

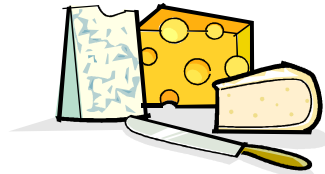
Friends of Whickham Parochial Newsletter September 2011

Chairperson: Lois Robinson
Vice Chair: Helen Abraham
Treasurer: Judith Williamson
Secretary: Rachel Meecham

To contact us email friendsofwhickhamparochial@btconnect.com

Free Cheese and Wine Night

Date: Tuesday 27th September at 6pm



Welcome to our first Newsletter of the academic year. We hope you had a lovely summer. An extra special welcome to all parents new to the school

this year. Friends of Whickham Parochial are what we used to refer to as the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) when we were at school ☺. Our first job of the year is to hold our AGM and this year we want to zing it up a little. Come along at 6pm for cheese, wine, soft drinks and nibbles. There will be several 'stalls' set up where you can find out more about the 'Friends' and how we can all help Parochial achieve its goals in 2011. At approx 6:30 we will start the AGM proper. All of the posts on the committee are up for grabs so if you are interested please email friendsofwhickhamparochial@btconnect.com and we'll tell you more. If you don't want a formal position on the committee but would still like to get involved, we'll tell you more at the AGM. Please come along if you can. We would love to see you

Make way for the Mayor!!



At the end of last term a hand print mural was completed with handprints of all the children in school at that time. Sorry once again we couldn't include new reception class children.

It will be installed very soon and we are very fortunate to have the Mayor of Gateshead unveiling the mural. Local press will also be covering the event. Everyone is welcome to celebrate this event, meet the Mayor and smile for the cameras at a coffee morning following the presentation. The handprint tiles are still going through the kiln so we don't have a date yet, but as soon as we do we will let you know

Nutty Nonsense Night

Disco, fun and games for the children just before we break for half term. The event is scheduled for October 20th so write the date in your diaries. Times, details and consent slips to follow soon and of course we would love to hear from you if you can help on the night.

Cinema Clubs

The technology is now fully working so the next cinema clubs are scheduled for 8th November (KS1) and 15th of November (KS2) straight after school until 5pm. Ticket price will include a 'snack' tea. Exact details and consent forms will follow nearer the time. If you can help with serving the refreshments etc we would love to hear from you.

BBQ Raffle Prizes

We still have a few unclaimed raffle prizes from Julys BBQ. £50.00 vouchers for Arco, tickets no 346-350 and £20 Deanos voucher, tickets number 476-480. If you are a winner please contact friendsofwhickhamparochial@btconnect.com. Please stake your claim before the end of September as these vouchers have an expiry date and we would like to re-use them if no-one claims them.

Bunting Project



If you made some bunting triangles over the summer, thank you! Please bring them along to the AGM or hand them to the school office. We have also found a bunting knitting pattern, so if you know a keen knitter let us know and we will provide the pattern. The bunting will be sewn together and used at all our fairs and events for years to come.

Junior Yard Project

We are well on our way to raising funds for the staged area for the junior yard and work should commence this year, well ahead of schedule. In the interest of 'Keeping it Local' does anyone know a joiner who is competent, has adequate insurance cover for school work and able to offer a competitive quote.. If so can they get in touch with "Friends"

If every parent/carer helped at just one event per year it would make a massive difference to the events we could schedule. Grab a coffee and take 5 to read the article over the page by comedienne Arabella Weir

Contact us on friendsofwhickhamparochial@btconnect.com

TOO COOL FOR SCHOOL

Arabella Weir is a best selling author, comedy writer and performer. But her coolest achievement? Running her PTA...

In my swaggering, over-confident, know-it-all youth, and in-keeping with most of my mates, I regarded any kind of do-gooding as the exclusive province of old ladies and, I'm ashamed to say losers (pronounced, even back then, as 'looozaahs'). That is, unless of course, popstars were doing the good – in which case the cause became immediately worthy of our support. That said, and in my defence, I was brought up by a mother who's idea of doing good amounted to making her children supper and even then couldn't be relied upon to do that regularly. Now I know that making a contribution, in whatever form, doesn't have to be sanctioned by someone wearing leather jeans and wraparound shades to qualify as cool.

Now the naffer and more faux-sincere the celebrity imploring me to 'give' the less likely I am to cough up at all! And it is precisely because teachers don't tend to ask (too worn out, probably) that I decided to get involved with my kids PTA. Well for that indisputably sound motive and the fact that I'm a 'controlling nightmare', according to some members of my household who fail to appreciate that what he (yes, all right, it's my husband) sees as 'controlling' I see as incredibly efficient, energetic, and always in the right. Leaving aside marital (and frankly erroneous) differences, it would be hard to deny that most PTAs need help, as much as they can get, and from parents with lots of enthusiasm and energy. Of course the more people involved the less of those resources an individual will need to stump up – the prospect of joining you PTA shouldn't be exhausting – the group as a whole will provide all the necessary characteristics to make a brilliantly effective machine.

I can trot out this kind of fighting talk now but in the initial and occasionally very dark days of my virgin involvement with the PTA at my kids' primary school, at the first meeting, there was me and one other mum! What started out as two of us sitting up all night wrapping 200 presents for Santa's grotto at our first Christmas fair is now an organisation so huge they've got blooming sub-committees who undertake tasks off their own bat and do what they are told! Whilst admitting nothing regarding my need to 'control everything' it would be fair to say that during my time at that PTA's co-chair I did begin to see the merits of a dictatorship. For example I knew I was right about how many vegetarian sausages were needed vs. how many meat ones so why on earth wouldn't people just stick to the shopping list I spent two hours meticulously putting together?!

OK, delegating isn't high on my skills list but you try putting a shopping list together by committee. Eight years on and I'm thrilled to be able to report I'm not the bossiest or even the most organised person on my kids secondary school PTA. At last, I'm not keeping the plane up on my own and serving the drinks and handing out the complimentary peanuts while doing the safety demonstration. There's a captain, co-pilots, stewards- the whole flight crew and we're cruising at a comfortable height.

We could do with more volunteers; of course we could, always. As for whether it's cool, as I explain to my children when dragging my wicker shopping trolley along – or rather shouting after them since they won't walk beside me when I've got that with me – cool is not about waiting to see what others decide qualifies. Cool is doing what you think is right and hang the courage and conviction to see that through.

Helping teachers who are making a career of educating our children whilst also supporting the school – raising the bar for all – is about as cool and worthy as it gets.

So come one, mums and dads, grans and grandads, aunts and uncles, everyone!! Spare us an hour on 27th September to come and find out how welcoming and friendly everyone associated with the 'Friends' is or drop us an email to find out how you can help.

New Ideas Competition

Please use the space below to give us some new fundraising ideas or perhaps something we haven't done for a long time you'd like to see again. All slips returned to school will be entered into a prize draw

I think a good idea for 'Friends' would be ...

Name _____

Email Address (if you have one)

And Finally - is there any interest out there for a CUPCAKE DECORATING CLASS?? If this is something you'd like to have a go at, please let us know(via email or message to school office)