library on diversity and inclusion last year and made a donation to the gardening club when their Belfast sink planters were stolen.

This may not sound like a lot, but as the main focus is on the playground upgrades, the majority of the money raised is being saved towards that. In the previous academic year (2021/2022) FOR funded 50 new iPads in the school and an interactive whiteboard, at a cost of over £4,000. The sooner the funds are raised for the playgrounds, the sooner FOR can go back to helping with those sorts of things.

## **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

I appreciate that parents have pressures on their time, but there are more ways to get involved than you may be aware. Some of these are set out below and I would encourage you to investigate whether you can help through any of these.

There are many ways you can help.

### **Online Shopping!**

- **Easyfundraising:** How many of you shop online or will shop online for Christmas gifts? Do you have your supermarket shopping delivered? If the answer is yes, then please consider visiting the retailer website through Easyfundraising. Doing so will contribute small amounts of funds back to the School with each order, which all add up. There is no cost to you, other than the small amount of extra time to go through Easyfundraising, rather than directly to the retailer website. If many of you do so, then it has the possibility to add up to significant sums. There are over 7,000 retailers signed up to give back to charities, so please do have a look using the link below.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/foraglan>

Sign up now, and make your first purchase through Easyfundraising, and they will make a bonus £5 donation! Some retailers may require ordering through their webpage, rather than the app, but the small amount of extra time will raise valuable funds for the School.

### Your Time

- **Volunteering:** FOR are always looking for volunteers to help with organising events or on the day and afterwards. Any time you can spare - even an hour or two helping to set up or looking after a stall at the Christmas Fair for example – is always appreciated and it all contributes to achieving the fundraising goal.

There is a schedule of upcoming events for the rest of the year – if you would like to be on the list of FOR volunteers or offer help for a specific event please get in touch with FOR - contact details are below. It is so helpful for FOR to know how many volunteers will be available for events as far in advance as possible.

- **Researching grant funding:** There are a lot of grants out there that may be applicable to our school and the provision of new play areas. We have been lucky to be able to raise the funds for the KS1 playground upgrades, purely through FOR organised events. However, grants could make a substantial contribution and will significantly accelerate the timetable for delivering KS2 upgrade works. Researching them is time-consuming on top of organising and managing the FOR event calendar. Anyone who may have a few spare hours help with the research should contact FOR to find out how they can help with this. If anyone has any experience of drafting grant applications or pitch documents, FOR is keen to hear from you too so please do get in touch.

### Your Generosity

- **Attending FOR's events:** FOR strive to make events affordable with a focus on building the wider school community. Many of them are directly aimed at providing socialising and fun opportunities for the children outside of school hours, e.g. the Board Games Café and Family Bingo nights. Please do come along when you can. I hope to see as many of you as possible at the Christmas Fair.
- **Donations:** There are several organised 'Donation Days' throughout the year e.g. Tombola prizes – please support these by giving whatever you can. Look out for details in upcoming school emails and WhatsApp groups. Any one-off monetary donations or donations of raffle prizes would also be welcome and gratefully received. Please contact FOR to find out how you can do this.
- **Standing orders:** A simple and straightforward way to help with minimum effort is to donate money directly via a monthly standing order or direct debit. If you wish to do so, the Friends of Raglan account details are:

*Metro Bank*

Account Name: *Friends of Raglan*

Sort Code: *23-05-80*

Account No.: 27439268

- **Payroll giving:** a tax-efficient way to help is via Payroll Giving which donates off your gross salary (salary sacrifice) and goes directly to FOR. This applies to parents who are employed and paid via PAYE and where your employer participates in a payroll giving scheme. If you are unsure, please speak with your Payroll or HR team who will be able confirm and provide more details.

### **Your Business/Workplace**

- **Match-funding:** Some organisations and employers have match-funding programmes. Match-funding is where employers will match pound for pound the funds raised by employees for chosen charities. You do not need to organise or run an event, but probably need to have some involvement – perhaps a stint on a stall or game. Some will have capped contributions once per year, some will offer multiple match-funds. Please investigate whether your workplace offers a match-funding programme, and contact FOR who are able to work with you to unlock valuable matched-funds.
- **Donations:** Can your business or employer help with monetary donations or donations of goods (e.g. for raffle prizes) or sponsorship? This could be an opportunity for publicity at FOR events or on FOR communications. Some businesses make regular/annual donations to charities nominated by staff. Please consider nominating FOR if your employer is one of these.
- **Limited company charitable donations:** Limited companies get tax relief for charitable donations. FOR is a registered charity listed on the Charities Commission website. If you have your own limited company, it could be tax efficient for you to donate to FOR. It can also help with B-Corp status! (You could also ask any friends or relatives who you know own limited companies to help in this way.)

### **Your Contacts**

- **Local businesses:** Do you know a local business you could approach for donations – vouchers, products, goods or sponsorship? Please do contact FOR if you do!
- **Individuals:** Do you know a famous local celebrity who could offer their time to make appearances at one of our events?

### **Your Skills**

- **Your work/personal skills:** This is not to be underestimated. In particular, for the KS2 project we are at present looking for someone to help with a vision for the garden area between the car park and the gym. If you have any experience that could help with this, please come forward! Your work skills may help us to save costs on hiring professionals e.g. drafting skills to draw up plans for the playground refurbishment. Qualified first aiders are always required to be present at FOR events so anyone in the medical professions could help with this so they don't have to always rely on the same person. Please let FOR know if you think you would be able to help in any way.

- **Hidden talents:** Do you have a secret (or not so secret) talent that could raise money at FOR events? E.g. are you good at children's face painting, making balloon animals, an amateur magician? Please let FOR know if you think you can help.

### **Your Ideas**

- **Fundraising ideas:** Do you have an idea for a fundraising initiative or event? It could be something you've come across at another school or charity. Please let FOR know.

Lastly, FOR would like to thank all parents and pupils for all the support received so far this year.

Contact FOR: Email: [for.ptabromley@gmail.com](mailto:for.ptabromley@gmail.com)

WhatsApp: please message your class WhatsApp group FOR representative