

Great Missenden School PTA

Fireworks De-brief Meeting 21st November 2016

Minutes

Attendees: Anita Leslie, Katharine Tompson, Nic Smedley, Luke Taylor, Caroline Boss, Kevin Hoy, Matt Boss, Lisa Harrison, Caroline McDonald, Roz Thomson, Harry Sperring

Apologies: Hannah Barrett, Emma Griffiths, Joanna Cocking, Paula Kitching, Emily Glover

Anita Leslie opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and said there would be a slight agenda change in that the smaller items on the agenda will be discussed first before we move on to the main item of the fireworks debrief.

DISCO

Committee agreed to change the date of the children's discos from 15th to Friday 16th December which will allow us to use the main hall for both discos. This makes logistics easier than when using the dining room. We also agreed to have half an hour between the two discos so that the transition between them is smoother. Reception-Year 3 will be at 5.30pm – 6.45pm, Years 4,5,6 will be at 7.15pm – 8.30pm. More committee members are available on the 16th to help run the evening. Anita had requested in an email that an event leader and helpers step forward to run the discos as the Chairs have work commitments around that time. Caroline Boss has agreed to lead and various helpers have replied to the earlier email.

***ACTIONS: Anita to contact DJ and confirm date change
Caroline to contact those who have agreed to help***

QUIZ NIGHT

Date for the next quiz night was agreed as 4th March 2017.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Luke announced the final takings numbers on the Fireworks Event. It was a record year with over £19k in takings, with net earnings for the school of £12k but subject to a few further expenses. It included a breakdown of takings for each area. Final total will be announced in assembly by Roz Thomson on Friday 25th November and committee members have been invited to attend.

FIREWORKS

Anita asked for all members to write down things which went well or need improvement on post-it notes for each area of the fireworks event. Everyone took some time to do this, sticking comments and suggestions on sheets of paper labelled for each area. Nic Smedley read them out and a brief discussion was held about some of the main areas, but more detailed discussions will be held at later meetings. Nic will collate all the problems/successes into a report which will be used when planning next year's event. It was generally agreed in the room, that we should begin organising the next fireworks evening very soon and not wait until next August.

It was generally agreed that the fireworks evening had been a success. We had positive feedback from members of the public, staff, volunteers from outside the school and past pupils and parents as well as current pupils and parents.

Some of the things which went particularly well:

Volunteers – After a slow and worrying start on the sign-up website, we had a wonderful turn-out of volunteers who were amazing. Many stayed in their post for longer than scheduled with energy and enthusiasm

Website – A great success, eye catching and worked well with links to school and ticket tailor

Web ticket sales – Ticket tailor was good value for money and people seemed to like being able to buy online

Entry Gate – 3 lanes worked very well in keeping long queues down, marshals and volunteers did a great job of keeping order and informing people of where they needed to queue

Floats – System for collecting money worked very well and was extremely well organised. Security was much better with black-outs at the window and a camera in operation at the door, plus ID for collectors.

Candy Floss - was a great attraction and we sold more than would have if it had just been bagged

Raffle Prizes – really great selection

Air Cadets/Marshals – Lots of praise received for the way they conducted themselves and were a great help on the night

Marshal briefing – was efficient and well organised

BBQ – Kings Farm were amazing; reliable, well organised and friendly. The BBQ set up was managed brilliantly and queues were much shorter than in previous years. We managed to serve everyone with food before the fireworks began – this was a contentious point in previous years. Frozen onions made life much easier than last year.

Bar – Was very appealing, pre-poured drinks meant that queues were minimal and much shorter than previous years. The bar was really efficiently run and well organised

Marketing – Banners and boards looked great, Facebook page was really good and generated comments, suggestion to pay for extra next year?

Fireworks – Reliable company and good display

Planning – The overall organisation, with one person taking the lead and area managers focusing on their own part of the event, seemed to work well. It certainly meant that the work was spread across the committee.

Some of the areas for improvement noted:

Signage – We need more “PAY HERE” and general direction signs so people know where they have to queue up (especially at popcorn/toffee apples area and BBQ) – suggestion to get these printed in January

BBQ – Look at the lighting for next year, could do with more. Better signage needed. Use barriers to manage the queue, so it does not interfere in the playground next year? More pay stations would help with the queue length. Suggest pre-paid orders bought online at the same time as tickets, would speed up some of the queueing. Apple sauce ran out early and ketchup ran out before the end, more for next year. The rolls were too big for the sausages which, although the sausages were great quality, made them look like they were not good value; address this for next year. Price lists and menu should be available further down the queue so people can make up their minds before arriving at the desk.

Bar – Mulled wine ran out, order more for next year. There was possibly too much choice of ale in terms of the size of the queue, although people seemed to like the options. Less ale needed overall next year. Another heater would be good for next year. At busy times it would be good to have someone at the head of the queue directing people to servers.

Marketing – Could package the sponsorship so potential sponsors know what they’re getting, will help with negotiation. Suggestion to make the newsletter more visual in run up to fireworks to make more impact

Communication – suggestions for next year to set up a template of announcements, pre-drafted with a timeline for when comms to parents go out

Online sales – Begin selling sooner next year, think about a different system for collecting wristbands, many people didn’t print out their ticket first and might have been a bit confusing

Gate – Walkie talkies could be useful here, particularly to communicate with treasurers. More coins in the float, as they were constantly giving out £1 change and quickly ran out. The

volunteers at the cash gate were a bit cut off from everything happening in the playground, think about their positioning for next year.

Candy floss – the queue was huge at times, separate out from popcorn and toffee apples next year? Maybe have two machines, better signage

Float – Suggestion of a double float to re-set in middle of evening. Sometimes there were a lot of people milling about queuing for loos and sorting out children, in the corridor outside locked room. Consider moving room next year? Trial a cashless system for the summer fete?

Bonfire – Could this be bigger and could announcements about it be clearer so people don't miss it? Can we look at insurance/safety documentation and relocate to the grass area nearer the playground to integrate it more into the evening? Guy throwers need microphones to address onlookers as they introduce and toss each one on the fire – this section is great fun for children and many people missed this bit.

Lighting – More needed around BBQ and glow sticks table was very dark and a little bit cut off from everything else – consider layout

Fireworks – Star gave us 17 minutes instead of 20, discuss for next year, some commented that the music was not synchronised, but this was never intended and costs more money to have done

Fairground – Thomas Hebborn very difficult to deal with and not reliable. He overcharged what we had agreed for Hook a Duck, failed to bring some rides and negotiated us down in price with the threat of not turning up. Suggest we look into alternatives for next year, maybe have more for the smaller children?

Matting – did not really cover the whole area and mud was transferred to playground. It would be too expensive to hire matting for the whole area, suggest funneling people through barriers? It might not be such an issue next year as there will be astro-turf in the area so we'll wait and see on this

ACTION: Nic to collate all the comments and suggestions and produce a document we can use in planning next year

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- No news on the Tesco fundraiser as yet.

ACTION: Roz to check with Jenny Laville and report at later meeting

- Vicki Cleaver has sold 360 tickets for the pantomime which is a great result and she has done a wonderful job on this. We discussed the possibility of combining the pant ticket sales with the fireworks tickets online next year. To be agreed.

ACTION: Luke to send invoice to Nic Tomlin in order for us to claim the VAT

- The committee approved the treasurer to make online payments to the following people in order to settle their expenses:

£108 – Anita

£283.20 – Kevin

£48.02 - Lisa

- Mike Battye put in a request in October for science equipment and the committee has agreed to pay for this at a cost of £975. He will go ahead and purchase.
- We agreed to pay for the children's Christmas gift, which will be a little stocking to hang on the tree, into which they put their wish for the world. PTA members will help to give these out to the children on Monday 19th December
- Next year's fireworks will be on 4th November 2017

Next meeting: Tuesday, 17th January at 7.30pm in the staff room